**LESSONS LEARNED**

* The lessons learned from the project can be summarized in the following way:
* There is no need to be afraid to change the scope of the project if the original one does not work.
* It is important to admit mistakes and to not be afraid to stop, review the needs and change the project activities and at times change the goal and objectives and the level of implementation as well as the project activities, the project target groups and its beneficiaries.
* At the initial stage it is crucial to consider the experience the region/the community already has, to know the history, culture and traditions, to understand the specifics of the communities; in other words, the initial mapping should be done carefully and various aspects should be considered
* If it takes a long time to develop a project, then key pre-conditions of the project might lose their relevance and it will be necessary to reconsider ways and methods of the project implementation at the very beginning of the project implementation.
* The international experience shall be adjusted to the local realities before it is introduced locally. There is no point to rely and go for one approach only. It is worth taking the trouble to try various ways. For instance, the regional development is not based and dependent on the existence of the Regional Development Agency.
* Capacity building, in particular at the local and regional level takes time and requires **a** flexible approach.
* Grant funding is required to support the developed project proposals together with trainings and other learning activities to keep momentum going so that the participants do not feel demotivated and lose their heart but have their skills operational and aspirations high.
* It will be good to have more types of published materials produced to be distributed by the pilot communities themselves. For instance, something like a community investment profile. It is also necessary to update and publish manuals and guidelines to be used by local public authorities in their day-to-day operations. For example, a manual on how to attract investments.
* It is important to ensure coordination of the project participants at the regional level as well as closer cooperation of the project and other similar projects and programs funded by other donors, for instance, the EU-funded project on tourism, the Turkish International Development and Cooperation Agency projects and programs, GIZ, DESPRO and other. Such coordination took place during the time frame of the project.
* Visits to other regions and communities of Ukraine are extremely useful in terms of knowledge and experience sharing. It will be great to have more of them in the project.
* It is crucial to teach the basics of advocacy to the representatives of various sectors in the community in order to empower them to protect their interests when interacting with regional and public authorities.
* It is impossible to attract investment without the endorsed master plans of towns and cities.
* The information and communication campaigns shall be an integral part of the implementation of any strategic plan.
* It is crucial to engage and rely on the potential and resources the community and CSOs have when preparing and implementing the local policy and addressing the pressing issues of the community.