JULY 2012 - JUNE 2013
European Partnership with Municipalities

Economic Development
It's All About Jobs

Energy and Environment
Painting the Environment Greener

Water Supply
Life with(out) Water

Social Inclusion
Hope for All

Education
Good Education for Stronger Generation

Health
"The Greatest Wealth Is Health"
We reached the end of the third year and we know we are on a good track to make significant positive impact on the lives of the population in the South and South West Serbia. Different people may have a different view as to what is the impact of EU PROGRES. Some would say it is the 29 infrastructure projects that improved business infrastructure, waste management, water supply, energy efficiency, and conditions for education, health, youth and sports.

Others would argue that actually it is the large infrastructure projects, of inter-municipal character, equally important for the large towns that are hosting the key activities, and for those smaller municipalities in the area that will provide supplies or services, which are key success of the Programme. To name a few, Leskovac Green Zone, Vranje Industrial Zone, Pčinja Fruit Development, the Regional Centre for Development of Agriculture in Pešter. The common denominator for all is creation of hundreds, if not thousands of jobs in the coming years.

Then, of course, the activities which improved local government capacities, and which are instrumental for enhanced municipal competitiveness – four One Stop Shops, which will reduce total time needed for issuing of construction permit from average 96 to 77 days. Or the technical and planning documentation which already enabled municipalities to access 1.6 million Euros funding.

One should not forget the social inclusion and direct support to some 9,100 people from vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, including Roma, people with disabilities, elderly citizens and women, whose lives benefitted from different projects.

But there are three approaches that we believe have made a remarkable difference and whose effects will be felt long after the Programme ends. Good governance. Development vision. Partnerships.

EU PROGRES is one of the few development programmes in Serbia that embedded good governance principles into all its activities. You may ask yourself how did we do it? We linked the good governance to construction. On top of bricks and mortar, came a layer of transparency, effectiveness, efficiency, non-discrimination and participation. And what was the result? Thirty-five new regulations that enhance sustainability and impact of infrastructure projects were adopted. We built a kindergarten – we assisted municipality to define regulations about enrolment of children. We reconstructed a green market - rules for renting of stalls were drafted.

We inspired the municipal leadership to bring their development vision to a higher level. To think laterally and to include neighbouring municipalities in planning and implementation of projects. To overcome their
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However, EU PROGRES wouldn’t have been possible without the great partnership established between the project donors, the EU, the Government of Switzerland, the Government of Serbia, the 25 municipalities and the implementing partner the United Nations Office for Project Services. The strategic chairmanship of the Programme Steering Committee, by the Serbian European Integration Office meant continuous support and leadership not only to the Programme, but to the participating municipalities as well.

With the joint efforts, shared objectives and genuine commitment, those partners, through EU PROGRES, are contributing to shifting the South and South West from the map of the least developed and conflict prone municipalities into the area that is attractive to investors, with skilled people and potentials for socio-economic growth that could benefit the entire country.

The Status of EU PROGRES Contracted Projects

- 146 completed (62%)
- 44 on track (19%)
- 32 delayed with low risks (14%)
- 2 delayed with high risk (1%)
- 10 discontinued (4%)
It's All About Jobs

Medveda Termovent Factory

The reconstruction of the Medveda wood processing factory Termovent is finished. Delivery of machines for the factory, donated by the Slovenian Centre for International Development, will be completed by mid July. By the end of 2013, the Factory will employ 30 people.

Vranje Industrial Zone

Development of detailed regulation plans and the main design for the bypass road to the Industrial Zone, opening of One Stop Shop, preparation of a foreign direct investment plan, as well as a branding project, confirm a comprehensive approach to enhance business friendly environment in Vranje, that could reverberate through the entire Pčinja District. Already, the Italian shoemaker Geox said it would invest 15.8 million Euros and open 1,250 jobs in the next three years, while Ditre Italia has signed a contract with the Government of Serbia to invest around 13.4 million Euros and open additional 400 jobs.

Leskovac Green Zone

The infrastructure works on 50 hectares in the Zone are completed and there is significant, investors’ interest for the Zone. Two local financiers remain keen to enter the Zone, and furthermore Leskovac has been negotiating possible investments with the Greek and Israeli companies. The potential of the Green Zone is exceptional and can be measured in tens of millions of Euros.

Pčinja District Regional Fruit Production Centre

About 190 agricultural producers from the entire Pčinja District benefited from the trainings on modernisation of production and will get the opportunity to apply for fruit seedlings and start new orchards. Moreover, EU PROGRES supported signing of the agreement among the seven Pčinja municipalities to establish a Steering Committee that includes senior municipal officials with decision making authority, and Advisory Board that is composed of fruit experts who have a role to provide guidelines for the project development. Without this organisation, prospect for the regional project success would be more limited.

Pešter Regional Centre for Development of Agriculture

The works on the construction of the Regional Centre for Development of Agriculture for Pešter are 60% completed, delivery of tractors and agricultural machinery started in June 2013, while the Czech Development Agency provided the first set of equipment for the laboratory that will operate within the Centre. This regional project, which covers Novi Pazar, Tutin and Sjenica, should create 15 jobs in the first year of work and support over 200 agricultural households to increase production and profit. The opening of the Centre is expected in November 2013.
“My company employs two workers, but I plan to employ two more, as I have contracted a large export to Italy, and I expect to do business with Greek and Macedonian companies soon. We are doing well, and I am planning to set up a larger production line on the lot that belongs to my family.”

Davor Novković (25), the owner of “Eko dabar” pellet production enterprise supported through the Business Incubator Centre in Vranje
Once constructed, the Banjica Landfill will increase the waste collection for the population of Prijepolje, Nova Varoš, Priboj and Sjenica, from 60% to 100% and cover more than 109,000 people. EU PROGRES' support in these efforts is instrumental. First, the Programme supported preparation of geological, geotechnical and hydro-geological study that provided input for the redesign of the main design, to bring it into compliance with the provisions of the 2009 Law on Environmental Protection. This meant that optimal technical and technological solutions are selected to build the Landfill facilities. The redesign of the main design will be finished in August 2013, after which the preparation of the public procurement for the construction of the Landfill will be possible.

However, what ensured institutional and financial sustainability of the project were:

- Finalisation of founding documents and agreement of the participating municipalities to form a joint Limited Liability Company (LLC) that will manage the Landfill
- Setting aside three million Dinars from the budget of each of the four municipalities for functioning of the LLC and additional five million Dinars for the infrastructure works on the Landfill in 2013

Recycling Centre in Nova Varoš

The Recycling Centre in Nova Varoš is the first facility of its kind in the South West Serbia, and it promotes both the protection of the environment and the employment. EU PROGRES supported development of the main design and works on the adaptation of the recycling centre, which included provision of a sorting line and 22 different containers that solved the problem of sorting of solid waste in the Nova Varoš.

At the moment there are four newly employed persons, while this number should go up to ten once all equipment is delivered. It is expected that the profit of the Recycling Centre in Nova Varoš will be 18,000 Euros in 2015 and grow to 200,000 Euros by 2033.

Within the project, Prijepolje and Priboj PUCs received additional solid waste collection containers, which meant that their current needs as defined by the municipal Waste Management Strategies, are fully met.

Synergies:

- The Eco Fund supported Nova Varoš to procure the facility for the Centre
- The EU Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) Serbia-Montenegro funded project CLEAN, buying 68 additional separation containers and two horizontal presses, making the Recycling Centre in Nova Varoš fully operational
- The Embassy of Japan donated funds for procurement of a garbage truck
By recycling, the quantities of waste that end in the landfill are reduced, and thus the exploitation period for the landfill is extended. Recycling conserves resources and protects the environment because it reduces the need for new raw materials.
No Life without Water
The water supply in **Sjenica** was improved for 12,500 people after new pumps purchased by EU PROGRES, were installed. Sjenica continued the work on the replacement of water pipelines, and while using technical and planning documentation developed thorough EU PROGRES and its predecessor PRO, obtained about 19,5 million Dinars for the new projects from the Government of Serbia.

In **Trgovište**, by upgrading of water supply system in Novo Selo the quantity of water available to households is increased up to three times, and the quality of water has improved.

In **Vranje**, Ćoška settlement 30 Roma families got fresh water. Following the EU PROGRES’ support, Vranje Public Utility Company for water supply installed pumps of greater capacity than initially planned and constructed another street pipeline creating pre-conditions for another 25 households to be connected in the near future.

Works on the water supply system in Jelašnica village in **Surdulica** will provide water supply to some 379 families. Of 1,500 people who are benefitting from this project, 45% are Roma.

The construction of the water reticulation in village **Džepnica (Blace)** will give access to water to 73 households with 219 inhabitants.
Social Inclusion

Hope for All

Social inclusion = society for all people = respect = equal opportunities and decent living standards regardless of economic status or ability, gender, sexual orientation, social or ethnic background

9,106 people

EU PROGRES has made a positive change for people from vulnerable and disadvantaged groups since its inception in July 2010 and supported them to obtain identity cards, find employment, access social entitlements and education, get clean water...

Assistance to Roma

- Provision of clean water to 800 Roma in Vranje and Sürdulica
- 1,200 Roma got access to education, employment and health protection
- Free legal aid to about 500 Roma to obtain personal documents, access social welfare rights, education
- An entrepreneurship projects should enable employment of 29 Roma
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Free Legal Aid

Through Citizens’ Advisory Service (CAS) offices in Preševo, Žitorađa, Prokuplje and Novi Pazar free legal aid was given to 2,375 users to obtain personal documents, access social welfare entitlements, education etc.

Support to Persons with Disabilities

1,850 people with disabilities and elderly people benefitted from 23 partnership projects of civil society and LSGs. Activities have encompassed measures to include persons with disabilities in the labour market.

Gender Issues

EU PROGRES intensified its support to gender equality issues and work with the equality mechanisms in 12 municipalities in the South West and Toplica District and indeed made significant progress.

Support to National Minorities

- Furnishing and equipping the new premises of the Albanian National Minority Council
- Albanian, Roma and Bulgarian National Minority Councils promoted tolerance, human rights, and cooperation between majority and minority groups
- The Office for Human and Minority Rights (OHMR) has been supported in preparation of the Draft Strategy for the Fight against Discrimination (2013-2018) as well as in monitoring the work of national minority councils

“Society’s expectations of men and women depend on cultural, political, economic, social, religious and other factors. Attitudes and behaviour towards a gender are acquired and may change with circumstances. This is why the rights of women in our local community and more broadly constitute fundamental human rights and why discrimination is politically unacceptable, economically inexpedient and prohibited by law. The fact is that gender equality is in the interest of both men and women and society as a whole. This is why the Gender Equality Council of the Nova Varoš Municipality will continue striving to ensure gender equality in all walks of life, both public and private.”

Danijela Topalović, Chairwoman of the newly established Nova Varoš Gender Equality Council

In the state statistics, Alija Žulji is registered as an internally displaced person. He came from Prizren to Novi Pazar 12 years ago. Before he registered with the CAS, every time he needed personal documents he would go to Kruševac where registers from his hometown are kept.

“I would leave Novi Pazar at 6 AM. I get off the bus in Kraljevo, and take a second bus to Kruševac. I usually get there during their break and then I wait. There are no (direct) buses to Novi Pazar before 4 PM, so then I get onto another bus in Kraljevo and get home around 7 PM. It takes me 13 hours to travel 240 kilometres. I have no income and every round trip costs at least three thousand dinars”, Žulji said. “Sometimes it happened that they spelt my name wrong and then I would have to hit the road again”.

“At the Job Fair we displayed all objects we made at the workshop. People came by to admire our success. I am proud that we have shown them we can also be useful to the society,” Davor Raspopović, from the Association for People with Special Needs of Raška said. EU PROGRES provided machinery for the carpentry workshops, and that project until now generated employment for 19 members of the Association.

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Good Education for Stronger Generation

Programme Achievements

- 8 infrastructure projects
  - improved conditions in kindergartens and schools
- 6,600 pupils and staff
  - benefitted directly

The renovation of the Priboj Homeland Museum building creates conditions for a standing exhibition of the diversity and rich cultural and historical heritage of this part of Serbia.

“The European Union’s support for cultural projects is very important for Priboj, because they can give an impetus to the economic development of this region. The Homeland Museum has artefacts that are over 7,000 years old and that many people may find interesting” - The Mayor of Priboj, Lazar Rvović.

The building of the Vlasotince library, better known as "Gigina kuća", was heavily burned during a fire in 2008, taking with it one third of the book fund. The restoration of the building, which had been housing a library for 101 years, unfolded in several stages, and building’s reconstruction was not completed until EU and the Government of Switzerland donated 66,000 Euros through EU PROGRES.

“The renovated library should certainly help preserve the cultural heritage of this area and additionally improve conditions for the work and education of teachers and students.” - Andrew Headey, DEU Head of Operations III.

Three projects targeting youth and enhancing conditions for sports were finalised, while two more are ongoing. It is estimated that 3,000 sportswomen and sportsmen will benefit.
The rate of preventive screenings of women in Nova Varoš, in the first six months after the purchase of 4-D ultrasound, is at 80% compared to 2011 rate.

Nova Varoš, where the number of dental examinations for school children, from January-March 2013, increased to 1,100, which is 60% of all examinations done in 2011. There was also rise in the number of examined newborns by 40% in the first six months of usage of the new ultra-sound, while the rate of preventive screenings of women, in the same period is at 80% compared to 2011.

Kuršumlija, where there is a modern laboratory which can perform around 115,000 analyses annually. The construction of the new building enabled easier access for persons with disability and created much better working conditions for medical staff.

Prokuplje, where the construction of the Plateau outside the Health Centre created 69 new parking spaces, which reduced traffic congestions in front of the building and contributed to safer transport of patients particularly in emergency interventions and patients on dialysis.

Blace, with the construction of an emergency entrance annex to the Medical Centre time needed for the transportation of patients from the ambulance car to the medical office was reduced from four minutes to one. According to the survey conducted by the Health Centre, this increased citizens’ satisfaction by 50%.
Let us first remind you what good governance is. It could be defined as a system of values, policies and institutions, by which the society directs and manages its social, political and economic affairs, through interaction of state and local authorities, citizens, civil society and private sector. It is a lasting process with the ultimate goal of improving quality of life and well-being of citizens.

EU PROGRES is one of very few development programmes in Serbia today that has good governance concepts and principles embedded in all its activities. It has not been easy: we have been working diligently with the support from the experts of Government of Switzerland over the past few years to integrate the concept and its key principles, accountability, transparency, participation, non-discrimination and efficiency, in the wide range of EU PROGRES’ supported socio-economic projects. This meant transferring good governance from a conceptual level into the living practices that could show tangible results to the local self-governments and the citizens.

How did we do it? Considering that a large portion of the EU PROGRES’ budget is allocated for infrastructure projects, we decided to link good governance with construction. Surprising and challenging, isn’t it? Our approach entailed that, in parallel with construction works, we worked closely with the municipalities to help them identify aspects of a particular project that needed to be addressed in order to enhance governance. For example, when we built a new kindergarten, in parallel we helped municipality to define regulation that will ensure there was no discrimination during enrolment of children; when we reconstructed a green market, the municipality defined rules for renting of stalls; when a water supply project contributed to savings, the municipality defined which portion of the savings would be used to subsidise water bills for the most vulnerable citizens.

Indeed, three years later, we are able to present some sound results. Municipalities, with EU PROGRES’ support, while implementing infrastructure projects, adopted or revised over 30 local policies and regulations, each and every enhancing one of good governance principles. These policies and regulations will enhance sustainability and impact of infrastructure project(s); they will ensure that part of (public) affairs is better organised; and, most importantly, citizens’ interests and rights will be better addressed. And this is not abstract but very real, the most real issue of all.

**Linking Good Governance to Infrastructure**

![Diagram](image.png)
Good Governance Campaign

Through public campaign promoting accountability, transparency, citizens’ participation, efficiency and non-discrimination as the key five principles of good governance and its importance for local socio-economic development EU PROGRES contributed to raising awareness about this concept and encouraging citizens to participate in local affairs. The success of the campaign can for example be illustrated with the fact that 15 municipal websites were improved in order to increase transparency. Furthermore, over 1,200 citizens directly participated in decision-making process of drafting 2013 local budgets in Novi Pazar, Vranje and Raška, while citizens’ opinions were taken into consideration in the process of planning budgets for next year.

Communication in the Service of Development

Just like the 234 supported projects make a positive change in the lives of citizens in the South and South West Serbia, the EU PROGRES’ communication raises awareness on development challenges in the Programme area, encourages citizens’ action and promotes investments and economic development to facilitate easier and swifter societal change.
With 11 high level visits, 35 press releases and over 1,160 affirmative media reports in the last year, EU PROGRES ensured that citizens in the South and South West were regularly informed about the supported projects.

"Europe, That Is You"

The second campaign, "Europe, That Is You", which was fully in line with the SEIO Communications Strategy for the Accession of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union, contributed to enabling citizens in the Programme area to make informed decisions about Serbia’s accession to the European Union. The campaign promoted core European values while making them more understandable and approachable to citizens. It also informed citizens about the need for, benefits and positive effects of the EU integration process for the overall progress.

"Europe, That Is You" awareness campaign presented a ground for strengthening partnerships with the Government institutions on all levels and provided support to the SEIO to explain EU integration process to the citizens in the South and South West and gain more support from this part of the country.
Good Governance

We are supporting the municipalities in improving their adherence to the principles of accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in their work and in increasing civil participation in decision-making and are thus creating important prerequisites for sustainable development.

Municipal Management & Development Planning

We are endeavouring to improve the quality of services municipalities provide their citizens and businesses and providing professional support to the design of planning documentation. We are sure that the effects of our endeavours will be long-term, because municipal staff are acquiring knowledge they will need for the further development of the municipalities after the Programme is completed as well.

Physical, economic & social infrastructure

We are taking part in the funding and implementation of municipal and inter-municipal infrastructure projects – which immediately produce visible results and improve the quality of life; we are working together with the local self-governments on the design of technical documentation requisite for attracting additional investments.

Public Awareness & Branding of Areas

Departing from the fact that positive communication facilitates faster and easier changes, the activities we are conducting within this Component simultaneously promote the potentials and build a positive image of South and South West Serbia, and raise public awareness of the socio-economic problems and the ways of resolving them.

European Union

EU PROGRES Overall Budget is 18.1 million EUR

Gov. of Switzerland

Serbian Govern.

14.1 million EUR

2.5 million EUR

1.5 million EUR

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