

PROGRES

IN MAKING THE DIFFERENCE



PROGRES

IN MAKING THE DIFFERENCE

ABBREVIATIONS

AOR	Area Of Responsibility
CFCU	Department for Contracting and Financing of EU Funded Programmes
CFP	Calls For Proposals
CIF	Citizens' Involvement Fund
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSS	Citizens' Satisfaction Survey
DEU	Delegation Of The European Union
DRP	Detailed Regulation Plan
EU	European Union
EU PROGRES	European Partnership With Municipalities Programme
FIDIC	International Federation Of Consulting Engineers
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GE	Gender Equality
GEM	Gender Equality Mechanisms
GG	Good Governance
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
HACCP	Hazard Analysis And Critical Control Points
IPA	Instrument For Pre-Accession Assistance
LAP	Local Action Plan
LIP	Large Infrastructure Projects
LSG	Local Self-Government
MEI	Ministry Of European Integration
MSE	Medium and Small Enterprises
NALED	National Alliance For Local Economic Development
NES	National Employment Service
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PRAG	Practical Guide To Contract Procedures For EU External Actions
SCTM	Standing Conference Of Towns And Municipalities
SCO	Swiss Cooperation Office
SDC	Swiss Development and Corporation Office
SIP	Small Infrastructure Projects
SME	Small And Medium Enterprise
UNOPS	United Nations Office For Project Services

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TANGIBLE CHANGE



Graeme Tyndall

European PROGRES Programme Manager

Here we are, at the end of our engagement in a diverse, intense and strategic partnership with 34 municipalities in the South East and South West Serbia. Over the past three years Serbia powered through recovery from floods, four election periods, migration crises, natural disasters to name a few. This required vigour, flexibility, adjustments, patience and dedication of our committed team and beneficiaries, and these challenges have been met head on.

As strong promoters and practitioners of participatory approach, we can say that together with our donors, the European Union and the Government of Switzerland and partners – the Government of Serbia’s line ministries, especially the Ministry of European Integration and Local Self-government (LSGs), non-governmental and international organisations, existing and future business people and all of the people in the Programme area, we have indeed achieved a lot.

As a result, we can now showcase tangible results of 254 projects in improved local governance capacities, better conditions for infrastructure development, more conducive environment for business expansion and enhanced social inclusion.

In line with progress that Serbia achieved on the World Bank’s Doing Business and Global Competiveness Forum ranking lists, European PROGRES contributed to improvement of the Municipal Competitiveness Index in 31 beneficiary LSGs primarily due to enhanced management of resources, improved urban planning and construction, strengthened local economic development capacities, and better policies in social affairs.¹ The citizens are more satisfied with the work of local self-governments than when the Programme started, they trust local institutions more and recognise gradual improvement of living standard – these may be indicators of European PROGRES’ contribution to some positive changes at the local level.²

¹ The Competiveness Study of 34 Municipalities in the South East and South West Serbia was conducted in early 2014 to provide baseline indicators for measurement of the Programme’s contribution to objectives. The Programme monitored and analysed the changes of the municipal competitiveness index in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017.

² European PROGRES, and its predecessor, EU PROGRES, conducted Citizens’ Satisfaction Surveys in 2010, 2013, and 2017, which enabled the Programme to monitor the trends related to citizens’ perceptions of local self-government performance and situation in their communities.

Distinguishing unemployment as the key challenge, the Programme strived to create the foundation for generation of economic activity. We supported establishment of 96 enterprises and helped 32 established businesses to enhance competitiveness. Our support directly enabled employment of over 700 people full time and 255 temporary. The Programme's assistance to development of technical and planning documentation, and several construction projects related to industrial zones have complemented efforts of the Government and LSGs to facilitate investments. The created project pipeline worth 29 million Euros and developed urban documentation for the key industrial and touristic zones is instrumental for economic boost of the entire area, if there is an adequate follow up.

The construction or reconstruction of education, social, and health facilities, and improvement of communal infrastructure indeed improves quality of people's lives. We are, however, proud that our contribution

was more than "cement and bricks", as in parallel with beneficiary municipalities we developed or revised local regulations that enable the use of buildings in accountable, transparent, efficient, participatory and non-discriminatory manner. This is what enhancing Good Governance in the LSGs was all about.

Last, but not the least, the European PROGRES' social inclusion benefited 7,570 vulnerable people, primarily women and Roma, through economic empowering or facilitation of employment, enhancing access to health and education, improving access to public services and enabling them to exercise fundamental rights.

The pages that follow will present a fragment of the accomplished work. Although the results are impressive the wheels of overall development locally and globally are notoriously slow to turn. It was our goal to contribute to the much larger, national and regional efforts and

we should be proud of what we have achieved – together.

It was a privilege to be a part of European PROGRES. I hope you will find this publication a good tool to measure our success and to further build upon the presented results in the future.

On behalf of European PROGRES' team and myself I thank all our partners for dedicated and unfaltering support.

Sincerely,
Graeme Tyndall





Sem Fabrizi

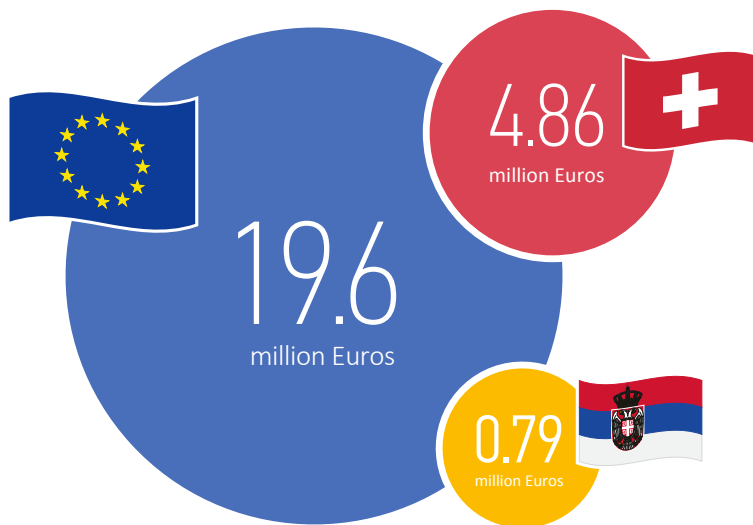
H.E. Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia

European Union taxpayers allocate 200 million Euros a year to support Serbia on its road to EU integration. Through European PROGRES these funds go directly towards attaining European standards in education, social integration and the economic future in South East and South West Serbia that will ultimately benefit all Serbian citizens.

ABOUT EUROPEAN PROGRES

European PROGRES was designed as an area based development Programme intended to assist sustainable growth of 34 underdeveloped municipalities in the South East and South West Serbia. The Programme contributed to strengthening local governance, creating a friendly environment for development of infrastructure and businesses, and enhancing implementation of the social inclusion and employment policies.

BUDGET AND PARTNERS



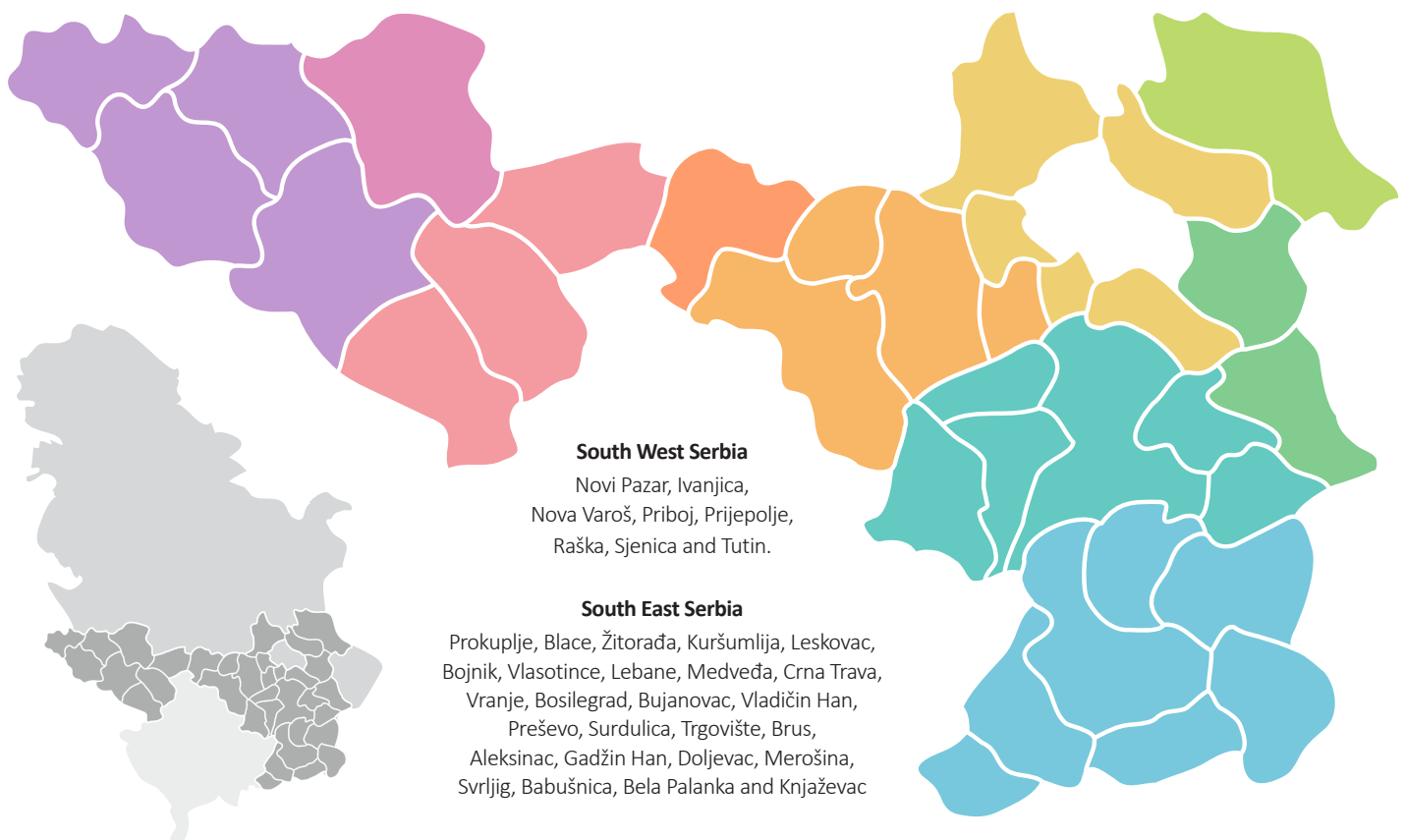
European PROGRES was a multi-donor Programme, financed by the European Union (EU), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Government of Serbia.

The Programme preparation and consultations on the national and local level were led by the Ministry of European Integration (MEI)³ while the Programme was implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and 34 municipalities in the South West and South East Serbia.

- European Union contributed 19.6 million Euros
- Government of Switzerland provided 4.86 million of Euros
- Seven million Euros from the overall budget was devoted for the priority infrastructure projects implemented directly through the Central Contract and Finance Unit (CFCU)
- The Government of Serbia, through line ministries and municipalities, co-funding was 787,068 Euros⁴

³ The Ministry of European Integration was formed on 27 June 2017 formally replacing the European Integration Office of the Government of the Republic of Serbia (SEIO)

⁴ Listed co-funding was generated only through the part of European PROGRES implemented by UNOPS. Additional co-funding has been / will be generated through part of the European PROGRES implemented by the CFCU.



PROGRAMME SCOPE



European PROGRES focussed its assistance in the Serbian European integration process and support of equal socio-economic development in four result areas:

- STRENGTHENED LOCAL GOVERNANCE
- COMPETITIVENESS OF LOCAL ECONOMY
- SOCIAL INCLUSION
- COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS



83

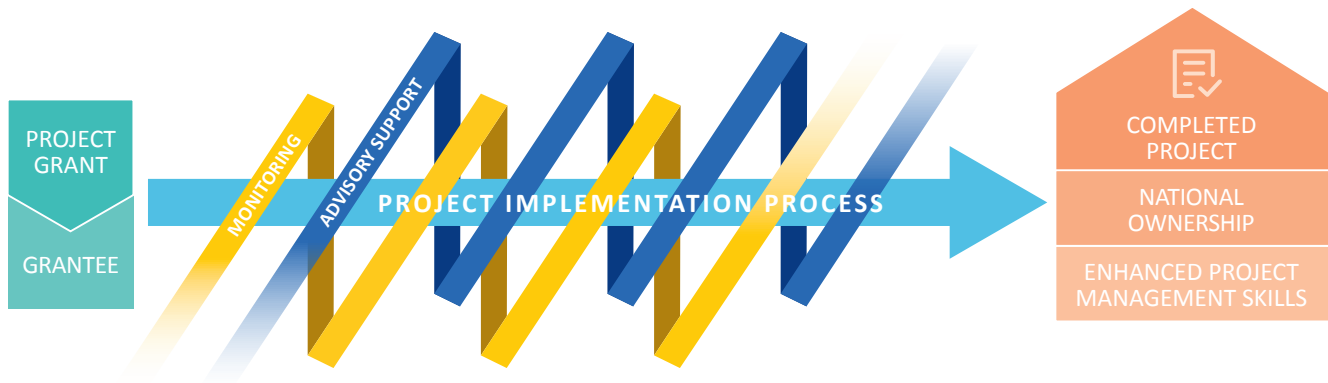


93



78

EUROPEAN PROGRES GRANT METHODOLOGY



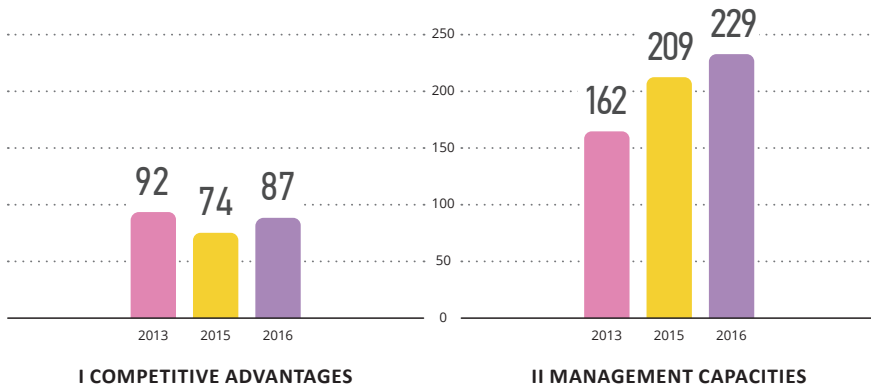


Jadranka Joksimović

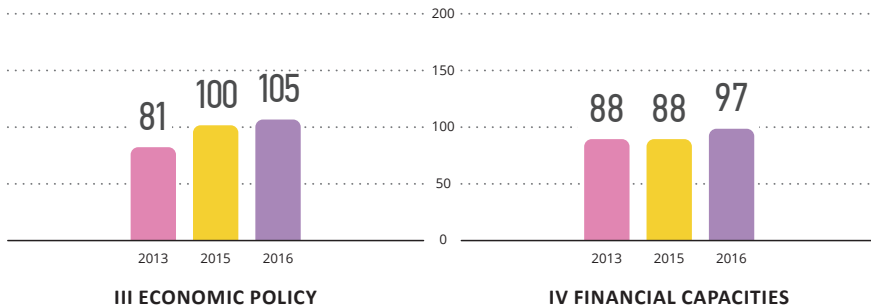
Republic of Serbia Minister of European Integration

Balanced regional development is one of the main goals of the European Integration which requires empowerment of the key carriers of this process - the local self-governments, small and medium enterprises and citizens. Only in this manner Serbia can be a functional member of the EU, while the citizens can feel the tangible benefits of the European integration.

DIFFERENCE MADE



The Programme tracked Competitiveness of LSGs by assisting in collection and upload of relevant data into the Competitiveness Portal, an online tool specifically designed for this purpose. With the Programme’s support, data was collected for years 2013/2014, 2015/2016 and 2017/2018. Compared to 2013/2014, the cumulative data confirms a 22 percent increase in competitiveness levels in 31 LSGs.

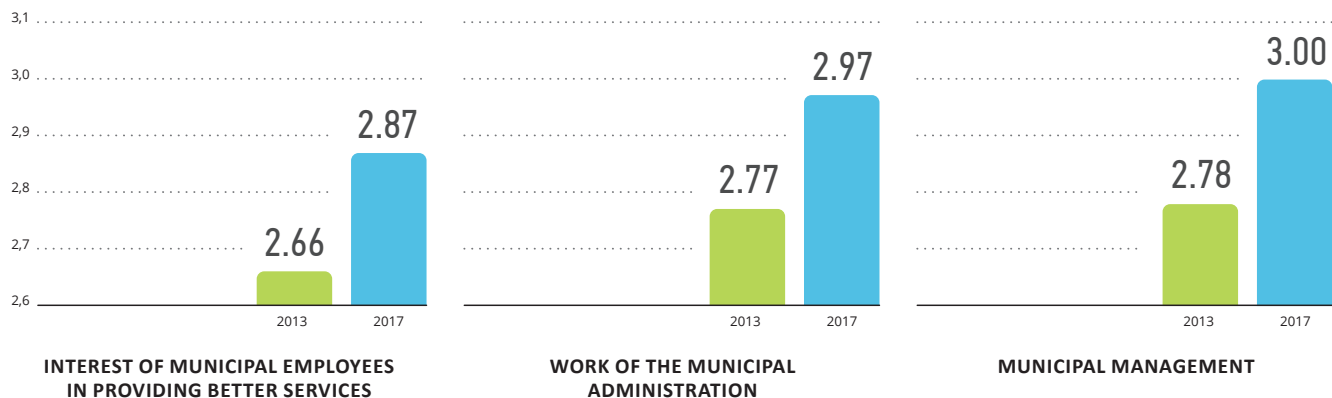


Results of the most recent of the three Citizens’ Satisfaction Surveys conducted between 2010 and 2017 show that there has been a constant upward trend in the

number of respondents who feel the local authorities take their interests into account and provide services appropriate to their needs.

Another positive finding is the growth in optimism about the political situation which has grown to all time high at the end of 2017.

AVERAGE RATING OF THE MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION





STRENGTHENED LOCAL GOVERNANCE

European PROGRES forged durable partnerships with the local self-governments (LSGs) and worked on strengthening local planning and management capacities while simultaneously improving relevant legal framework, procedures and processes in line with the principles of good governance.





Philippe Guex

H.E. Ambassador of Switzerland to Serbia

Switzerland, using the tailor made approach, has made a transfer of good governance principles to a number of local self-governments in Serbia, ultimately contributing to their increased legitimacy when it comes to shaping the life of the citizens and the communities.

PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF CAPITAL INVESTMENTS

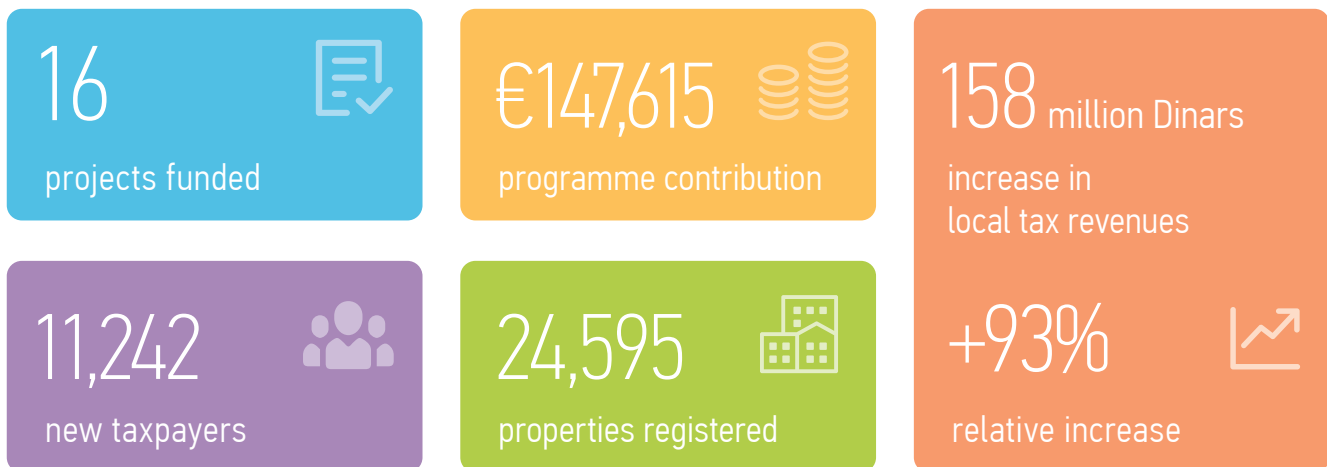
The Programme’s technical assistance (TA) for budget preparation and simplification of capital investment cycle was introduced in 15 municipalities thus providing LSGs with tools for long term and effective identification, development, and funding of local capital projects. Fifteen **Programme Budgets (PBs)** and **Capital Investment Plans (CIPs)** were developed.

The analysis of effects of these activities showed that the LSGs with CIPs more effectively developed and funded capital projects while those municipalities that received TA for preparation of Programme Budgets were more successful in ensuring citizens’ participation as they conducted 45 actions in the budget planning process, while using more versatile approaches, including the Internet and Budget Surveys.

IMPROVED REGISTRY OF TAX PAYERS

The Programme supported revenue collection, through update of local tax related data bases in 16 municipalities. As a result, 24,595 tax eligible properties and 11,242 new tax payers were registered which enabled beneficiary LSGs⁵ to increase 2016 property tax revenue by 158 million Dinars or by 93 percent compared to the baseline from 2013.

SUPPORT TO LOCAL TAX OFFICES



⁵ Aleksinac, Babušnica, Bela Palanka, Blace, Crna Trava, Gadžin Han, Priboj, Prijepolje, Trgovište, Vladičin Han, Ivanjica, Raška, Bosilegrad, Tutin, Preševo, Bujanovac



DRPs: BLUEPRINTS OF FUTURE SUCCESS

Detailed regulation plans are the blueprints for potentially high impact municipal projects. In a short time after DRPs were developed through European PROGRES, first results were seen through realised investments.

DRP for industrial zone in Vlasotince resulted in investment of 2.2 million Euros and enabled development of technical design and construction of the new production facilities of a manufacturer of electronic devices that will also create 250 new jobs.

In Ivanjica two produced DRPs were immediately put to work. DRP for industrial zone Senjak enabled the design and four million Euros investment into construction of the four gas network – a precondition necessary for the existing textile factory within the zone to construct new facility and increase production. The factory will also be eligible to obtain certificate for use of ecological resources that will improve competitiveness of their products. Upon completion of works, the textile company will enable creation of 250 new jobs.

Another DRP, Tourist-Recreational Area Jakovića Polje in Ivanjica realised investment of 220.000 Euros for the development of main design for the local sports hall.

Overall, the quality planning documentation, which is a result of transparent and participatory process, indeed facilitates development and is one of key steps in facilitation of industry investments.



Zoran Lazović
Mayor of Ivanjica

The process of adopting plans set up by European PROGRES in accordance with the prescribed legal regulations helped us to establish dialogue between all stakeholders, and in return expedite the local projects and achieve better results.

DETAILED REGULATION PLANS

Recognising that the new investments in the infrastructure are directly conditioned with the existence of Detailed regulation plans (DRPs) the Programme supported LSGs in development and adoption of 36 DRPs covering the area of 2,038 hectares in 22 LSGs. Amongst others this includes 18 DRPs for development of industrial zones⁶ and 16 DRPs that provide foundation for valorisation and preservation of natural and cultural heritage and tourism development.⁷

The early public views at the start of the process, granted participation of all stakeholders - developers, investors, and citizens which in turn led to design of urban policy development tailored to the local needs aligned with the national legislation and the European Union (EU). Additionally, e-governance tools such as a dedicated web page about the plans and email addresses for queries were set up to increase transparency in the drafting process. LSGs were encouraged to consider received inputs to improve both the quality of the consultations and the final products while the time required for adoption of DRPs was significantly reduced.

In 2017 the approach received public acclaim as three DRPs developed through the Programme received awards at 26th Niš International Urban Planners Exhibition - Šehovica Polje in Prijepolje, Oblačino Lake in Merošina, and in the category of nature and environment protection through studies, research and projects, Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment of the DRP Corridor Infrastructure in the Spatial Plan of the Nature Park "Golija" won the third place.

Finally, to capture the best practices and lessons learned through implementation, European PROGRES issued "Stimulating Local Sustainable and Economic Development through Preparation of Detailed Regulation Plans" publication.

⁶ Babušnica, Blace, Bela Palanka, Ivanjica, Leskovac, Raška, Svrlijig, Tutin, Vlasotince, Vranje

⁷ Ivanjica, Knjaževac, Brus, Merošina Lebane, Surdulica, Kraljevo, Raška, Novi Pazar and Sjenica



DETAILED REGULATION PLANS

13 
IMPROVEMENTS
FOR EXISTING BUSINESS

9 
ESTABLISHMENT OF
CONDITIONS FOR INVESTMENT

8 
REVITALISATION
OF DEPRIVED AREAS

5 
PROTECTED AREAS

1 
REHABILITATIONS
OF BROWNFIELD SITES

36 
TOTAL DRPs

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS)

European PROGRES supported development of Geographic Information Systems in 12 LSGs. This information technology tool enables municipalities to collect, process and manage spatial data. Once established, GIS enhances development planning, utility and resource management, decision-making, and provision of information to the public and potential investors.

Efforts were made to ensure GIS **sustainability** – in addition to equipment and trainings, support was provided for adoption of municipal decisions and internal protocols including the GIS action plans. Additionally, the draft Rulebook for the use of GIS equipment was developed to provide guidelines to LSGs for transparent, efficient, and sustainable use of this tool.

FIDIC AND PRAG TRAININGS

The Programme focussed on the increase of municipal capacities to handle contracting, contract management monitoring and evaluation of infrastructure projects by organising a series of trainings on the International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC) contract modality and Practical Guide to Contract Procedures for EU External Actions (PRAG).

LOCAL GOVERNANCE REFORMS

Within local governance reforms, the Programme developed five reform packages in order to contribute to enhanced transparency, improved planning, strengthened accountability, more efficient management of public assets, and enhance citizens' soft participation. The reforms were implemented in 13 municipalities⁸ through adoption/revision of 21 local regulations.

The activities focussed on the implementation of Guidelines for Development of Public Administration Websites and Establishment of Electronic Government Services were conducted in cooperation with the Office for Information Technology and E-Government and Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit (SIPRU) team and resulted in 13 municipalities⁹ developing action plans to advance and three municipalities¹⁰ to introduce 17 different, public administration related online services.

⁸ Babušnica, Bela Palanka, Blace, Bojnik, Crna Trava, Lebane, Medveđa, Merošina, Nova Varoš, Prijepolje, Raška, Tutin and Vlasotince

⁹ Nova Varoš, Ivanjica, Raška, Novi Pazar, Raška, Tutin, Brus, Kuršumlija, Babušnica, Crna Trava, Lebane, Medveđa, Vlasotince, Surdulica

¹⁰ Novi Pazar, Raška, Ivanjica



INCREASED COMPETITIVENESS OF LOCAL ECONOMY

Within efforts to enhance local competitiveness European PROGRES facilitated 1.7 million Euros investment towards support to local governments, to enhance quality of services they provide to citizens and businesses, while in parallel creating conditions for development of infrastructure. Assistance was also provided to support development of small and medium enterprises, clusters, entrepreneurship, and agricultural producer groups.





FAST TRACKING ISSUANCE OF BUILDING PERMITS

Following the stipulations of the new Law on Planning and Construction, in partnership with the National Alliance for the Local Economic Development (NALED), European PROGRES provided technical assistance to all 34 municipalities to transit to electronic building permits system (EBPS) by training 472 people and supporting them to upload urban planning documents into the Central Registry of Planning Documentation.

The project contributed to reduction of average time needed for issuance of permits from eight to five working days. e.g, the City of Vranje, where prior to the project only one application was filed electronically, entirely transitioned to the electronic system with 360 applications and the realisation of 93%. Brus, was awarded by NALED as making the greatest progress nationally in processing construction permit applications with 72% improvement compared to the beginning of the project.

Overall, out of 7,000 construction permit applications, 93% were resolved, which is a 13% improvement compared to the start of the project, while the share of negatively resolved applications was reduced from 40% to 16%.



Zorana Mihajlović
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Construction,
Transport and Infrastructure of Serbia

The result of this project is that 34 cities and municipalities in the south of Serbia today issue building permits almost twice as much as the first time an e-permit was introduced, and this region is today among the best in Serbia in this field.

ELECTRONIC BUILDING PERMITS

The Programme, under the patronage of the Ministry of Construction, Transport, and Infrastructure (MCTI) and in partnership with the National Alliance for the Local Economic Development (NALED), successfully supported LSGs to implement electronic building permit system (EBPS). This resulted in reduction of both the average time needed for issuance of a construction permit from eight to five days in 34 European PROGRES LSGs and the share of negatively resolved applications.

DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNICAL DOCUMENTATION

European PROGRES provided grants for development of 40 main designs for the construction of social, communal, environmental and economic infrastructure, i.e. of a pipeline of “ready to build” projects worth 29 million Euros. Seven of 15 local governments who already applied to the Government for funding of projects exceeding 8.6 million Euros, secured budget for implementation of works, in the amount of 3.3 million Euros.

The Programme’s assistance also included grants to LSGs and direct contracts for implementation of 20 infrastructure projects aimed to improve lives of people living in South East and South West Serbia. The projects ensuring better access to health, education, social and communal services, environment protection and business conducive environment will positively impact an estimated 170,000 beneficiaries.

MAIN DESIGNS



40
projects funded



€3.3 million
accessed donors' funds



€321,140
programme contribution



€29 million
created project pipeline



THE COURSE OF SAVINGS

Within continuing flood preventing efforts in South and South West Serbia, the technical documentation for protection from erosion and torrents in the Jablanica, Pčinja, and Vlasina Rivers watersheds created preconditions for works estimated at four million Euros that include construction of 27 anti-erosion barriers to reduce the risk of torrential flooding in eleven LSGs.¹¹

Since 2010, during European PROGRES and its predecessor Programmes, 13 barriers together with 650 metres of wattle-fence dams and afforestation of 200 hectares and replanting grass on 18.5 hectares of land were completed on the Raška River basin protection in Novi Pazar. This integrated approach to flood prevention and protection justified its purpose in 2014, and reaffirmed it in 2016, when the City was sheltered from the floods which befell Serbia.

During the last project phase, 250,000 Euros were invested into the construction of five barriers on five rivers in South West Serbia.

¹¹ Lebane, Medveđa, Vlasotince, Crna Trava, Babušnica, Surdulica, Gadžin Han, Bela Palanka, Trgovište, Bujanovac and Vranje



Nihat Biševac
Mayor of Novi Pazar

This project additionally strengthen the protection of the Novi Pazar citizens and their property from floods and it's safe to say that this has improved quality of life of all of us living here.



Michael Davenport

H.E. Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia 2014-2017

The small and medium-sized enterprises in the EU countries play a leading role in the economy, job creation, and drive economic growth. This is why the EU provides support precisely to this sector for the implementation of entrepreneurial ideas.

SUPPORT TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP

European PROGRES strived to support entrepreneurship and enhance competitiveness of SMEs through introduction of international quality standards, innovations, provision of business start-up grants, and donation of equipment. In line with this, half a million Euros was invested into launching 93 new start-up businesses, while three social enterprises were established through grants to partnership projects of civil society organisations and local governments.

Support to women entrepreneurship resulted in registration of 43 businesses and employment of 92 people. Similarly, through support to small and medium Enterprises (SMEs) the Programme contributed to enhanced competitiveness of local businesses and opening of jobs, while directly enabling the beneficiaries to enhance productivity and reduce operational costs. The support to Micro and Small-sized Enterprises (MSEs) through the provision of equipment to 16 MSEs generated new business and opening of 43 new jobs. The beneficiary MSEs invested 60,000 Euros of their funds into corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects, hence ensuring welfare for the society and directly benefitting 9,000 vulnerable people.



PRODUCTION



FOOD PROCESSING



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



SERVICES





FAMILY
BUSINESS
“DAIRY
VELIČKOVIĆ”

Through the support of Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs), European PROGRES sought to increase employment and contribute to the value chain of local suppliers, the expansion of the market and higher productivity of the entire business community in Serbia.

Family “Dairy Veličković” from the village Alakinca near Surdulica has a long tradition in the production of high quality milk and dairy products. This small enterprise managed, in two decades, to develop its production capacity of 1,000 litres of milk per day and five employees to 5,500 litres of milk, 22 employees and 350 retail stores in the country and abroad.

Through European PROGRES, the company received a cooling storage for finished products and accessories, which enabled more efficient use of resources and transportation, reduction in total operating costs and jobs for two more employees.

As the enterprises supported through the Programme were obliged to carry out socially responsible activities, “Dairy Veličković” undertook cleaning of the riverbed of the river Vrla in the village of Alakinca, and in cooperation with the non-government organisation “Life aid”, donated products to the most vulnerable population.



Milan Veličković
Owner of Dairy Veličković

The new equipment from European PROGRES allowed us to increase the volume of transported goods per turn, which reduced the price of products, brought us savings and in this small underdeveloped village created two more jobs.



SOCIAL INCLUSION

Throughout its implementation, European PROGRES effectively addressed issues related to social inclusion by improving access to employment for both men and women, while also assisting local self-governments (LSG) to develop and implement local policies relevant for integration of the most vulnerable and marginalised groups, including national minorities and promotion of cultural heritage and priorities through intercultural dialogue.



SOCIAL INCLUSION OF THE MOST VULNERABLE AND MARGINALISED GROUPS

Ten LSGs were assisted to implement **vocational training** measures from the Local Employment Action Plans, enabling education of 335 unemployed (175 men and 160 women) and facilitating employment of 184 people (112 men and 72 women). The majority of projects were for unemployed youth of up to 30 years, enabling them to acquire the first professional experience.

338 

ROMA TRAINED AND SUPPORTED IN INCOME GENERATION

176 

ROMA CHILDREN IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE OF SERBIAN LANGUAGE AND MATHEMATICS

515 

BENEFICIARIES EDUCATED ON EARLY MARRIAGES AND RECEIVED FREE LEGAL AID

773 

BENEFICIARIES UNDERWENT MEDICAL CHECKS

17 

PEOPLE FROM THREE ROMA FAMILIES IMPROVED HABITATION CONDITIONS

1,928 

BENEFICIARIES HAVE IMPROVED THEIR LIVING AND SAFETY CONDITIONS

10 
grants awarded

€98,429
programme's contribution

€32,120
municipal co-funding

335 trainees
175 men and 160 women

280 certified
144 men and 136 women

184 employed
112 men and 72 women

7 

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

2 

TRAINING FOR KNOWN EMPLOYER

1 

TRAINING FOR THE LABOUR MARKET

Twenty-two **young people** (20 men, two women) registered businesses after their business ideas were selected in an open competition, and they underwent holistic mentorship in all aspects of business management. Additional 19 jobs were created.

Similarly, through the project with the Centre for Social Policy, European PROGRES enabled 28 beneficiaries (17 men and 11 women) from **vulnerable social** groups to register companies and open additional 90 new jobs- 39 of which permanent and 51 temporary.

Sixteen projects for piloting measures from the Strategy for Social **Inclusion of Roma** directly benefited 3,634 persons (1,588 men and 2,046 women): in the area of employment, 338 Roma completed training that enhanced their

employability or were supported in income generation activities; within efforts to enhance education, 176 Roma children improved their knowledge of Serbian language and mathematics, and 65 parents were educated about the importance of educating their children; 515 beneficiaries in the area of social protection had been taught about the consequences of early marriage and regulated statuses through free legal aid; in the area of healthcare, 773 beneficiaries underwent medical checks, while three Roma families improved their living conditions after their houses were adapted; living and safety aspects of 1,928 beneficiaries in settlements were improved through upgrading of sanitary and hygienic conditions and installation of fire protection systems.

The Programme supported 43 partnership projects of **civil society** organisations and LSGs in 24 municipalities which directly benefited 3,300 people with strong focus on the economic empowerment of the vulnerable and improved access to fundamental rights and public services. Four of the municipalities who have benefitted from these projects developed and adopted criteria for transparent and non-discriminatory allocation of funds in the local budget for civil society organisation for the duration of the Programme.

16 projects implemented 

3,634 
Roma as direct beneficiaries
1,588 men and 2,046 women



EL SISTEMA METHODOLOGY

European PROGRES provided close to two million Euros for projects contributing to improvement of the education sector. While most projects dealt with infrastructure, eight were focussed on inclusive education especially benefiting the most vulnerable children.

One of such projects - "Orchestras and Choirs of Hope" included 200 music classes based on the globally recognised El Sistema methodology for over 200 children.

This free classical music education that promotes human opportunity and development for impoverished children was founded in 1975 in Venezuela and has since been adopted by 60 different countries and over four million children and youth world wide. UNESCO declared the programme the world's most successful social inclusion initiative as it aims to both improve musical and interpersonal skills and raises the self-esteem of the participants.

This has been especially important for some 100 Roma children that were a part of the project, implemented by the Music Art Project Association, in partnership with one music school and three primary schools from Vranje, Vranjska Banja and Surdulica, and four Roma civil society organisations from Vranje and the surrounding municipalities. Not only that the music skills were improved, but also there was contribution to reduction of rates of school dropout and youth violence.



Perica Kamberović
Beneficiary

The way we did the exercises was fun. We trained to adjust our musical pitch and learned how to play the instruments as a part of the orchestra. Our parents are very proud of us, as well as the audience.



Jadranka Joksimović
Minister of European Integration

Employment of women and their introduction to the labour market is one of the priorities for the Government of the Republic of Serbia and that is why we are active partners in all activities that aim to improve the social and economic position of women and gender equality.

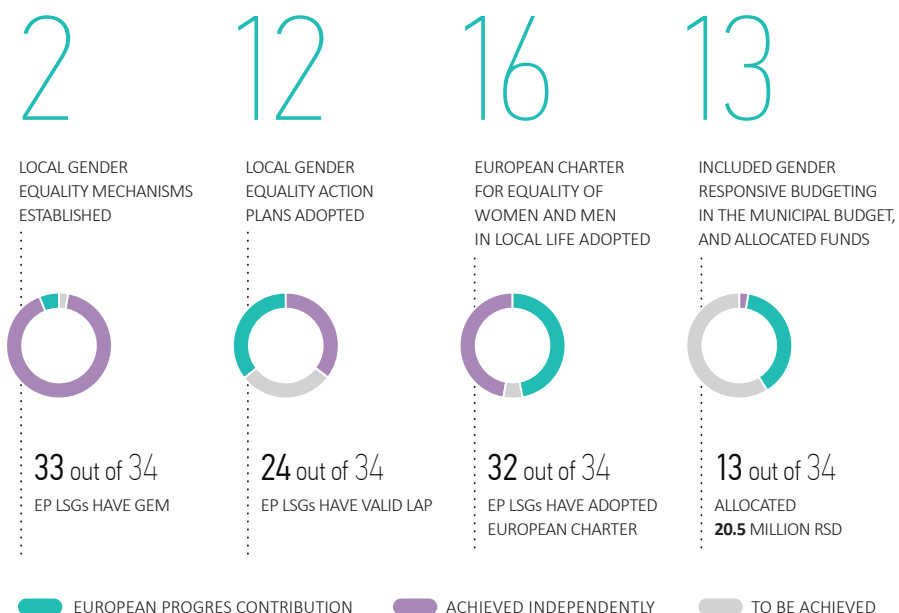
GENDER EQUALITY

In partnership with the UN Women, European PROGRES worked on strengthening the institutional framework for **gender equality**. Twelve of 16 Local Action Plans for Gender Equality that were developed with support of the Programme were adopted. As result of advocacy, 32 municipalities signed the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life. Gender responsive budgeting (GRB) was introduced.

Implementation of 18 projects to support **local gender equality mechanisms** (GEMs) positively affected 1,589 people (1,291 women and 298 men). In the domain of economic empowerment: 149 women enhanced knowledge about entrepreneurship; 28 received material for agricultural production; 15 initiated certification of organic production; and five women received grants for business start-up.

Ten Local Women Councillors Networks (LWCN)¹² gathered 97 female councillors, and produced ten Annual Work Plans and recommendations on improvements of local policies to enhance participation of women in decision-making, and contribute to the improved position of women.

The Programme also provided **medical equipment** for protection of women's reproductive health for healthcare institutions in nine municipalities.¹³ Public awareness raising campaign "Find the Time", among other results, led to 747 women undergoing free gynaecological examinations. Additionally, 60 medical professionals attended a lecture about trends in treatment of malignant diseases.



¹² Aleksinac, Brus, Babušnica, Knjaževac, Medveđa, Merošina, Surdulica, Svrlijig, Priboj and Prijepolje

¹³ Aleksinac, Bela Palanka, Babušnica, Brus, Doljevac, Gadžin Han, Knjaževac, Merošina and Svrlijig



SUN IS WHERE IT IS MOST NEEDED

Working in the least developed municipalities, European PROGRES developed mechanisms to bridge the service provision gap where limited budgets and human capacities inhibited the response of local institutions to diverse needs of its citizens. In majority of such cases, Civil Society Organisations (CSO) were invited to contribute with specialised skills and human resources.

Cerebral Palsy Association from Ivanjica Municipality is one of these organisations. Founded in 2002, and accredited by the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, it evolved into one of the main providers of social services in the municipality where currently there are close to 2,200 people living with disabilities.

Two projects financed with 30,175 Euros through the Citizens' Involvement Fund enabled the Cerebral Palsy Association of Ivanjica to improve the quality of life of over 100 children with disabilities. Better access to health services was secured through occupational and recreational therapy workshops, procurement of new equipment and training of 18 persons to become licenced personal assistants.

The results achieved were so impressive that after the financial support from the Programme ended, the the line Ministry took over funding this programme.



Svetlana Glavinić
President of the Cerebral Palsy Association, Ivanjica

Through this project we empower families and prevent institutionalisation by keeping children within the community, while fully supporting their parents as well.



Ginevski Bufet za Učakivani



UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA
FACULTY OF ARTS
LJUBLJANA

COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

European PROGRES implementation and its benefits for citizens of Serbia, together with the contribution of the European Union and the Government of Switzerland to the development in the Programme area was actively communicated locally and nationally.



Èvröppå, tø ši

Over the years, Programme activities generated over 5,000 media reports, 40 percent of which were in national media. While 110 press releases were prepared and distributed, majority of coverage was generated by more than 50 visits and events attended by high profile officials.

Attention to Programme's social media channels correspondingly grew over the implementation period to reach close to 10,000 followers on Facebook and 1,000 on Twitter. However, European PROGRES website remained the most popular information hub with approximately 5,000 unique visitors per month and 200,000 during the four years.

Simultaneously the Programme ensured that the communication needs of direct beneficiaries were met both per individual activities and target groups.

Four annual art competitions attracted close to 1,000 artworks from high schools in the Programme area inspiring the pupils to depict themes relevant to European values, local development, European integration process and the projects European PROGRES implemented in their towns. The competitions had twofold value – production of the popular Programme Calendar and raising awareness amongst Serbian youth of the European values.

A yearlong European PROGRES information and advocacy campaign themed “Bringing European Integrations Closer to the People in the South East and South West Serbia” started in October 2016 communicated to citizens – youth and media in particular, the benefits of the European integration process and the scope of the EU and Swiss donations to Serbia. Outreach towards Serbian youth took place in ten high-schools, two universities, five stand-alone campaign events and seven local festivals.

“You are Europe” contest for the best ideas to improve lectures and/or student life in high schools attracted 25 submissions from 17 municipalities and 20 high schools. Competition cumulated in “You are Europe” knowledge quiz on the EU integration process where the two winning teams¹⁴ received 100,000 Dinars each to implement the nominated projects.

During the campaign **three media seminars** were held for 68 local and national journalists in Novi Pazar, Niš and Belgrade, improved understanding and facilitated reporting on both accessions and donation methods within the EU integration process. A media seminar for the national media, in Belgrade, was successfully held in cooperation with the Ministry of European Integrations (MEI) while the Head of the Negotiating Team for the Accession of the Republic of Serbia to the EU was a special lecturer.

¹⁴ Ambassadors, Gymnasium from Novi Pazar and “Health Knights” from the Bujanovac High School “Sveti Sava”



Steffen Hudolin
Head of Operations II,
Delegation of European Union to Serbia

It is essential that the citizens of Serbia learn about the opportunities that the European integration process avails. This knowledge opens doors to experiences and skills to effectively advance their communities.

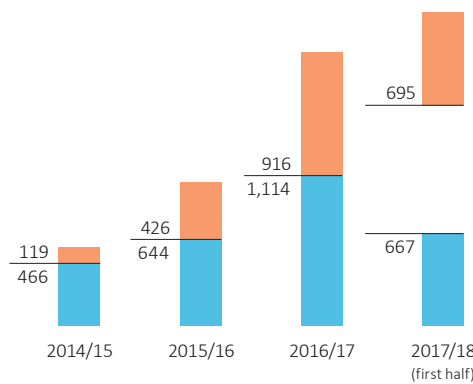
The three-month long **Competition for the Best Media Reports on European Integration in the South East and South West Serbia**, organised in the partnership with the DEU, the SDC and the MEI, officially concluded by selection of eight winners, from 67 submissions covering topics ranging from flood and environment protection, support for the development of agriculture to self-employment of people with disabilities and fighting gender and ethnic prejudices. The winning outlets received equipment to improve technical quality of reporting.

The competition was synergy initiative of the MEI and the DEU, which also organised two study tours for the awarded journalists on reporting on the EU integrations, to Belgrade and Brussels.

During the three years European PROGRES supported **15 local festivals** focussed on youth engagement, culture and inclusion of the most vulnerable, across the Programme area, ensuring that diversity and richness of cultures in the South East and South West Serbia were promoted and upheld.



REPORTS IN LOCAL MEDIA (2,981)



REPORTS IN NATIONAL MEDIA (2,156)



191,000

VISITS IN REPORTING PERIOD



755

FOLLOWERS



679,000

PEOPLE REACHED

9,061

LIKES



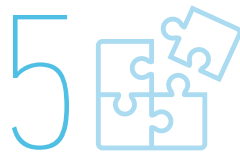
WHAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Through European PROGRES substantial efforts have been invested in the improvement of economic and social infrastructure, increasing competitiveness of local economies, enhancing social inclusion and better understanding of the good governance and gender equality processes. The following pages* present the support provided to these specific thematic areas which has made a difference in the lives of people by creating much better perspectives for living in these areas.

*
The Programme results presented in this part of the publication have been thematically redistributed. Consequently, some activities and their relevant projects, beneficiaries and results have been introduced in several different themes and will thus in the overall calculation of investments and impact be inconsistent with data previously shown in this publication. Each theme should thus be viewed as a separate set of data independent of other thematic or result data set shown in this publication.



social enterprises established through partnership projects of civil society organisations and local self-governments, ultimately resulting in 19 full time and nine temporary jobs



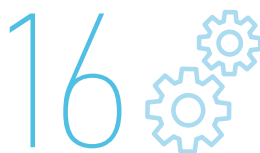
clusters of micro, small and medium enterprises supported in introducing innovative practices to improve competitiveness of the members of the cluster



traditional products branded in order to improve their market access and increase competitiveness of the local economy



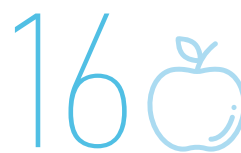
groups of agricultural producers received equipment to enhance their production and have created six full time and eight seasonal jobs



small and micro enterprises received equipment to expand and improve production and ultimately create over 40 new jobs



women provided with equipment to start businesses to improve their economic standing and ultimately create 92 jobs



businesses received assistance in introducing food quality and safety standards to increase their competitiveness in the local and international market



members of vulnerable groups received grants for procurement of equipment as support to self-employment and generated additional 39 full time and 51 temporary jobs



groups of agricultural producers aided in capacity development through trainings and a study visit to France



young persons provided with equipment to launch businesses, ultimately improving their economic situation through sustainable income generation

SUPPORT TO ENTERPRISES AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

European PROGRES provides close to 1.5 million Euros in support of enterprises and entrepreneurship in South Serbia

145 projects
 EUR 1,450,937 funds
 About 400 full time jobs opened up to date

Through European PROGRES, half a million Euros was invested into launching 93 new start-up businesses, while three social enterprises were established through grants to partnership projects of civil society organisations and local self-governments. The European Union and the Government of Switzerland also enabled 16 micro and small enterprises (MSE) to receive equipment in the total value of 229,536 Euros, while at least 20% of the awarded amounts were additionally invested directly in the local communities through corporate social responsibility interventions. In order to expand export and encourage business growth, sixteen businesses received assistance in the value of 60,000 Euros to obtain certification or recertification for international quality management and food safety standards, while four local self-governments and associations received technical assistance in the process of the protection of geographic origin of traditional agricultural products. Finally, in order to create a more favourable environment for agricultural production, 32 agricultural producer groups (APGs) were supported in capacity development, while seven also received equipment to introduce new technologies in production.

- 96
SUPPORT TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP
EUR 692,480
- 37
SUPPORT TO ENTERPRISES
EUR 459,362
- 8
SUPPORT TO AGRICULTURAL PRODUCER GROUPS
EUR 283,795
- 4
PROTECTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION
EUR 15,300





Michael Davenport

It is up to you now to eradicate all prejudice through education, persistence and unity because so often they limit this region in using its incredible capacities and standing shoulder to shoulder with the rest of Europe

H.E. Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia 2014-2017



Day Care Centre for children with intellectual disabilities constructed in Brus



project enabled Albanian children in Bujanovac and Preševo to improve their command of the Serbian language by introducing teaching assistance into regular Serbian as a non-mother tongue classes



members of vulnerable groups received grants for self-employment, enhancing their better economic standing and fuller social integration



women assisted in launching businesses to improve their economic standing



projects of LSGs and CSOs improved the access to health and social services, provided opportunities for economic empowerment and deepened inter-ethnic dialogue for vulnerable and marginalised citizens



young persons supported in opening businesses, ultimately improving their economic standing through sustainable income generation



projects of Roma and other CSOs improved access to employment, housing, social protection, health, education and human security for the Roma community



municipalities raised the employability of the members of the most vulnerable groups through vocational trainings



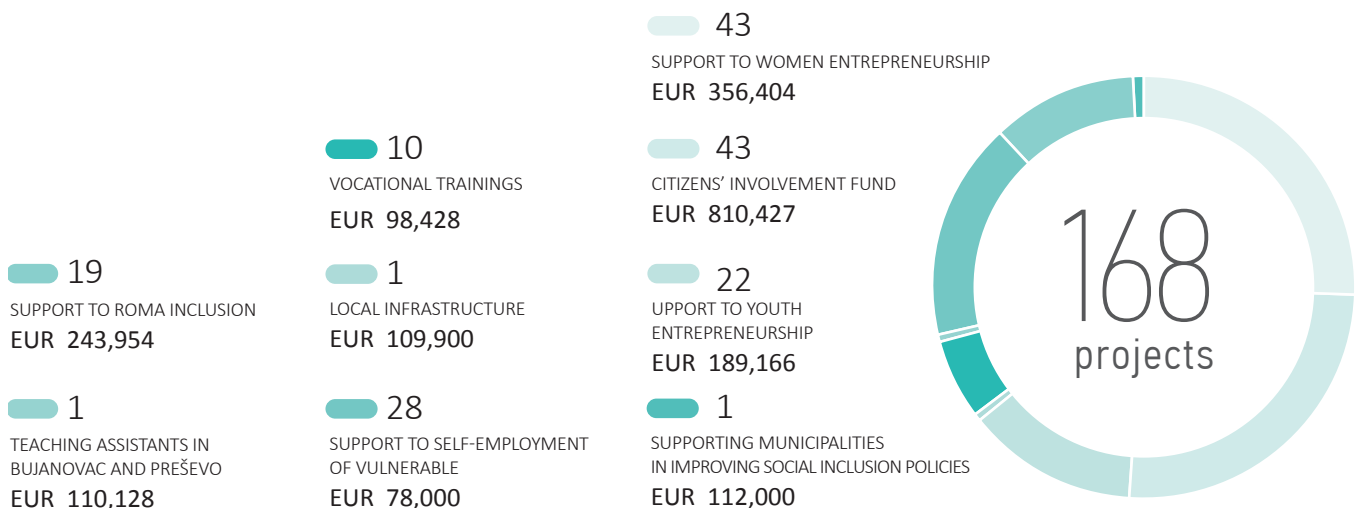
social enterprises established, enabling permanent employment for 19 people from vulnerable and marginalised groups

SUPPORT TO SOCIAL INCLUSION

The European Union and the Government of Switzerland, through European PROGRES, have provided over two million Euros in support of social inclusion projects in South Serbia.

168 projects
 EUR 2,144,164
 invested
 Over 7,000
 beneficiaries

Through European PROGRES over two million Euros was invested into enhancing the social inclusion and empowerment of the most vulnerable citizens in the Programme area. Over 800,000 Euros was dedicated to more than 40 partnership projects of Civil Society Organisations and local self-governments, realised through the Citizens' Involvement Fund, 250,000 Euros was invested into projects helping approximately 4,000 Roma individuals in the areas of employment, housing, social protection, health, education and human security. Over half a million Euros was utilised to procure equipment in support of the self-employment of women and youth, resulting in 65 newly established businesses. Additionally, as part of a wider intervention implemented by the Centre for Social Policy on behalf of European PROGRES, 28 members of vulnerable groups were assisted in entrepreneurial ventures. Finally, vocational trainings, organised through projects worth over 100,000 Euros, enabled more than 300 individuals to obtain knowledge and practical skills needed for securing employment and resulting in more than 180 new jobs so far.



HOUSING THE HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH SERBIA

In November 2015 after nine months of construction a new, higher education building, housing Bujanovac Department of the Subotica Faculty of Economics was officially opened.

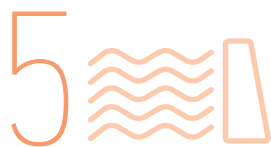
Previously, the Bujanovac Department, established in 2011, was located in the rented premises at the Cultural Centre and supported in various capacities by the Coordination Body for Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa, Municipality of Bujanovac Mayor, OSCE and the EU. In 2015, when the fourth generation of students enrolled and the number of students grew, the lack of space became evident.

Almost a million Euros was invested in the construction project- the EU and the Swiss Government allocated 800,000 Euros through European PROGRES, while the Government of Serbia, through the Municipality of Bujanovac and the



Coordination Body, contributed with 180,000 Euros. The structure, built in accordance with the highest European standards, covers a surface area of 2,300 square metres and includes, among other facilities, six modern well-equipped classrooms, a library and a career centre.

Bilingual classes at this Faculty, unique in South Serbia, are now attended by almost 400 Albanian and Serbian students. The new students can choose between four study programmes: Finance, Banking and Insurance, Agribusiness and Agricultural Economics, Accounting and Audit and Marketing.



anti-erosion protection projects contribute to the protection of citizens and their possessions from the effects of floods



projects introducing the geographic information system into municipalities facilitate easier development planning



detailed regulation plans and a tourist destination management study enable the sustainable development of the Golija tourist destination, as well as of the five adjacent municipalities



priority local infrastructure projects improve the social and economic infrastructure in municipalities



detailed regulation plans developed in order to support attracting investments and the revitalisation of municipal urban areas



main designs created to positively benefit the improvement of municipal infrastructure in the fields of education, culture, social services, tourism and waste collecting and disposal

SUPPORT TO INFRASTRUCTURE

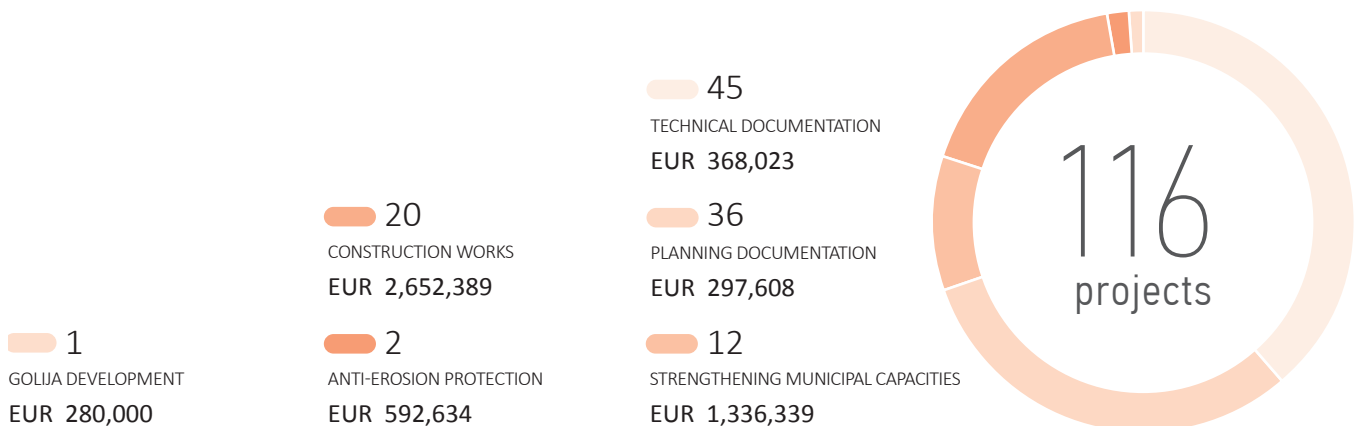
Through European PROGRES, the European Union and the Government of Switzerland provided close to 5.5 million Euros in support of infrastructure related projects in South Serbia.

116 projects
 EUR 5,526,993
 invested

The European Union and the Government of Switzerland have earmarked close to 5.5 million Euros for the implementation of more than 100 projects geared towards the improvement of infrastructure in 34 municipalities of the Southeast and Southwest Serbia.

This was achieved through both direct support to the realisation of priority municipal infrastructure projects and through strengthening local capacities for implementing such projects.

Close to a million Euros was invested in the construction of the facilities for the Bujanovac department of the Subotica Faculty of Economics, half a million Euros was invested into conducting the anti-erosion protection of the water courses of the Raška River and the Pusta Reka, 1.8 million Euros was allocated for 19 priority municipal socio-economic infrastructure projects while over 300.000 Euros was directed into the development of main designs which creates a key precondition for the initiation of infrastructural projects to improve access to social and communal services and better the local business environment. Assistance was also provided for design of 36 detailed regulation plans that create conditions for development of industrial zones and valorisation of natural and cultural heritage of key touristic sites in the area.





Ursula Läubli

Over the last 15 years, we have invested a lot into the transfer of our knowledge and experience in a manner which is tailored to the local context, and when local self-governments apply these principles in their daily work, then citizens live better and have improved public services.

Director of the Swiss Cooperation Office in Serbia



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

As a part of support provided to municipalities in development of local policies and administrative regulations, the Programme defined the approach to link the principles of Good Governance with infrastructure projects.

A new primary school was constructed in the village of Zapadni Mojstir in the municipality of Tutin complete with a preschool, infirmary and schoolyard equipped for sports. However, to the local community the school will also serve as a place of gathering, recreation and a cultural centre. Along with the new school, hoping to further revive the village and prevent migration, the local self – government has also contributed by constructing the road to the locality.

Beside the infrastructure, the school administration was supported in the implementation of good governance principles. Through adoption of the School Administrative Board Rule Book parent representatives were included as the School Board members. This practice enables the local population to express opinions on school management and to participate in the decision making process regarding the use of school premises and content it provides for curricular and extracurricular activities.

European PROGRES introduced similar practices in 15 other projects across the Programme Area strengthening the principles of transparency, accountability, non-discrimination, participation and efficiency.

16 

LSGs adopted or amended 33 relevant regulations within 16 infrastructure projects

23 

Good Governance Centres established

13 

municipalities supported in local governance reforms through adoption/revision of 21 regulations

27 

municipal representatives built capacities through a set of trainings and study visit

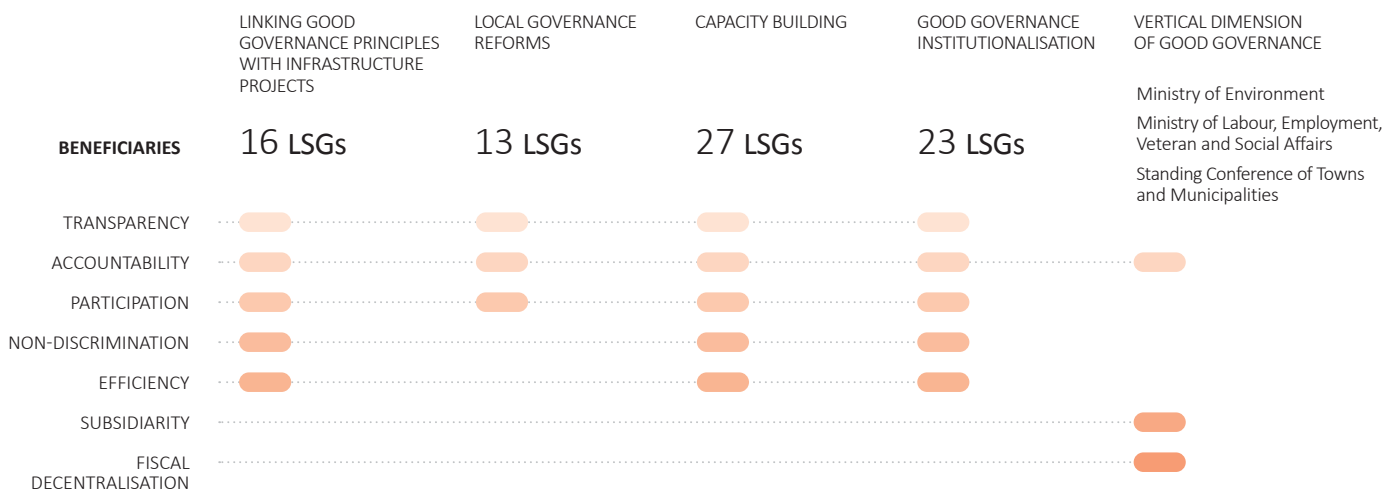
GOOD GOVERNANCE

The EU and the Government of Switzerland have provided close to 800,000 Euros through European PROGRES to strengthen implementation of good governance principles in South Serbia, as an important requirement and an essential element in efforts of all societies to achieve sustainable development.

54 local regulations revised or developed
 EUR 718,000 invested

Good governance is an important requirement and essential element in efforts of all societies to achieve sustainable socio-economic development, based on democracy, rule of law and human rights. The European PROGRES Programme strived to interweave the five principles of good governance – accountability, transparency, participation, non-discrimination and efficiency, in all of its activities, wherever it was meaningful and relevant.

In order to strengthen the capacities of local self-governments (LSGs) to tackle good governance (GG) issues the Programme delivered six trainings and organised one Study Tour for 27 municipal employees. Efforts to institutionalise GG capacities resulted in establishment of GG Competence Centres in 23 LSGs, while actions related to local governance reforms benefited 13 municipalities that adopted 21 regulations primarily enhancing property management and accountability. The Programme has continued to apply unique approach of linking infrastructure projects and good governance, which facilitated adoption of 33 local regulations that contribute to improved accountability, participation, transparency, efficiency and non-discrimination as the main GG principles.



1,118 

women economically empowered through two cycles of partnership projects of civil society and local self-governments (LSGs) as well as Roma social inclusion projects, while the conditions for work engagement of another 78 women were also created



MEDICAL EQUIPMENT AND CAMPAIGN

The Programme procured and delivered medical equipment in the value of 109.500 EUR for women’s health care services in nine local medical/health centres. Complementary public health campaign “Find the time” achieved significant results in the area of public health: 747 women underwent free gynaecological examinations, 1,129 women attended street events which raised their awareness on the importance of regular medical examinations and the improvement of reproductive health for women. More

than 400,000 people were reached via media outlets, while 81,196 through the social media campaign. Additionally 60 medical professionals attended a lecture that summarised the campaign results and presented trends in treatment of malignant diseases. In addition, the Programme provided an X-Ray machine to the Prokuplje Hospital that will enhance quality of health services provided by this health centre to 110,000 citizens.

13 

municipalities introduced gender responsive budgeting

12 

municipalities adopted or revised Local Gender Action Plans

43 

women entrepreneurship projects supported

21 

taylor made capacity building plans created

32 

municipalities adopted European Charter on Equality of Men and Women in Local Life

10 

Women Councillors Networks established

10 

health centres provided with medical equipment for improvement of women’s health

SUPPORT TO GENDER EQUALITY

The EU and the Government of Switzerland have, building on the results of the predecessor Programme, invested close to one million Euros through European PROGRES to support gender equality activities in the South Serbia.

78 projects
 EUR 912,857 invested
 975,843 beneficiaries
 95 jobs opened

The Programme provided 43 grants in the amount of 356,583 Euros to unemployed women to start their business. Additionally, as a result of women empowerment projects implemented through Citizens' Involvement Fund (CIF) 118 temporary and full time jobs were created. Similarly in backing the local gender equality mechanisms, 18 projects aimed at implementing priority activities from the Local Gender Equality Action Plans were financed aiming to improve the position of women in local communities.

Since 2014, in partnership with UN Women 21 tailor made capacity building plans were developed, 12 LSGs adopted or revised Local Gender Action Plans, 32 adopted European Charter on Equality of Men and Women in Local Life, and 13 municipalities introduced gender responsive budgeting. Additionally, the Programme supported establishment of local Women Counsellor Networks in ten municipalities, and provided capacity building activities.



FUTURE DIFFERENCE



Marko Vujačić

European PROGRES National Programme Manager

Over the past years we have together achieved a number of good results and, more importantly, built the foundation for projects that can effect significant, positive change on the development of the South East and South West Serbia in the coming years.

However, reaching the desired level of development and higher living standard is not an easy task. Local self-governments in this part of the country continue to encounter serious challenges: the number of those living in or at the risk of poverty is too high, needs for investment in public infrastructure is significant, unemployment is reduced but remains extreme in some communities, while negative demographic trends and migration of the youth is probably the most serious problem.

We have no quick solution. However, some of European PROGRES' lessons learned could be useful. Serious development, requires long term thinking and planning, consistent and persistent effort. Politics and development are inter-linked but the politics should serve development not vice versa, as sometimes is the case. Coordination between local and national authorities, whether we speak about policies, competencies, or projects, must be stronger. Local self-governments should not forget that their citizens, primarily through civil society organisations, can be a valuable partner in endeavours to enhance quality of life in communities.

In so many ways, good governance is the key piece of the solution puzzle. LSGs that embrace good governance, which means those that continually strive to enhance accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness, citizens' participation and non-discrimination are the ones that are successful. And this, in turn, positively affects all aspects of life at the local level resulting in better life for the citizens.

The good news is that we are not alone in this. The development Programmes and dedicated donors - the European Union, and the Government of Switzerland in cooperation with the Government of Serbia, have been supporting LSGs' development efforts, not only over the past three years but for longer than a decade and will continue to do so in the coming years through

new programmes. With decades of experiences under their belt they understand the complexities of challenges and are unwavering in their support. This is encouraging and helpful. However, at the end of the day, it is up to LSGs, or actually up to all of us living in Serbia, to do the work and bring the country to the level where we rightfully and proudly stand shoulder to shoulder with the developed societies.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Bojana K. Kopriva". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bojana" and the last name "Kopriva" clearly distinguishable.



Republic of Serbia



Programme Funded by EU



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Implementing Partner

