



PROGRAM AGREEMENT

**in the frame of the ART Initiative
between EBN – the European BIC Network,
and UNDP, leader of the ART Initiative**

Taking into consideration that:

- UNDP, through its *Hub for Innovative Partnerships* based in Geneva, is the leader of the Initiative called ART (Articulating Territorial and Thematic Networks for Human development) which operates in collaboration with the Scientific Committee, with UNIFEM, UNHCR, UNITAR, ILO, OMS, UNOPS, and with other organizations of the United Nations.
- The ART Initiative, as illustrated in annex n. 1, has the objective of promoting in all Countries democratic governance, human development, peace and pursuit of the Millennium Goals through programs called ART GOLD (Governance and Local Development) based on the collaboration between the United Nations, local Governments, Regions, Provinces and Municipalities (local authorities) of the South and North together with their social actors, and among such actors, universities, public institutions, health and social services, enterprises, associations, NGOs, and others. Framework Programs in Albania, Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Lebanon, Morocco, Dominican Republic, Serbia, Sri Lanka and Uruguay are already being implemented or are in a preliminary phase. These Framework Programs operate in an intersector manner in various complementary fields such as governance, environment and territory organization, local economic development, local health and welfare systems, local basic education and training systems.

- The ART Initiative also operates at an international level furnishing support to the Programs in the various Countries through institutional and technical assistance of United Nations Organizations and their specialized centers. In particular, the international initiatives are the following:
 - ART International which promotes decentralized cooperation partnerships between local communities and social actors of public, private and associative sectors from South and North;
 - ISLED Program which supports internationalized local economic development and assists agencies for local economic development;
 - IDEASS Program which promotes a greater use of innovations for human development through south–south and south–north cooperation projects;

- In particular the ISLED Program supports 50 Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs) with the aim of catalyzing projects and business opportunities as well as opportunities for the internationalization of the local economies. The 50 local economic development agencies are present in the Balkans (Serbia, Albania, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina), Sub-Saharan Africa (South Africa, Mozambique and Angola), Latin and Central America (Colombia, Ecuador, Uruguay, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica), the Caribbean (Dominican Republic).

- LEDAs are self-sustained, non-profit structures with legal personality and functional autonomy. They have participation from local stakeholders from both the public sector (local administrations, decentralized arms of the national Government) and the private sphere (associations, chambers of commerce, trade unions, producers' organizations, banks), which agree on strategies, instruments and initiatives aimed at developing the economy of the territory. They have access to links with national and international partners and networks, allowing the local economy to make the best use of the globalization opportunities. They offer services to entrepreneurs and institutions in areas such as information, entrepreneurship promotion, technical assistance for the creation of micro, small and medium enterprises, for start-up and development, special credit for investment, project financing, economic development planning and monitoring, territorial marketing. In this way, they function as a weapon against poverty: they facilitate the inclusion of the poor into the economic circuit by providing the resources they lack, combating in such a way a traditional model of economic development that assigns the task and privilege of producing wealth to only a segment of the population.

- IDEASS seeks to reinforce territorial, integrated and participatory development processes by promoting innovation for human development. The Initiative aims at improving the ability of local and national public and private actors to respond in a satisfactory manner to

the needs of the population through innovative and efficient mechanisms and tools already adopted in other countries.

- IDEASS accomplishes its mission through the realization of various activities starting from the building of a “supply” of innovations, passing through their international promotion and the formulation and the implementation of south-south and south-north cooperation projects with interested actors. Innovations are thought in the following sectors:
 - *Governance*, supporting the functioning of local institutions, promoting rights, forging dialogue, territorial planning, managing judicial systems and public services.
 - *Local economic development*, services for local enterprises, technologies and innovative products, new management systems for public services and funds, social protection and reduction of exclusion, promotion of decent work.
 - *Developing a sustainable environmental patrimony*, managing the historical and artistic heritage, valorizing environmental and energy resources, reducing vulnerability, managing emergencies, identifying appropriate technology and methodologies, supporting environmentally sound business practices.
 - *Developing sustainable health and social services*, decentralizing services, widening access to and participation in services, social integration of children and adults with problems in education and the labour market, identifying appropriate technology and methodologies.
 - *Developing sustainable educational services*, decentralizing education, widening access and participation in schools, including children with problems, valorizing the cultural heritage, identifying appropriate technology and methodologies.
- Business and Innovation Centres (BICs) are organizations serving both the public interest and the private sector, which employ a dynamic system of detection/selection/monitoring/management of entrepreneurs and projects. They are aimed at creating and developing innovative businesses, by offering a wide range of business support services within a professional cost-effective structure. BICs contribute to the stimulation of local economies in areas with industrial development and knowledge intensive potential. Their purpose is to adapt/prepare endogenous human physical and financial resources in order to strengthen the business sector. This concerns not only the creation of small and medium sized enterprises and the development of existing ones, but also actions aimed at improving the local governance of the SME systems as well as actions aimed at providing self-employment tools to disadvantaged groups.
- The European Business and Innovation Centre Network (EBN) was set up in 1984 as a joint initiative of the European Commission, European industry leaders and the first pioneering Business and Innovation Centres. At present EBN is an independent body and acts as an

umbrella organization that, at present, brings together over 200 BICs from all around Europe and beyond (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cape Verde, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macau, Macedonia, Morocco, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom).

- The European BIC Network's mission, as illustrated in annex 2, is to promote the growth of Business and Innovation Centres as well as of other mixed public-private organizations both within and outside the European Union, supporting the emergence of new small and medium sized businesses and develop activities in existing businesses based on new ideas with growth potential. The mission is carried out through the provision of tools and services for the strengthening of local and sustainable entrepreneurship based on the utilization of the territorial endogenous potentials, and through the provision of world-wide exchange opportunities recognizing that although acting locally BICs must daily face global economy.
- Among the services provided to its members EBN provides those of:
 - *networking*, with the aim of creating the appropriate environment for exchanges especially at the international level, through projects, events thematic actions and sector specific approaches, sharing and transfer of expertise, tools, and specific know-how, to support continuous evolvement and adaptation to competitive environments;
 - *Projects*, through a network "idea-lab", which invents, tests and deploys pilot-schemes meant to support BICs and other partners in keeping pace with the changing environment both at a the technical and the managerial levels.
 - *Quality*, through the undertaking of feasibility studies and technical support for the setting up of new BICs through on-site visits, audits and assistance in quality assurance. EBN ensures that members comply to a professional, serious and specific quality system, using both process and results indicators, delivering advice and assistance to BICs and similar organizations.

The above mentioned parties, recognizing mutual interest in shaping long-term cooperation, agree to define durable ways of collaboration among each other in the fields of local economic development and innovations and therefore express to commence the collaboration agreeing upon:

- Setting up a joint EBN / ART-ISLED technical working group aimed at promoting means of cooperation between Business Innovation Centres associated to the European BICs

Network and Local Economic Development Agencies associated to the ILSLEDA network. Cooperation framework initiatives will be aimed at:

- Supporting LEDAs on management and technical issues;
- Scouting innovations and capturing their potentialities;
- Supporting know-how and opportunities' transfer among territories.

EBN and ART – ILSLEDA will nominate the members of the aforementioned technical working group within 15 days from the date of signature of the present agreement. The technical working group will elaborate a project aimed at promoting appropriate connections between interested BICs and LEDAs through twinning modalities. The twinings between LEDAs and BICs will be set up according to specific parameters such as, prioritized regions of cooperation, homogeneity of local resources, mutual interests in territorial internationalization. The twinings will be aimed at supporting the transfer of know-how on management issues from BICs to LEDAs, supporting LEDAs to find sustainable ways to manage and deal with local innovations and defining sustainable measures for territorial business cooperation. The technical working group will proceed with the definition of the procedural steps needed to arrive to the elaboration of the project within 75 days from the date of signature of the present agreement.

EBN and ART – ILSLEDA will jointly undertake fund raising activities to ensure the elaborated project will be appropriately funded and hence implemented and realized in due time.

- Undertaking a research of European innovations which can be transferred through north-south and south-south cooperation channels activated through the IDEASS Programme. The research of innovations will be realized by EBN through a competition which will be launched by EBN and will involve all its interested members. EBN and ART – IDEASS will set up a technical working group that will define the rules for the competition, the standards the innovations must meet to be able to concur to the competition and a grid containing the evaluation criteria within 45 days from the signature of the present competition. Thereafter the competition will be launched by EBN according to the defined regulations and the results will be displayed and delivered to ART IDEASS during the EBN Annual Assembly which will be held in the month of June 2008 in Budapest, Hungary.

Date:

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