



8th Annual Conference of Microfinance Institutions, Bucharest, Romania; 26-28 May 2005

"Success of Microfinance: How do We Use this Success to Maximize Benefits for Clients"

May 24-25, 2005

**Study tour of Romanian MFIs:
Bucharest – Cimpulung Muscel - Gradistea – Brasov – Sf. Gheorghe – Ploiesti -
Bucharest.**

Microfinance practitioners and other conference participants are invited to meet Romanian microfinance institutions and enjoy a study tour of some of their projects, including tourism, trade, agribusiness and restructured mining areas.

CONFERENCE SESSIONS
CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL

Thursday, May 26 at 9:00 – 9:55

Conference Opening:

Mr. Calin Popescu Tariceanu, Prime-Minister of the Romanian Government

Mr. Thomas L. Delare, Charge d'Affaires, US Embassy in Romania

Mr. Ken Vander Weele, Microfinance Centre for CEE and the NIS Chair

Mrs. Soknan Han Jung, UNDP Residential Representative

Mr. Giorgio Ficarelli, Head of Pre-accession Coordination Section, EU Delegation in Romania

Key Note Speech

Kate McKee, Director, Microenterprise Division, United States Agency for International Development

Thursday, May 26 at 9:55 – 11:35

PLENARY SESSION:

Microfinance in C&EE and the NIS: What are the Priorities in the Years to Come?

This session will discuss ways in which all organizations involved in microfinance can play a role in leveraging the past successes of the sector and how a more client-driven approach to microfinance can further that aim. The session will be preceded by a presentation of the 2004 microfinance sector's achievements in the C&EE and the NIS so as to bring a contextual perspective. During this plenary session, representatives of banks working in microfinance/SME lending, networks and hands-on MFI practitioners will share their experiences and future plans.

Facilitator: Caroline Tsilikounas (Microfinance Centre for CEE and the NIS Board Member, ICMC and Mercy Corps Technical Advisor to DEMOS, Croatia)

Presentation of the Microfinance Sector Performance in 2004: Grzegorz Galusek (Executive Director, Microfinance Centre for CEE and the NIS)



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Panelists: Volker Renner (Regional Director, Eastern Europe/Central Asia, FINCA International, Russia), Ken Vander Weele (Microfinance Centre for CEE and the NIS Chair and Chief Operating Officer, Opportunity International, Austria), Marina Yoveva (Microfinance Centre for CEE and the NIS Board Member and MED Senior Technical Advisor for WV Middle East & Eastern Europe, Romania), Gagik Vardanyan (Executive Director, MDF "KAMURJ", Armenia), Kenan Crnkic (Executive Director, MCO PRIZMA, Bosnia & Herzegovina), Edward Siegel (Senior Managing Director, ShoreBank Advisory Services, UK)

Workshop Session 1 - Thursday, May 26 at 12:15 – 13:45

WORKSHOP 1.A

Risk-Management Financial Services: Options for Low-Income People and MFIs

Low-income households live on the edge of financial solvency. While microcredit has proven effective at helping poor people increase their incomes and build their assets, few if any of such households have access to effective risk management options. All face frequent financial shocks that can rapidly erode hard won gains. As a result, many slide quickly down the income ladder and into poverty. Market studies have shown a strong demand for risk mitigation products and services. Assessments of the growing number of microinsurance providers indicates that these services together with savings and emergency loans offer MFIs opportunities to respond to their target populations' expressed needs. Drawing on a wide range of global examples, this panel will explore both the demand for and supply of micro-savings, microinsurance and emergency credit.

Facilitators: Monique Cohen (President, Microfinance Opportunities, USA), Michael McCord (President, The Microinsurance Centre, USA), Craig Churchill (Senior Expert, International Labour Organization, Switzerland)

WORKSHOP 1.B

Fueling Financial Systems Development: A Myriad of Funding Sources

The supply of funding for microfinance looks radically different today than it did 10 years ago. Newcomers such as private investment funds and foundations are offering fresh funding options. Public sector donors continue to play a significant role, increasingly working through channels such as budget support and apexes. More attention is also being focused on local sources of financing.

What have we learned in the first 10 years of supporting microfinance through mainly bilateral and multilateral agencies? Does it matter where funding will come from in the future? What role do different funders have in a given institution and in given markets?

Facilitator: Alexia Latortue (Senior Microfinance Specialist, CGAP, USA)

Panelists: Eric Duflos (Microfinance Specialist, CGAP, USA), Kate McKee (Director, Microenterprise Division, USAID, USA)



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WORKSHOP 1.C

Credit Where It's Overdue: Lending to Socially Excluded Individuals in Central Europe

For the past decade microfinance in Central and Eastern Europe, focusing on the underserved micro-enterprise sector, has paid no serious attention to the vulnerable and socially excluded individuals such as Roma and other ethnic minorities. The session will present recent attempts by three socially aware microfinance institutions in Bulgaria, Macedonia and Romania in providing credit to Roma clients in urban and rural areas. Through a video presentation and guided discussion, participants will have an opportunity to meet these clients, visualize various lending methodologies and understand the credit assessment process. Representatives of the MFIs will discuss the challenges of lending to socially marginalized individuals and share their experiences in combating social exclusivity through business development and microfinance.

Facilitator: Piotr Korynski (Program Director, Open Society Institute, USA)
Panelists: Georgi Breskovski (Executive Director, Mikrofond, Bulgaria), Pavel Velev (Executive Director, USTOI, Bulgaria), Vasil Davaliev (Executive Director, CRS – Horizonti, Macedonia), Anca Ciobanu (Executive Director, Center for Economic Development, Romania)

WORKSHOP 1.D

Microfinance Fundamentals for Beginners

This workshop has been specially designed for microfinance beginners who want to get an idea about the basic principles that lay behind the delivery of successful microcredit services. During the workshop, participants will have a chance to review the four historical stages of development of microfinance, typical microfinance "myths" and how these have been challenged by realities in the CEE and the NIS regions as well as globally. Attention will be paid to the typical reasons that microfinance institutions fail so that the "lessons learned" can be shared among future microfinance providers. Two case studies of successful MFIs in the region will be presented during the workshop.

Facilitator: Olga Tomilova (Deputy Director and Training & Consulting Unit Manager, Microfinance Centre for CEE and the NIS)
Panelists: Nejira Nalic (Executive Director, Mi-Bospo, Bosnia),
Babur Tolbaev (Chief Executive Officer, Financial Group Kompanion, Kyrgyzstan)

Workshop Session 2 - Thursday, May 26 at 15:00 – 16:30

WORKSHOP 2.A

Advancing Social Performance - Strategy for the Region

On March 17 in Paris, a group of MFIs, networks, donors, researchers, raters and investors met to set out a common agenda on social performance in microfinance. As a result of this meeting the International Working Group on Social Performance was created to ensure coordination and collaboration of action and ensure greater social focus and transparency in performance management and reporting in microfinance. A longer-term goal has been set up to develop industry standards in assessment, comparable



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reporting, auditing and rating of social performance placing internal management of social performance by MFIs at the core.

To contribute to the common agenda and elevate it to a regional level, MFC would like to invite all regional industry stakeholders (practitioners, donors, investors, raters, consultants, researchers and others) to participate in a regional debate that would set parameters for the "operationalization" of social performance in the region.

During the workshop, MFC will provide a short overview of social performance initiatives that are already underway. Prizma, The Integra Venture, PlaNet Rating and IFAD, as representatives of different regional industry stakeholders, will share their visions, plans and experience in social-performance concept implementation in their organizations to lay the groundwork for a regional discussion on actions to follow.

Facilitator: Deborah Burand (Consultant, International Finance Corporation, USA)
Panelists: Katarzyna Pawlak (Deputy Director and Research Manager, Microfinance Centre for CEE and the NIS), Kenan Crnkic (Executive Director, MCO Prizma, Bosnia and Herzegovina), Allan Bussard (Managing Director, The Integra Venture, Slovakia), Minh-Huy Lai (Director, PlaNet Rating, France), Henri Dommel (Rural Finance Technical Advisor, IFAD, Italy)

WORKSHOP 2.B

Prospects of Microinsurance in Transition Settings

Many case studies from around the globe show that it is possible to insure poor people in a sustainable manner. Micro-insurance is becoming widely acknowledged as an important development tool by providing access to effective risk-management strategies for low-income people. In the context of transition settings, where low-income people have become more and more vulnerable to increasing risks, people find themselves in a difficult situation when state safety nets collapsed and they have a limited ability to develop their own sufficient coping strategies.

Is this new opportunity of microinsurance relevant for the transition settings of Eastern Europe and Central Asia? To what extent do low-income people feel the need to enhance their risk management strategies given their limited knowledge of insurance? Is it enough to be willing to buy it? Do they have capacity to pay for it? Would the people trust insurers after the collapse of the financial systems in early 90's? How can we secure the safety of the insurance system? What are the options to deliver microinsurance in this context? What other measures can be taken at the national level to create a friendly environment for micro-insurance?

This workshop will try to answer these questions and discuss solutions on the basis of a comprehensive microinsurance feasibility study done in Georgia for KfW. Country-level demand and supply considerations will be supported by results from a pilot test of a health microinsurance scheme being delivered jointly by Constanta Foundation and Aldagi - a Georgian insurance company.

Presenters: Michael J. McCord (President, the MicroInsurance Centre, USA), Levan Lebanidze (Executive Director, Constanta Foundation, Georgia), Michal Matul (Researcher, Microfinance Centre for CEE and the NIS)

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WORKSHOP 2.C

NGOs and Transformation: Must You REALLY Transform? CAN You Really Transform? What Price Should You Pay?

NGO microlending organizations across the region are feeling the pressure to "transform" themselves into commercial legal forms. Some donors and investors say they can't support NGOs, some commentators say NGOs are inherently weakly managed, some regulators remain skeptical about the idea of NGOs engaged in commercially sustainable microlending. But "transformations" of this sort are expensive and legally very complicated – sometimes even impossible without legal changes. The moderator will explain the legal mechanics of an NGO-to-commercial entity "transformation" and critique the conflicting claims made about such transformations. Panelists will then speak to the issues of these types of transformations from their own experience.

Facilitator: Timothy R. Lyman (President and Executive Director, Day, Berry & Howard Foundation and Legal Advisor, CGAP, USA)

Panelists: Aleksandar Kremenovic (Director, MicroCredit Organization "MICROFIN", Banja Luka, Bosnia & Herzegovina), Ludmila Teterikova (Finance Director, FORA Fund, Russia), Mary Chaffin (Legal Counsel & Corporate Secretary, Mercy Corps, USA)

WORKSHOP 2.D

What is the Strategy of the Romanian Microfinance Sector in Light of Potential European Union Accession?

The rapid growth of the Romanian MF sector within the last two years, a coherent legislative framework its microfinance activities, new micro-credit products targeting entrepreneurs from urban as well as rural areas, client-oriented development strategies and the improvement of the MFIs performance indicators - are these the proper steps that Romanian MFIs should follow for a smooth integration into the EU Microfinance sector?

The purpose of this workshop is to debate the development strategies of two Romanian MFIs: CAPA and CHF; and to discuss the challenges the MFIs and their clients, the Micro and Small non-bankable enterprises are facing in light of the country's expected EU Accession in January 2007.

Facilitator: Giorgio Ficarelli (EC Delegation in Romania, Head of Pre-accession Coordination Section)

Panelists: Adrian Chindris (Executive Director, CAPA Foundation, Romania), Glenn Moller (Deputy Director, CHF International, Romania), Csaba Kalman (Executive Director, Opportunity Micro-credit, Romania), Vlad Mihut (Training Program Coordinator, ROMCOM Foundation, Romania)

Thursday, May 26 at 17:10 – 18:40

SPECIAL EVENT:

Regional Discussion Forum

Regional meetings will be conducted in **three** groups:

1. Central Asia (facilitator: Olga Tomilova, Deputy Director and Training & Consulting Unit Manager, Microfinance Centre for CEE and the NIS)
2. Russia, Caucasus (facilitator: Marina Yoveva, MFC Board Member and World

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- Vision Middle East and Europe Region, Romania)
3. Southeast Europe (facilitator: Neijra Nalic, MFC Board Member, MI-BOSPO, Bosnia & Herzegovina)

Each regional discussion forum will consist of practitioners and experts from the region (donors, consultants, and representatives of associations).

Meeting agenda:

- short presentation of the mapping-study results for the region;
- discussion on regional challenges and how to address these to smaller groups of practitioners;
- small-group results presentation and plenary discussion.

Thursday, May 26 at 18:40 – 19:45

OPEN SESSION:

Women Advancing Microfinance in Central and Eastern Europe and the New Independent States (WAM)

The second meeting of an informal network of regional women professionals initiated by MFC to exchange professional support and advice, share experience and discuss other issues of interest to the regional women professionals. Similarly to the initiating event, the role of MFC is limited to providing a basis for discussion and to facilitating the meeting. It is expected that all WAMers share their experiences and give support to others.

At the very beginning participants will have an opportunity to quickly network and get to know each other. Deborah Burand, representing WAM International, will provide a "worldwide" update. After this ice-breaker, MFC will present the results of a mapping study conducted this year, which among other issues, also investigated the state of employment of women and men in the microfinance industry. The presentation will be the basis for informal group discussions aimed at identifying problems in professional life and ways of tackling them in everyday work.

Facilitator: Katarzyna Pawlak (Deputy Director and Research Manager, Microfinance Centre for CEE and the NIS)

Friday, May 27 at 9:45 – 11:00

PLENARY SESSION:

**Money for Grabs, but why Can't you Get It?
Annual MFC Donor and Investor Fair**

This session is a great opportunity for getting to know microfinance funders active in the region. Funders and investors will discuss the biggest problems in accessing and providing funding.

Facilitator: Deborah Burand, Consultant, International Finance Corporation, USA

Workshop Session 3 - Friday, May 27 at 11:40 – 13:10

WORKSHOP 3.A

Financial Education: A Win-Win for Clients and MFIs

The success of MFIs depends largely on their clients' ability to improve their economic security and to use financial services wisely. But low-income people often know little about managing household finances and can make choices that imperil their success. This workshop will introduce a Financial Education training curriculum that enables low-income people to better protect and manage their assets and improve their use of financial services. Informed clients become better consumers of financial services. Better consumers mean a better bottom line for MFIs.

The training curriculum has been developed during the past two years by Microfinance Opportunities, Freedom from Hunger and their partners from different parts of the world. As a key partner, MFC will present some results of its market research and adaptation of the curriculum to the unique transitional setting of Eastern Europe. The workshop is a first step toward implementing the curriculum in the CEE and the NIS region.

Facilitators: Kathleen Stack (Vice-President, Freedom from Hunger, USA), Michal Matul (Researcher, Microfinance Centre for CEE and the NIS)

WORKSHOP 3.B

Principles of Rural Lending

Rural finance is considered a cutting edge issue for microfinance stakeholders aimed at addressing the poor and reaching underserved groups. What are the key issues for extending financial services into rural communities? What are the key principles for success in rural finance, what products and approaches have been successful, and under what contexts can they be applied? The presentation will explore key fundamentals, illustrative cases of proven approaches and examples of innovative products and technologies. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, which has been involved in rural finance for several decades, will lead the workshop and facilitate a group discussion. The considerations will be illustrated as examples of MicroCredit Organization "MICROFIN," which through a specific organizational structure, lending methodology and monitoring, serve rural clients in Bosnia and Herzegovina. What are the key issues for extending financial services into rural communities? An appropriate organizational structure that could ensure adequate, financially sustainable, office structure to serve rural clients. Very often rural markets are small, isolated and economically undeveloped. The usual urban office structure cannot adequately be applied to a rural market due to its high cost. At same time, "remote" lending was found to be highly inefficient. MIKROFIN designs a new office type, a so-called "rural satellite office" in order to properly serve rural clients. Within a new structure, MIKROFIN designs monitoring and internal control systems. Adjustments of lending methodologies and loan products has also been important to ensuring that appropriate services are delivered to desired clients in a sustainable way.

Facilitator: Ake Olofsson (Rural Finance Officer, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Italy)

Presenter: Aleksandar Kremenovic (Director, MicroCredit Organization "MICROFIN", Bosnia & Herzegovina)

WORKSHOP 3.C

Performance Monitoring and Benchmarking: The Role of Information in Improving MFI Performance

This workshop will focus on the how and why of performance monitoring and benchmarking both at the MFI and network level. Building on previous workshops presented by the MIX in collaboration with MFC, this workshop will provide insight into interpreting and using customized benchmarking reports. It will also draw upon several examples of how and why networks are currently working with MFC/MIX to strengthen their performance monitoring activities.

Facilitators: Matt Graham (Analyst, MIX- Microfinance Information eXchange, USA), Justyna Pytkowska (Researcher, Microfinance Centre for CEE and the NIS)

WORKSHOP 3.D

Achieving Social and Financial Institutional Goals through the Establishment of Partnerships in Microfinance

The workshop will explore how different models of partnerships in microfinance can contribute to the realization of institutional goals and more effective client service. Jeff Ferry will address the myths of MFI partnerships with banks, and discuss why microfinance institutions may consider establishing partnerships with banks and the different (partnership) options they may consider. Next, case studies based on the experience of other regions will be presented to address the following issues:

- * reasons for establishment of partnerships and how to identify the partners;
- * the possible structure of partnerships and role of partners;
- * the impact of partnerships on MFI clients and institutions.

The representative for XacBank will present its assistance to the creation of 17 savings and credit cooperatives in 17 rural Mongolian soums (smallest administrative division in rural areas). Elissa McCarter will focus on CHF's experience with AMEEN in Lebanon and will provide an overview of the structure of the bank partnership model, the reasons for its initial establishment and evolution over time, and the lessons learned to date. Since 1998 AMEEN has disbursed, more than 29,000 loans and \$36 million in capital, of which \$26.5 million has been a contribution in the form of bank capital through three bank partnerships. Paolo Vitali will present some promising models to capture remittances.

Facilitator: Jeff Ferry (Chief of Party, Georgia Microfinance Stabilization and Enhancement, CHEMONICS, Georgia)

Panelists: Bat-Ochir Dugersuren (CFO, XacBank, Mongolia), Elissa McCarter (Director of Development Finance, CHF International, Romania), Paolo Vitali (Giordano Dell' Amore Foundation, Italy)

Workshop Session 4 - Friday, May 27 at 14:25 – 15:55

WORKSHOP 4.A

Emergency Loans: the Other Side of Microcredit

Microcredit is known for its valuable contribution to poverty alleviation and to a lesser extent job creation. Yet enterprise loans only fulfill half of credit's poverty alleviating potential. When considering the needs of the poorest households -- equally if not more

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important are emergency loans that allow them to gain a smooth pathway to both income and consumption.

The movement out of poverty fostered by microenterprise credit is slow and patchy. Poor people do not emerge from poverty just because they have received a few income-generating loans. Any livelihood improvements that do occur are precarious; they can easily be reversed by shocks to the household that affect income, expenses or both. Sustainable poverty alleviation typically requires, among other things, access to financial services that enables the poor to manage risks.

The workshop will explain the developmental and commercial reasons for offering consumption or emergency loans to the low-income market. It will outline responsible strategies to avoid client over-indebtedness and minimize credit risk, and it will illustrate these approaches through fascinating case studies from the region.

Facilitator: Craig Churchill (Senior Expert, International Labour Organization, Switzerland)

Panelists: Bat-Ochir Dugersuren (CFO, XacBank, Mongolia), Shalkar Zhussupov (General Director, KCLF, Kazakhstan), Ivona Planinic (Finance Manager, Prizma, Bosnia & Herzegovina)

WORKSHOP 4.B

How Can Governments Help – or Harm – Microfinance?

The effectiveness of microfinance as a development and poverty reduction tool has attracted the attention of many governments. Unfortunately, good intentions on the part of governments don't always translate into good governmental interventions. Governments **do** have a role in creating sound conditions for microfinance to flourish, but they can also take steps that impede or even stop the development of the sector. This presentation and discussion will explore constructive roles of governments in supporting the three levels of the financial system: micro (retail institutions), meso (apex and supporting services), and macro (policy, regulation and supervision). It will also touch on how donors – and even practitioners – can help ensure that governments play a **constructive** role.

Presenters: Timothy R. Lyman (President and Executive Director, Day, Berry & Howard Foundation and Legal Advisor, CGAP, USA), Eric Duflos (Microfinance Specialist, CGAP, USA)

WORKSHOP 4.C

How to Make a Rural Credit Product Work? Approaches to the Assessment of the Rural Market

Entering rural areas involves high institutional risks connected with the differences from, urban considerations (weather risks, cash flow patterns, remoteness, density, etc.). This fact implies the importance of market research that would enhance market intelligence and inform decisions aiming at risk mitigation. However, to conduct research cost-effectively a practitioner has to be equipped with the knowledge about different options, opportunities and costs.

After the introduction, which aimed at exploring the rationale for market assessment in rural areas, the following research options within the product development process will be presented by a MFC researcher with regard to their purposes and suggested methodology:

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1. The feasibility study;
2. Exploratory market research;
3. Product concept test;
4. Quantitative market survey aiming at demand estimations;
5. Pilot test monitoring;

The introduction will be based on MFC research experience gained during the Imp-Act and SEEP PLP projects. As soon as listeners get acquainted with the various research possibilities, practical experiences will be discussed with an attempt to reply to questions about the costs and benefits of market assessment in rural areas. MDF-Kamurj will present its research and pilot testing efforts for shifting microfinance organization from a sharply urban focus toward a new and challenging expansion to rural areas and development of a rural lending product - "Swallow" loan, which was undertaken in conjunction with the SEEP PLP project. EKI will present a process of conducting market research, piloting and rolling out a new micro loan for very poor rural clients.

Facilitator: Dorota Szubert (Researcher, Microfinance Centre for CEE and the NIS)
Presenters: Gagik Vardanyan (Executive Director, MDF-Kamurj, Armenia), Sadina Bina (Executive Director, EKI, Bosnia & Herzegovina)

WORKSHOP 4.D

Performance Monitoring for MFI Managers – International Reporting, Analysis and Monitoring Framework and Tool for MFIs

The workshop will introduce the SEEP Framework, which is a result of SEEP's Financial Services Working Group, and several years of consultation with industry stakeholders, including donors, rating agencies, investors, and others. The panel will introduce the standard templates for Reporting, the SEEP 18 Ratios, and a new tool under development from the developers of Microfin that will help managers to monitor performance. The panel of industry representatives will discuss the implications for the MFIs and the next steps in promoting the framework as a global standard for sharing information across institutions.

Facilitator: Tillman Bruett (Partner, ACT – Alternative Credit Technologies, USA)
Panelists: Maria Stephens (SEEP Financial Services Working Group, USA), Minh Huy-Lai (Director, PlaNet Rating, France), Ken Vander Weele (MFC Chair and Chief Operating Officer, Opportunity International, Austria), Lynne Curran (Leader of ACCION CAMEL Team, Senior Director & Project Manager, ACCION International, USA)

Friday, May 27 at 16:30 – 18:00

Special Event

Note: Non-member MFIs can Attend as observers

MFC Membership Meeting

This meeting is for members of the MFC network. The agenda of the meeting includes:

- Reporting for 2004
- Presentation of 2005 plans
- The election of two new board members
- Discussion on the membership issues



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FRIDAY, MAY 27 AT 20:00

ROMANIA NIGHT – DINNER HOSTED BY MICROFINANCE COALITION ROMANIA

Romania Night will take place at **McMoni's restaurant**, located near a lake in Bucharest's largest and most beautiful park, **Herastrau**, adjacent to the Crowne Plaza Hotel. During Romania Night, attendees will be served a traditional Romanian meal and be entertained by traditional musicians and dancers. Additionally, there will be displays of traditional crafts and foods for purchase and sampling.

Address:
28, Marasti Blvd.
Sector 1, Bucharest

Workshop Session 5 - Saturday, May 28 at 9:00 – 10:30

WORKSHOP 5.A

Ratings for MFIs: WHY and HOW to get a Rating?

This workshop will discuss the benefits of ratings for MFIs, using one MFI as a case-study. ACCION CAMEL instrument will be presented as a tool to assess the financial health and overall performance of the MFI. The ACCION CAMEL™ measures the **Capital adequacy, Asset quality, Management, Earnings and Liquidity** of microfinance institutions (MFIs). **The ACCION CAMEL™:**

- Provides MFIs with an accurate and comprehensive diagnosis of financial performance relative to microfinance industry standards
- Identifies institutional weaknesses and pinpoints areas for improvement (especially if the MFI is considering transforming itself into a regulatory institution)
- Guides management decisions as well as the efforts of technical assistance teams
- Provides funders and potential investors with an objective method to evaluate and verify an MFI's performance

Participants from CEE/NIS countries will find out how to obtain support to fund their ratings through the Rating Fund.

Facilitator: Olga Tomilova (Deputy Director and Training & Consulting Unit Manager, Microfinance Centre for CEE and the NIS)

Panelists: Shalkar Zhusupov (General Director, KCLF, Kazakhstan), Lynne Curran (Leader of ACCION CAMEL Team, Senior Director & Project Manager, ACCION International, USA), Perrine Pouget (Rating Fund Administrator, ADA, Luxembourg)

WORKSHOP 5.B

Market Access: More Critical than Finance Access? Launching the Debate

In more advanced CEE/NIS economies, accessing the market may be more difficult than accessing credit. We would like to share a promising experience in facilitating market

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access for micro-entrepreneurs that Integra has developed in Slovakia, Romania and Serbia.

Facilitator: Allan Bussard (Managing Director, The Integra Foundation, Slovakia)
Panelists: Miroslava Vacvalova (Program Manager, The Integra Foundation, Slovakia), Florica Chereches (Executive Director, Association Integra Romania), Eniko Malacea (Executive Director, Integra Romania Brasov Branch Association), Zdravka Soskic (Executive Director, Integra Partner, Serbia)

WORKSHOP 5.C

Listening to Clients

The "Listening to Clients" Series is a groundbreaking and interactive market research training for microfinance practitioners. It combines the MicroSave "Market Research for Microfinance (PRA) toolkits and the Aims/SEEP Client Assessment toolkit in 14 training modules. The "Listening to Clients" uses a highly effective and user friendly video-CD and DVD-ROM formats. The series is presented using PowerPoint and an embedded video. The workshop will introduce participants to the series by showing selected modules and using participatory exercises.

Presenter: Monique Cohen (President, Microfinance Opportunities, USA)

WORKSHOP 5.D

Using Product Costing Tools to Boost Your Efficiency

Maximizing efficiency is key, both for product profitability and client service excellence. In an increasingly competitive market environment the active usage of product-costing tools becomes an important success factor for any microfinance institution or bank. In this workshop we will explore process mapping and activity-based costing methods and discuss the cost-efficient practical application of them. The potential of product costing exercises will be discussed based on reference cases from Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Peru and Bolivia.

Presenters: Christian Ruehmer (Director, Deutsche Bank, USA), Michael Fiebig (Director for Business Development, Kasabank, Kosovo), Jim Reiff (Chief Executive Officer, PShM/Opportunity International, Albania)

Workshop Session 6 - Saturday, May 28 at 11:30 – 13:00

WORKSHOP 6.A

Establishing an Effective and Professional Supervisory Mechanism for Credit Unions

Regulation and supervision are critical to protecting the savings of credit union members. This workshop will explore concepts, strategies, techniques and lessons learned for creating effective monitoring and supervision mechanisms that allow for safe development of credit unions and establish adequate control over systemic and other risks ever present in financial intermediation in order to preserve the integrity and security of a country's financial system.

Presenter: Normunds Mizis (Project Director, World Council of Credit Unions, Uzbekistan)



Workshop 6.B Innovative E-training for Microfinance

Under the PEMTE project (Pedagogical Environment for Microfinance Multicultural Training E-content) supported by the EU, MFC developed the e-modules of an online training "Foundations for sustainable microfinance".

The aim of the project was to create a new training environment combining face-to-face training and Web-based training. Online training can be very useful especially in knowledge acquisition and skills development.

Working on one of the modules during the workshop will be followed by a discussion on how this innovative tool can be used.

Presenters: Olga Tomilova (Deputy Director & Training and Consulting Unit Manager, Microfinance Centre for CEE and the NIS), Didier Krumm (Training and Technical Support Deputy Director, PlaNet Finance, France)

WORKSHOP 6.C

The Changing Context for USAID Microenterprise and Microfinance Assistance: Implications for NGO Practitioners

The purpose of this session will be to discuss the AID context, trends, challenges and opportunities, and new instruments for securing funds for financial services and enterprise development activities.

- Trends that may be discussed, among others, include: (1) mission staffing changes, (2) strategy and program trends, such as fitting microenterprise activities within larger multi-component private sector programs, (3) implications of USAID's overall shifts in strategic priorities.
- The challenges and opportunities facing microfinance practitioners in the near term including (1) developing the capacity to monitor and compete for USAID cooperative agreements and contracts, (2) and, to diversify services to match USAID demand.
- We will conclude by briefly introducing new programs and activities of USAID's office of Microenterprise Development.

By the end, the audience will have a clearer understanding of the trends affecting financing for poor households and microenterprise development, and what can be done to capitalize on these trends.

Facilitator: Kate McKee (Director, Microenterprise Division, USAID, USA)

Presenter: John Seong (Director, Economic Restructuring Office, USAID, Bosnia & Herzegovina)

Workshop 6.D Staying Ahead of the Competition

Increasing competition in microfinance markets around the globe has heightened the need for a more systematic and rigorous approach to tracking and interpreting the market signals around us. What does it take to compete in the most saturated MFI market in the region? What does it take to compete against world-class banks?

WWB has adapted the latest tools and frameworks from corporate strategies to the microfinance industry and has employed these tools with Network Members in the region.



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"Success of Microfinance: How do We Use this Success to Maximize Benefits for Clients"

Come learn about a sequence of quick and yet insightful analyses you can implement in your own markets to determine how to competitively position your institution for long-term success.

Presenters: Anna Gincherman (Relationship Manager for EE and MENA, Women's World Banking, USA), Harsha Thadhani Rodrigues (Senior Associate, Strategy, Women's World Banking, USA)

MAY 26 – 28 AT 8:30 – 20:00
MARAMURES CRAFT FAIR

Throughout the conference a Maramures Craft Fair will take place at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. Participants will be able to browse through a wide variety of centuries-old traditional and modern crafts made by Romanian artisans from the world-famous region of Maramures and to shop for unique handmade souvenirs.