

## “USAID Taught Us To Identify Our Problems”



Photo: GRASP

Constantin Mitrica, Mayor of Gostavatu in Romania, displays his flip chart page of priorities at a USAID workshop.

“Suddenly I understood. This wasn’t a charity, a place you could go with a couple of empty bags, fill them up with money, go home to the village and solve all your problems. First and foremost, GRASP taught you how to identify your problems and how to set them in order - which are more important, which are less important, what the solutions are.”

- Mayor Constantin Mitrica

Local government officials in Romania who participate in GRASP, USAID’s local government training program, learn the usefulness of letting their constituents become involved in budget planning and community goal setting.

Constantin Mitrica, Mayor of Gostavatu, who attended the training says he enjoys his job more than ever and sees concrete accomplishments. According to the Mayor, action on projects is based on requests of the citizens at public meetings. “The projects are important, but we couldn’t have implemented them on our local budget. And here USAID helped us enormously. The six hundred million Lei (\$18,670) provided for the first stage of the road paving project - that’s an extraordinary thing for us. We couldn’t have done it alone.”

Gostavatu’s paving project will cover 18.5 km of road with additional plans to build a road and a bridge over the main irrigation canal in Gostavatu. Farmers will be able to transport grain from the fields to storage facilities, and there will be easier access to railway stations and national roads. Currently, a trip to Traianu takes two hours but will decrease to twenty minutes once the road is paved, and the trip will be a much safer drive.