



Photo credit: UNDP Serbia

UNDP Partnership with Sweden in Serbia

June 2025



The partnership between Sweden and UNDP has significantly advanced sustainable development in Serbia by addressing climate resilience, environmental protection, gender-based violence, governance, and migration. Swedish support facilitated innovative efforts to restore wetlands, preserve biodiversity, improve water quality, and mitigate climate impacts like droughts and floods. In parallel, joint initiatives helped women and girls in Serbia to report domestic violence and receive timely and effective protection, developed a professional civil service, and promoted circular migration to counteract depopulation. These efforts underscore a shared commitment to an inclusive and resilient future for Serbia.

Focus areas:



GREEN TRANSITION

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Biodiversity and Environmental protection



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY:

- Empowering survivors and ensuring they have long-term support
- Supporting institutions
- Changing perceptions and dominant gender stereotypes



GOOD GOVERNANCE

- Strengthening institutions at the national and local level
- Promoting Circular Migration

UNDP projects supported by Sweden

▼ PROJECT TITLE	▼ FUNDING SOURCE	▼ PERIOD	▼ TOTAL BUDGET USD*
GREEN TRANSITION			
EU for Green Agenda in Serbia (EU4GAS): Protecting and Investing in Biodiversity and Water for Enhanced Climate Resilience	SIDA	2022-11-20 2026-11-20	\$2,098,728
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY			
Integrated Response to Violence against Women and Girls in Serbia III	SIDA	2020-10-01 2023-03-30	\$605,333
Ending Violence-Empowering Change	SIDA	2024-01-01 2026-12-31	\$808,763
GOOD GOVERNANCE			
Civil Service Training for the 21st Century in the Republic of Serbia	SIDA	2020-06-20 2023-12-31	\$2,022,390
Promoting Circular Migration	Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation Republic of Serbia; SIDA	2021-11-01 2027-12-31	\$2,950,000 (SIDA contribution \$1,400,000)

* Total budget in USD may fluctuate for contributions received in EUR due to exchange rates.

EU for Green Agenda in Serbia: Protecting and investing in biodiversity and water for enhanced climate resilience

Within the wider initiative to implement the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, Sweden supports activities for the preservation of wetlands in Serbia. The goal of these activities is to improve the climate resilience of wetlands and protect their biodiversity. The project runs from December 2022 till December 2026, with the financial support of Sweden in the amount of \$2,098,728.



GREEN TRANSITION

Key results:

- **7 innovative solutions** from Protected Area Managers **for protection, revitalisation and conservation of wetlands in protected areas across Serbia**, selected through a public call and received 600,000 USD in total for implementation. These solutions will help restore the natural balance in wetland ecosystems, preserve biodiversity, improve water quality, and reduce the negative impacts of climate change (droughts, floods, the spread of invasive species) in wetlands.
- The **“It’s not just a pond” campaign** launched in June 2024 **to raise public awareness** of the importance of wetlands preservation. It informs citizens about the numerous benefits of wetlands for people and the environment and invites all relevant actors to implement concrete measures for protection of these precious ecosystems.
- The **stakeholder dialogue** in May 2025 brought together all relevant nature conservation actors, including representatives of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the Provincial Institute for Nature Protection, local self-governments and protected area managers, **to share best practises and discuss the main challenges related to wetland conservation** measures in Vojvodina (northern province of Serbia).
- UNDP, in cooperation with AMCham, organized a study visit to Tara National Park in June 2025, focusing on engaging private sector companies in financing biodiversity conservation in Serbia. It gathered representatives of more than 20 private sector companies, protected area managers, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Embassy of Sweden.

Next steps:

- **Harmonise national legislation and policy** on nature protection and wetland conservation **with the EU acquis**, including Decrees on Ecological Network and Appropriate Assessment, as well as the Law on Nature Protection.
- **Training and workshops** for representatives of competent authorities and relevant stakeholders **on more effective management of protected areas and integration of nature, water, and climate into policy implementation**.
- Upgrade of information systems and field tools to **improve the collection, storage and processing of data on nature, biodiversity, and ecosystems** in institutions.
- Develop **citizen science app. on wetland conservation**.
- Establish a **National Wetland Inventory** and develop a **Wetland Restoration Action Plan**.
- Assess existing funding mechanisms for nature and water protection and climate change adaptation and design a **proposal for sustainable biodiversity financing** to secure funding for wetland restoration and the long-term implementation of nature-based solutions (NbS) through public and private investments.



“This is not just a pond” campaign visual

Addressing violence against women and girls in Serbia and advancing gender equality

With the support of the Government of Sweden, UNDP has been leading UN efforts in Serbia to eliminate violence against women (VaW) since 2016. **The project Integrated Response to Violence against Women and Girls in Serbia (2016-2023)** has significantly strengthened Serbia's response to gender-based violence through policy, capacity building, and public engagement. It supported the **adoption of the National and Provincial Strategy on Prevention of Domestic Violence (2021–2025)**, enhanced the **capacities of specialized women's organizations** to provide support services to survivors, and **trained professionals** across 60% of Serbian counties. The **Judiciary Academy's e-learning platform** was launched with seven accredited online courses aligned with the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence. **Public awareness campaigns** reached millions, reinforcing that violence is a societal—not a private—issue. Through the **“Journalists Against Violence”** initiative, over 100 women journalists joined efforts to change public narratives, affirming that the shame of violence lies with perpetrators, not survivors. These advances were made possible through broad partnerships, including key line ministries, independent bodies, media professionals, CSOs, and communities.

Building on the results of previous efforts addressing violence against women and girls in Serbia, the latest joint initiative **„Ending Violence – Empowering Change“**, led by UNDP in partnership with UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women, aims **to tackle the root causes of inequality (in both public and private life) and contribute to creating a society where gender-based discrimination and violence are unacceptable, women's rights are protected, and both women and men equally participate and contribute to all aspects of life.**

Running from 2024 to end of 2026, this project funded by the Government of Sweden, has a budget of \$2.2 million.



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY



Photo credit: Ana Batrićević available for free use as part of the Photograph and Illustration Database for Ethical Media Reporting of Violence against Women. The database was created and updated within Swedish-supported efforts to promote media reporting that contributes to the prevention of violence against women.

Addressing violence against women and girls in Serbia and empowering change



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Key Achievements in 2024:

- **Training Initiatives:** 240 prosecutors and judges improved skills for trauma – informed response to sexual violence cases and coercive control.
- **Support services:** 5 Centers for Victims of Sexual Violence supported to ensure continuity and operation and provide comprehensive health and psychosocial services.
- **Gender-equal parenting and community engagement:** 235 social care and education professionals trained to advise parents on non-violent and gender-sensitive parenting; 16 young men prepared to promote gender equality in their local communities.
- **Empowerment of women scientists and girls in STEM:** 190 women and girls engaged in entrepreneurial training and STEM fields promotion.
- **Giving voice to vulnerable groups:** 91 women with disabilities enhanced their advocacy skills and knowledge on sexual and reproductive health; 25 Roma women activists networked through a mentorship program that enables intergenerational knowledge exchange.

Looking Ahead – our next steps within the project include:

- Reaching 400+ educators with positive discipline strategies;
- Support educational institutions in preventing gender-based discrimination and harassment;
- Pilot gender equality programs in selected IT companies;
- Pilot solutions for tackling long-term unemployment of women and support women entrepreneurs in a digital world;
- Explore women's participation in the green labor market and STEM sectors.



Event to mark International Girls in ICT Day
Photo credit: Nemanja Jovanović



Expert meeting "Life in a Cage without Bars – Institutional Response to the Phenomenon of Coercive Control in Family and Partner Relationships"
Photo credit: Jelena Babić

Promoting Circular Migration

Photo credit: Returning point

Launched in 2021 with support of the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation, the Project focuses on promoting inclusive development through circular migration. This initiative was extended with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), with the total budget of USD 1,400,000 for the period 2024-2027. Implemented by UNDP and the “Returning Point” organization, the initiative aims to connect Serbia with its global human capital in the diasporas and create enabling conditions for returnees, expats, and foreign professionals – to live and work in Serbia.



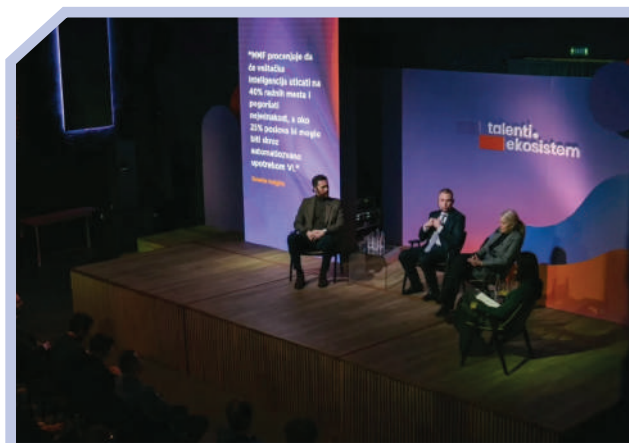
GOOD GOVERNANCE

Key Achievements in 2024:

- Diaspora engagement strengthened by connecting professionals and students with economic and professional opportunities in Serbia - through digital tools, targeted events, and multi-sector collaboration.
 - **Talent.Ecosystem** platform launched, linking Young Talent Fund alumni abroad (over 40,000 members, scholarship recipients and other young leaders) with Serbian companies; The new platform currently has over 250 users.
- Networking and community building advanced by fostering meaningful connections among returnees through targeted meetups, peer support initiatives and innovative digital solutions that facilitate the engagement of diaspora professionals in Serbia’s economic and professional landscape.
 - 3 Serbian Expat Meetups organized with 300+ participants, fostering peer connections.
- A gender-responsive approach embedded by empowering diaspora women through mentorship, entrepreneurship support, and visibility tools, culminating in the launch of the UMREŽENE Diaspora Women’s Network, where 24 local mentees paired with 10 returnee mentors, promoting solidarity and economic empowerment.
- Visibility and outreach amplified through multimedia storytelling, redesigned digital platforms, and scalable tools that showcased returnee journeys and expanded access to reliable information for repats.
 - **Talent.Ecosystem** Conference gathered 130+ government, private sector, and international stakeholders; Signed an MoU with the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation, formalizing the partnership with the “Returning Point” and setting a framework for future cooperation on the Talent.Ecosystem initiative.
 - 16 podcast episodes released, reaching 64,000+ views and amplifying diaspora voices.

Looking Ahead:

- Development of a model for direct engagement of the diaspora in local development projects;
- Further strengthening and institutionalization of a women’s entrepreneurship mentorship programme, with a specific focus on returnee women and female entrepreneurs from the diaspora, fostering cross-border exchange of knowledge, skills, and support networks.
- Inspired by the EPIC Irish Emigration Museum, Returning Point is developing a Digital Museum of Serbian Migration to preserve and share diaspora stories worldwide, with next steps focused on partnerships, pilot exhibitions, and platform development.



Returning point

Civil Service Training for the 21st Century in the Republic of Serbia

Photo credit: UNDP Serbia

This project was designed to develop a professional and efficient civil service capable of addressing contemporary challenges in knowledge and career management. It aimed to strengthen the National Academy for Public Administration (NAPA) by enhancing its internal capacities, improving staff and trainer skills, and refining institutional structures. It focused on creating dynamic training programs and e-learning platforms to prepare civil servants for the demands of the modern public sector and the fourth industrial revolution. Sustaining these improvements requires continuous innovation in curricula and teaching methods, incorporating international best practices, and fostering international academic and research collaborations to elevate NAPA's global standing.



GOOD GOVERNANCE

Key results:

NAPA's ability to provide effective and modern training significantly increased through:

- Introduction of modern learning techniques, in line with best globally accepted approaches, including combining several forms of learning, such as e-learning, teaching, and work experience.
- Engagement of experts to train the NAPA staff and trainers in diverse topics – from how to motivate public servants, handle stress, excel in public and media appearances, develop advanced and well-designed presentations, gain IT literacy, improve language skills, manage EU funds, to AI and emerging tech and its implementation in public service.
- Introduction of software for management and control of a growing portfolio of projects.
- The design and development of an advanced mobile learning platform (M-learning), seamlessly integrated into NAPA's Learning Management System (LMS). This M-learning software, a mobile application, connects directly to the Knowledge Base (eLibrary), a vital component of the LMS, also developed within the project.
- Assessments and updates in the relevant legal framework for NAPA's functioning and provision of services.

NAPA's Services are Closer to End Users:

- Thanks to one-click access to knowledge bases, NAPA's services are now more accessible to end users, resulting in the increase of active users by 90% in two years (2021 to 2023). The total number of attended courses was around 80,000 and is constantly growing.

Regional networking and positioning:

- NAPA has established new partnerships, exchanged best practices and strengthened cooperation with partner institutions in the region.

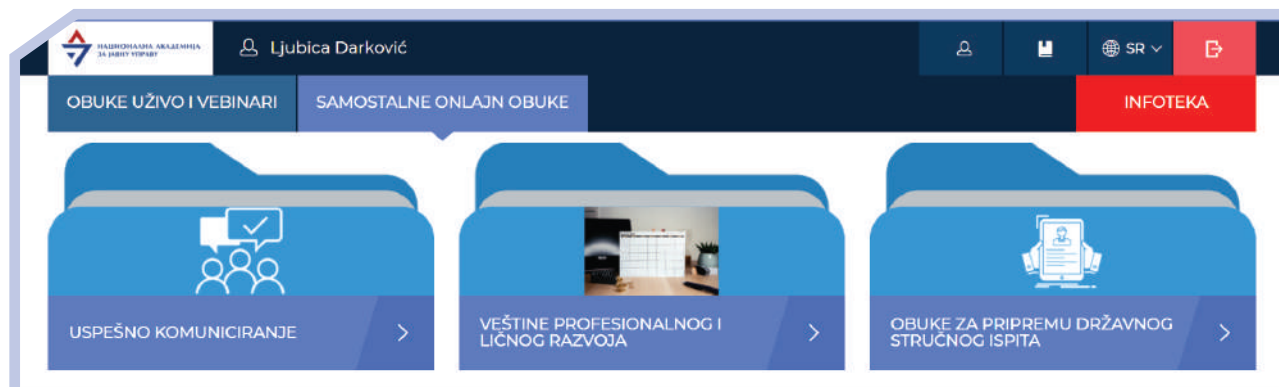


Photo credit: Screenshot from the e-learning portal for civil servants



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Photo credit: Jelena Mitrović