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February 2019

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SDG



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#NextGenUNDP

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FOREWORD

A recurrent motto that accompanies many international meetings and forums these days is the speed, scale and complexity of change in the world around us. For a development organisation like the United Nations Development Programme, this means that today's development challenges, compared to those of twenty years ago, are more complex and interconnected. A sense of environmental, economic and social urgency to deal with these challenges is adding to the pressure. "Business as usual" is no longer enough, and bold thinking is required to make breakthroughs and create true transformation.

The global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers the framework for engaging differently. The SDGs are multifaceted and call for an integrated response, for diverse partnerships and for innovative solutions. UNDP thus embarked on a journey of purpose-led transformation, which is not about management reform, but rather a development institution that is continuously renewing itself and working at the cutting edge of development, making solutions available to the countries it serves.

This 'Next Generation UNDP' continues to work on reducing poverty, strengthening governance, resilient development, the environment, clean energy and gender equality, but in each of these areas it aims to bring innovation, a platform way of working, agility and acceleration in services.

In Serbia, UNDP has worked hard over the last several years to transform its way of working, not only to deliver on time and with the quality of projects and funds entrusted to us by donors and the Government of Serbia, but also to bring new development services and knowledge, push our limits to be future-focused, innovative and aligned with the pace of global development. As a latest example, in 2019 UNDP Serbia is launching an Acceleration Lab, which represents one of a network of 60 labs that UNDP is opening worldwide. The Lab doesn't replace UNDP's current way of working, but rather augments existing capabilities through the application of cutting edge approaches to addressing social and environmental challenges.

In this special edition you will find stories on activities implemented by UNDP in Serbia, with the support of, and in partnership with, our donors and our national and local partners. We remain committed, in 2019 and beyond, to delivering development results for the impact that Serbia seeks for its EU accession agenda and towards the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.

Taking Action for Climate

"This initiative represents an opportunity for local self-governments, the business sector, civil society organisations and the scientific-research community to respond jointly in Serbia to the challenges of adapting to climate change, in order for us to preserve our environment, protect people's lives and incentivise economic development through innovative solutions." - Goran Trivan, Minister of Environmental Protection

UN Secretary General António Guterres, speaking to UN member states in September 2018, called climate change the defining issue of our time, stating: "We are at a defining moment. We face a direct existential threat. Climate change is moving faster than we are. If we don't change course by 2020, we risk missing the point where we can avoid runaway climate change, with disastrous consequences for people and all the natural systems that sustain us."

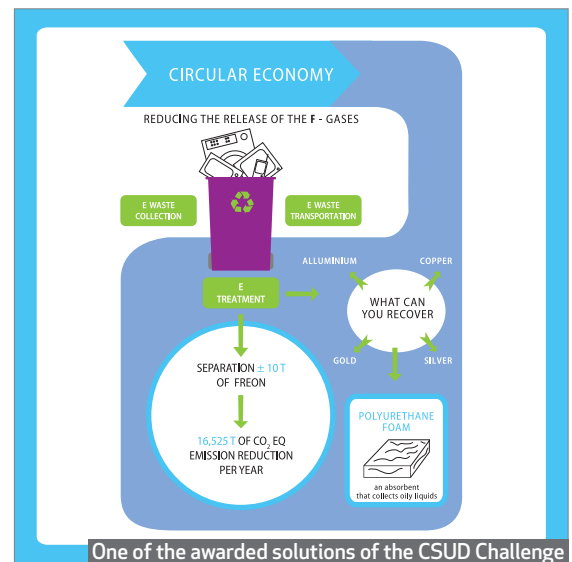
A special IPCC report of October 2018 made the case for urgent action around the world to keep global warming to an increase of within a 1.5-degree Celsius. Within 10-30 years, the report indicates, world temperatures could rise by more than three degrees. This could lead to an exacerbation of poverty, while the most vulnerable sections of the population will be the hardest hit by the effects of rising sea-levels, increased droughts, flash floods and extreme weather.

This call for action on climate also resonates in Serbia, which has committed to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) and adapting to shifting climate conditions. The scope of work is tremendous. As public assets and services are not at the required level of energy efficiency, many public service-related areas involving the use of large number of vehicles and machinery have untapped potential to reduce GHG emissions while simultaneously improving the everyday lives of citizens. There is a lack of available good quality data on current GHG emissions from different sectors, particularly at the local level.

With funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Serbian Ministry of Environmental Protection and UNDP currently implement the Climate Smart Urban Development (CSUD) initiative, focusing on climate action at the local level in Serbia. Individuals, civil society organisations, researchers, public institutions and businesses were invited to come up with ideas on how to reduce GHG emissions in their communities and to adapt to changing climate conditions. Another challenge was run for opening and managing climate change data at the local level, in sectors such as energy, transport, construction, urban planning, water and waste management. Though this initiative, the Ministry and UNDP help local partners develop, finance and implement these ideas in practice.

There are currently 46 teams of 'Climate Smart Innovation pioneers' and 'Open Data Innovation Pioneers' that receive support from the Climate Incubator project, which encompasses expert guidance on the further development of ideas (towards concepts, prototypes, testing and practical implementation); assistance in business planning and identification of the sources of co-financing; promotion; and partnering with other climate innovators. Open Data teams are also working to develop inventories of local greenhouse gases.

All these smart solutions for climate will initially be implemented in 24 municipalities in Serbia. However, they have high potential for comprehensive use all over Serbia, in many areas related to urban development, as well as in agriculture. The mechanism piloted by the project can be applied by the Ministry to further support climate action at the local level in Serbia through more challenges, in order to generate a movement and critical mass of positive change in tackling climate change.



*In 2017,
UNDP helped 140
countries access
\$3.2 billion in grant
financing for
climate initiatives*

Building a Circular Culture Together



Young Balkan Designers Open Call

"In order for us to reduce the discarding of food, or the generating of food waste, we need systemic, lasting solutions and sustainable management of excess food. With this we would contribute to reducing poverty and hunger, as well as protecting the environment – all for the benefit of the entire community" - **Radmila Ivetić**, President of the Food Bank Association

In 2015, the European Commission adopted an ambitious Circular Economy Action Plan to stimulate the transition towards a circular economy, boost global competitiveness, foster sustainable economic growth and generate new jobs. In 2014 alone there were private investments of around €15 billion in economic sectors relevant to the circular economy, with more than 3.9 million jobs created in these sectors, while patents on recycling and secondary raw materials increased by 35 per cent between 2000 and 2013. It is further estimated that the transition to a circular economy could reduce EU carbon emissions by 450 million tonnes and save the EU €600 billion by 2030, as well as creating 170,000 new jobs by 2035.

In 2018, UNDP partnered with the Government of Serbia, businesses, academia, creative industries and civil society organisations to promote the circular economy, supporting a transformative dialogue for the transition from linear to circular production and consumption, with a focus on the sectors of single-use plastics, textiles and furniture, as well as food waste. The process includes identifying and removing regulatory barriers that companies face in improving the circularity of their operations, promoting good practises and circular business models, as well as the co-creation and development of circular economy roadmaps for Serbia.

In December 2018, UNDP launched the impact acceleration programme "Together for Sustainable Business", piloting impact investment mechanisms for the circular economy. The programme will support 10 micro, small or medium-sized companies in introducing innovation and growing their operations while generating positive environmental and social impacts.

Recognising the need to promote eco-design, a Young Balkan Designers Open call was launched, inviting designers to propose circular design solutions that promote the sustainability and circulation of products, materials and services. Likewise, capacity building of research institutions will support the R&D necessary to find appropriate solutions in the areas of technological, social and business-model innovation.

UNDP is committed to building a circular culture among all stakeholders along the value chain. The project team organised a series of creative workshops with schoolchildren, while Food Waste Reduction workshops were organised in partnership with the Serbian Ministry of Environmental Protection, the Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Food Banks, Restaurant Associations and Social Enterprises.

The overarching goal of all these activities is to support sustainable growth in Serbia, growth that stimulates innovation and competitiveness, protects our environment and our health, while ensuring that no one is either left behind or excluded from the progress.

It is estimated that a third of all food produced globally is discarded. Each person in Serbia wastes an average of 35kg of food annually. At the same time, there are over 35,000 people using 75 Soup Kitchens across the country.

UN SDG 12 calls for a 50 per cent reduction in global food waste at the retail and consumer level by 2030.



Increasing Energy Efficiency in Serbian Municipalities

In 2017, UNDP helped 110 countries access about \$2 billion in grants for energy projects



Wood pellet fired boiler in a primary school in Raška

"With energy efficiency measures implemented and mindful consumption, we could save up to 30% annually on our energy bills, and use the savings for other purposes that benefit the local community," - Aleksandra Stojiljković, City of Leskovac Energy Manager

Impact of 13 demonstration site improvements:

- **Estimated energy savings: 2 million kWh/year**
- **Estimated CO2 emission reduction: 1,500 tonnes annually**

In line with the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan and the EU Directive on Energy Efficiency, Serbia committed itself to reaching a national indicative energy savings target of nine per cent in the period between 2010 and 2018. According to the Law on Efficient Use of Energy, municipalities with 20,000 citizens or more (85 in total) must appoint energy managers, adopt energy efficiency plans and programmes, implement energy efficiency measures and achieve energy savings targets.

In partnership with the Ministry of Mining and Energy, and with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNDP works to improve the energy and cost efficiency of public buildings and municipal services in Serbia, as well as to increase investments in energy efficiency of public facilities. The project "Energy Management Systems in municipalities throughout Serbia" combines donor funds, state budget funds for energy efficiency and municipal resources.

At the national level, UNDP has provided expert support for initiating, drafting or improving laws, regulations and policies related to municipal energy management, including the Law on Efficient Use of Energy, Government Decrees and Rulebooks governing municipal energy efficiency. The UNDP-developed EMIS, Energy Management Information System, was included as a mandatory tool within the official Energy Management System of the Republic of Serbia.

At the local level, 13 public buildings in 13 municipalities throughout Serbia were the first to be selected as demonstration sites, where energy efficiency improvements were carried out. Significant energy savings and reductions in CO2 emissions showed other local governments the value of such measures. UNDP assisted 29 municipalities and three towns in implementing their Energy Efficiency Programmes and Plans. With project support, local energy management offices were established in 12 municipalities and 150 municipal technicians learned how to improve energy management at the local level, while 125 training participants later obtained a license for Municipal Energy Manager and 611 public servants were trained how to enter data into EMIS. Additionally, 50 engineers learned how to manage Energy Efficiency of large public buildings, while 42 obtained a license for Building Energy Manager.

The Untapped Potential of Biomass

"All six CHP plants that were supported in their construction by the project we are implementing with the UNDP have been connected to the grid and have started producing green energy. The capacity of biogas plants in Serbia has thus increased significantly, which is an exceptional result and a rare example of direct, tangible and well-designed donor support to investments. The Ministry is extremely satisfied and proud of this outcome," - Miloš Banjac, Assistant Minister of Mining and Energy



Biogas CHP plant in Alibunar

The use of biomass is a technically feasible and cost-effective solution for a great part of Serbia's needs for renewable energy

The benefits of renewable energy are numerous and far-reaching, from improved public health and a preserved environment, to strengthened national economies. The positive impacts of clean energy include decreased pollution and global warming emissions, as well as tangible economic effects – through the creation of local jobs, reduced dependence on imports of foreign fossil fuel supplies and greater energy security.

Recognising these benefits and setting targets at the level of the EU Energy Community, Serbia committed to increasing the share of renewable energy in its overall energy consumption to 27 per cent by 2020, compared to 21.2% in 2009. The National Action Plan for Renewable Energy Sources envisages setting up 30 megawatts (MW) of biogas plants by the target year. Agricultural biomass constitutes 61% of the total potential of renewable energy sources in Serbia, but is not commonly used for energy generation. An added value of energy generation from this source is the reduction of agricultural production waste, which is a significant source of water and soil pollution in Serbia.

In partnership with the Serbian Ministry of Mining and Energy, and with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNDP Serbia is implementing the five-year project "Reducing Barriers to Accelerate the Development of Biomass Markets". Six biogas combined heat and power plants (CHP) with a total capacity of 6.35MWe have been constructed in Aleksinac, Alibunar, Bač and Zrenjanin. The \$1.6 million of investment grants provided by the project have secured a further \$21million of private investments. Aside from the financial value, the host communities gained a 100 new jobs, levels of pollution and waste were reduced, and the local power distribution network was improved. Additionally, the UNDP team prepared methodology for monitoring raw material consumption and energy production in this type of facility.

In order to support biomass markets in Serbia, UNDP experts developed a model of contracts for long-term biomass supply and prepared technical specifications of wood and agricultural biomass. An online biomass e-trading platform has also been set up and is operational, managed by the Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Serbia. In parallel, a model report has been developed for producers of electrical energy from biomass, to complement the Government Decree on Privileged Power Producers.

Focus on Resilient Communities

"The overall impact of the migration crisis on Šid has not been adverse, but beneficial. Living with migrants can only improve our lives," - Zoran Semenić, Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Šid



Globally, countries are paying an increasingly high price for shocks that disrupt the normal functioning of communities. Following the floods of 2014, Serbia again, in 2015, faced the shock of the flow of over a million refugees and migrants transiting through its territory, and local communities had to raise to this challenge and its many economic and social ramifications. Crisis prevention and resilient development are a priority for UNDP in Serbia. UNDP works together with international and national partners to ensure that cities and municipalities in Serbia are better prepared for shocks and are more resilient to any type of disaster.

As part of the European Union's Support to Migration Management, UNDP – in partnership with the World Health Organisation (WHO), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Project Services Agency (UNOPS) – delivers EU funding and support to 18 communities hosting some 4,000 refugees and migrants, focusing on improved health facilities and services, communal infrastructure and public services and social cohesion, with the overarching goal of improving life for all people living in these communities. The team of UN agencies works in close cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of European Integration and the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, as well as other stakeholders. While leading and ensuring the management of the Open Communities – Successful Communities project, the UNDP team is focused on communal infrastructure and public services, and works jointly with IOM and WHO on social cohesion measures. The project upgraded public health, social and education services in Lajkovac, Preševo, Subotica, Belgrade, Dimitrovgrad, Tutin, Banja Koviljaca, Šid, Pirot and Sombor. Vranje and Bujanovac received complete equipment and furniture for a local school and nursery school, while the Emergency team of the Bosilegrad Municipality and a pre-school institute from Sombor respectively received an off-road vehicle and a passenger vehicle. Experts were engaged in carrying out the hydrogeological exploration of a spring in Preševo, testing groundwater and drilling an exploitation well in the municipality of Bujanovac, to identify solutions for sustainable water supply in these local communities. Specialised utility vehicles and equipment for water supply and sustainable waste management were also procured in Obrenovac, Sjenica, Bela Palanka, Bujanovac and Kikinda. A new ambulance facility was constructed and equipped in Preševo, and an outpatient clinic was reconstructed in Bogovodja, Lajkovac municipality. In Belgrade, UNDP developed the Expansion and Reconstruction Project for the Institute for Emergency Medical Care, which enabled the smooth launch of construction works in 2019.

The capacity gap in local public services was bridged by engaging professional staff, including hydro engineers, doctors, public health technicians, nurses, drivers of sanitary vehicles, utility workers and workers in maintaining the hygiene of public institutions. This ensured the high quality and availability of services vital for citizens, refugees and migrants in these municipalities.

In parallel, joint volunteer actions organised with migrants and volunteers from local communities enabled them to get to know each other, overcome prejudices and build bridges between host and displaced communities.

The EU project 'Open Communities – Successful Communities' reached approximately two million inhabitants of municipalities on the migration route that now enjoy better public services and improved local resilience.

Strong Partnerships for Stronger Impact: Government, IFIs and UNDP, Working Together for Development Results

“UNDP has provided invaluable support to the Public Investment Management Office in ensuring timely delivery and good progress on the implementation of sovereign loans,” - **Marko Blagojević**, Director of the Public Investment Management Office

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a groundbreaking framework for people, our planet and prosperity. Implementing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will require that we leverage all sources of finance – domestic and international – reinforcing each other. In order for that to happen, partnerships arise as a powerful resource for delivering meaningful impact. UNDP’s new Strategic Plan calls for UNDP to play a stronger role as a provider of integrated development solutions, tackling multidimensional development challenges through SDG country-driven approaches, and to help governments leverage development financing. As a development partner in nearly 170 countries, UNDP supports governments in designing and implementing projects funded from their own revenue or from grants or loans provided by International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

Globally, over the last decade, UNDP has helped governments and IFIs implement projects with IFI financing worth over \$2 billion, helping to overcome operational bottlenecks while developing capacity and supporting the implementation of national development priorities.

UNDP supports governments throughout the project cycle – designing bankable projects, implementing projects and providing monitoring and evaluation oversight as a third party or fiduciary agent – such as for large-scale grants submitted through the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) or Green Climate Fund (GCF). If loan implementation is delayed, UNDP may be called in by a government to support activities outlined under the loan agreement. When there is a prospective loan under discussion, UNDP may also be brought in to provide technical policy assistance or capacity development services (in the areas of recruitment, procurement and financial management).

The benefits of tripartite collaboration include capacity development, faster implementation, lower costs, leveraged resources and increased transparency. UNDP has been working to facilitate an institutional environment that is conducive to closer collaboration with IFIs, developing joint action plans, mapping opportunities for cooperation and organising events and technical discussions to engage with IFIs and governments to lay the foundations of more effective development partnerships. Global memoranda or frameworks for strategic cooperation have been signed with, among others, the Asian Development Bank (2007), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (2014), the Islamic Development Bank (2016), the European Investment Bank (2016), the Council of Europe Development Bank (2017) and the World Bank Group (2018).

In Serbia, UNDP has supported the government on loan implementation since 2016, by attracting the best available expertise necessary for project management, including in complex procurement. The results today show that uniting forces produces better results and has a greater impact.

“The benefits of UNDP support to governments in delivering their domestic resources, including loans, can include quality development results with savings in terms of time and funds, while strengthening institutions and implementation capacity. UNDP’s extensive experience working in countries around the world and partnering with a wide array of stakeholders – including governments, IFIs and others – allows it to provide meaningful support to member countries as they work to achieve the SDGs and strengthen the livelihoods of millions of people,” - **Achim Steiner**, UNDP Administrator



Inequality - a Common Priority

"The culture of the Roma people is very rich, it just needs to be portrayed in the right way. The knowledge and experience I gained in the past six months will help me present it through film, music and other areas of contemporary creativity," - Tomislav Jovanović, Roma UN Volunteer at the Serbian Ministry of Culture and Information

A stocktaking of the MDGs, and the adoption of the SDGs in 2015, showed that the world halved levels of extreme poverty, but the eradication of poverty until 2030 requires concomitant action on inequality. The dedicated SDG 10 calls for the empowerment and social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

In Serbia, UNDP has had disadvantaged and marginalised communities in the scope of its work for many years. The current programme has a range of initiatives addressing the needs of Roma, people with disabilities, vulnerable women, the LGBTI community, people living with HIV and the unemployed. Projects are funded by the Austrian Development Agency, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Government of Turkey. It is an area of close joint action, policy support and advocacy with other UN agencies, think-tanks and civil society organisations.



30 Roma UNVs were selected to link Roma communities and public institutions in their municipalities

In 2017, UNDP carried out the fourth round of its regional survey on the socio-economic position of marginalised Roma¹ in the Western Balkans, with the support of the European Commission and in cooperation with the World Bank. The survey contributed to filling the gaps in the availability of data needed to monitor and inform socio-economic policies for Roma inclusion. According to the data, the most alarming situation in Serbia is that of the Roma on the labour market: just over a fifth of Roma citizens aged 15 to 64 were employed in 2017, while only a third participated in the Serbian labour market. The employment rate of Roma women was even lower, standing at just nine per cent. Rates of NEET [Not in Education, Employment or Training] among young (18-24) Roma are very high, at 73 per cent (88 per cent for women).

In 2018, UNDP supported the Centre for Social Policy (CSP) in launching a regional dialogue on the Welfare State in the Western Balkans. CSP also prepared a Human Development Paper for Serbia, focusing on inequality. UNDP also supported the Centre for Public Policy

Research in organising the first conference in Serbia focusing on the Future of Work. In 2018, UNDP worked with a group of researchers in an experiment to assess the universal basic income's approach in the context of welfare system reform.

In partnership with UNHCR, UNDP helped 30 young Roma become young UN volunteers. After a period of training, they were engaged in local institutions in 24 municipalities and cities where they live, in order to influence social and political processes relevant for Roma inclusion and advocate for the interests of the Roma community.

UNDP is a partner in a joint UN project with the UN Human Rights Team, UNFPA, UN Women and ILO, focused on ensuring autonomy, giving a voice to and stimulating the active participation of persons with disabilities (PwD) in social life and the labour market. To date, 79 PwDs have learned about their rights, the legal framework and practises regarding PwD employment, as well as how to advocate for their interests.

Towards a Society With Zero Tolerance to Violence Against Women



Women's Parliamentary Network of Vojvodina



Police filed 7106 criminal reports in 2017, which is an 88% increase compared to 2014

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Unfortunately, women and girls still suffer discrimination and violence in every part of the world. In Serbia, one in three women is exposed to physical violence, one in two women has experienced or is experiencing some form of psychological violence, while, on average, a woman is murdered by a current or former partner or family member every 10 days.

To build a society without violence against women and girls in Serbia, UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF are supporting the Government of the Republic of Serbia, headed by the Coordination Body for Gender Equality, through a joint initiative to provide an integrated response to violence against women and girls. The project brings together ministries, state bodies and institutions, as well as civil society organisations and media, to prevent violence and ensure that, when violence occurs, the victims receive timely and effective protection and support, and the perpetrators are duly punished. The initiative is funded by the Government of Sweden.

Domestic violence and violence in intimate partner relations is a complex issue, with multiple and difficult root causes that are slow to overcome. This is why this joint project applies a comprehensive approach to combating and preventing violence against women, by supporting activities aimed at prevention, protection and prosecution and the adoption of adequate national policies. It also helps establish broad partnerships and improve cooperation among all relevant state sectors (social protection, judiciary, police, education, health), non-governmental organisations, the media and other stakeholders at national, provincial and local levels. All activities are inspired by a common goal: to develop a social and institutional environment in Serbia that does not tolerate violence against women and girls.

For example, most recently, 200 police officers learned how to estimate risk, collect evidence and deal with domestic violence cases; 2,500 primary and secondary school pupils participated in activities promoting gender equality, raising awareness of gender-based violence and the promotion of healthy lifestyles, while 200 teachers learned how to prevent gender-based violence in schools. Additionally, 140 health workers learned how to recognise and document gender-based violence. An online resource was created for those suffering in cases of domestic violence, their families and professionals dealing with domestic violence. In 2018, the group Journalists Against Violence was also established, comprising 27 renowned editors and journalists and tasked with improving media reporting on violence against women in Serbia.

"It is up to media to constantly warn about the issue of violence, and to insist for the officials authorised by the law to prevent it, and for the society to recognise and condemn it" - **Ljubica Gojčić**, member of the group "Journalists Against Violence"

Open and Digital Serbian Assemblies

"The introduction of e-Parliament enables savings in the amount of 4.5 million RSD annually! Additionally, this digital tool assists in guiding/directing the work of the parliament towards its purpose – to discuss items on the agenda and to represent the interests of the people, rather than being used for self-promotion and inter-party disagreements,"
- Zoran Vukašinović, Secretary General of the Leskovac Local Assembly



E-parliament software, comprising DMS and e-voting on an open platform, is now available for customisation to all interested local assemblies in Serbia

UNDP has been one of the first development partners of the National Assembly of Serbia since 2004, and has helped the National Assembly introduce public hearings and mobile committee sessions, alongside a number of oversight tools. Building on these results, the Swiss Government started working with UNDP as a development partner to further parliamentary reform in Serbia and transfer practises and tools from the National Assembly to local assemblies. On the margins of local self-government units for years, usually with no staff or means of securing better oversight, local assemblies started – with SDC and UNDP support - organising and digitalising themselves. Local budget portals are piloted by UNDP with the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities in 10 municipalities, based on the National Assembly's portal for monitoring public budget spending. Tailor-made e-Parliament software was developed and introduced in Zrenjanin and Leskovac. This software, developed on an open platform, includes DMS and E-voting and is available to all interested local assemblies; customisation is already underway in the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and Niš Assembly. Another new tool is the Local Assemblies' Accountability

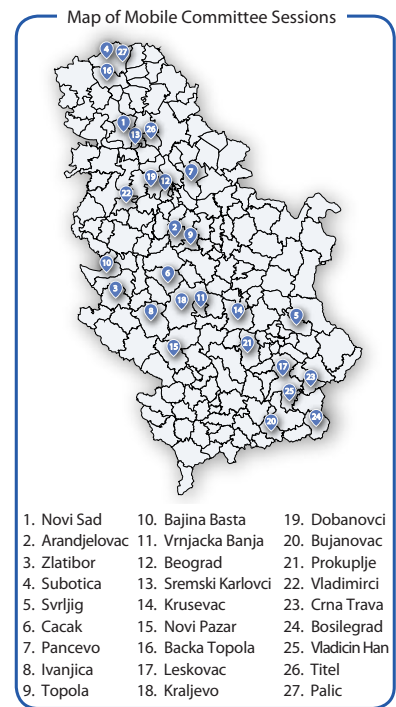
Index. An October 2018 Local Assemblies' Conference in Novi Sad saw the launch of an annual platform for cooperation and policy dialogue.

Knowledge sharing between the National Assembly and local assemblies, especially in terms of advancing SDGs, is featured as best practise (e.g. in the UNDP and IPU 2nd Global Parliamentary Report 2017¹, as well as in the UN Secretary-General's 14th March 2018 Report on interaction between the UN, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union²).

In order to contribute towards the quality of legislative drafting, SDC and UNDP supported the Belgrade Faculty of Law in preparing a Legislative Drafting Monograph, the first of its kind in Serbia, and introducing a Legislative Drafting Course in the regular curricula. During this course, over 400 participants – from the National Assembly, ministries, local administrations, independent bodies, as well as students – learnt legislative drafting techniques and examples.

With the support of the Swiss Government and UNDP, the National Assembly of Serbia formed its cross-party "Focus Group for Monitoring the Government's implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)", focusing on localising SDGs and engaging members of the youth. The main objective is to monitor the work and activities of the Inter-ministerial working group on SDGs; adopt laws supporting the implementation of the SDGs; amendments to the Law on the Budget for SDGs; raise awareness of the importance of the SDGs among MPs, local communities and citizens, especially youth. It is expected that the National Assembly will develop a permanent control mechanism for the implementation of the SDGs in Serbia; supporting both national and local governments, CSOs and citizens' activities on the implementation of the SDGs.

UNDP is currently strengthening one in every three parliaments worldwide and supporting an election every two weeks.



Strengthening Accountable Public Finance Management at Central and Local Levels

The Government of Serbia adopted a comprehensive Public Financial Management Reform Programme in late 2015. With donor funding from the governments of Sweden and Switzerland, UNDP works together with the Serbian Ministry of Finance, the State Audit Institution and the Public Procurement Office on the implementation of key reform measures with beneficiaries at central and local levels, in the areas of budget planning and execution, financial control and external scrutiny over public finances. The immediate objectives of increasing technical and operational capacities and better accountability in public finance management at all levels contribute to the goals of reduced risks for corruption and strengthening the rule of law, and advance key milestones and benchmarks under chapters 5 and 32 of Serbia's EU accession negotiations and SDG #16.

Interventions have contributed to increasing transparency in planning and monitoring budget execution at the local level. Public Budget Portals were developed in 10 local self-governments, while best practise models for involving citizens in local budget planning and spending were promoted via a national media campaign.

UNDP contributed to drafting the Public Procurement Strategy and has continuously supported the preparation of model documents for public procurement procedures promoting the most economically acceptable offer versus the lowest price criteria. The average number of bids submitted per competitive procedure has increased during the project period to three bids per tender, while the share of negotiated procedures represents three per cent (down from 5% in 2015) of the total value of concluded contracts.

Compared to 2015, the number of published State Audit Institution (SAI) reports increased from 173 to 390 in 2017, while the number of Certified Internal Auditors in the public sector increased from 258 in 2015 to over 400 in 2018; a new, more transparent and cost-effective system for certifying internal auditors in the public sector was also adopted. New forms of audit (IT and Performance audits) were introduced in line with the standards of INTOSAI and EU Accession requirements.

With regard to improving municipal audits, 70 Internal Auditors working in local administrations upgraded their knowledge and skills in planning, executing and reporting on the results of internal audits, in line with the international standards of internal audits. UNDP developed an e-learning platform for certified internal auditors in the public sector. That platform is now integrated into the website of the Central Harmonization Unit (CHU).

SIDA and UNDP also supported the development of custom-made software for the Public Debt Administration of the Ministry of Finance, which was launched in December 2018 and which allows PDA to manage public debt with the benefits of automation, with the easy preparation of reports, debt records and debt analysis and forecasting.

Local self-governments are financing civil society organisations in implementing various initiatives. Recognising the need to further strengthen the capacity of LSGs in this area, UNDP implements the EU-funded Regional Programme of Local Democracy (ReLOaD) in Serbia, working in partnership with four local self-governments and 17 civil society organisations (CSOs) to ensure that CSO projects financed from the local budget are in line with local development priorities. This initiative benefits 4,000 people in these communities.



"Citizens, as well as local governments, are now more aware of how important it is to organise public debates, to jointly discuss and decide on all issues of importance to the local community, particularly budget spending and investment plans. In this way we decentralise decision-making and contribute to a more democratic society," - Miroslav Mijatović, CSO of the Podrinje Anti-corruption Team (PAKT), Loznica

Opening Data Contributes to Growth

Open data stimulates economic growth: the European Data Portal estimated (2016) the total market value of open data in the EU at between €193 -€209 billion, while the potential global economic benefits are valued at \$3 billion annually. Open data also improves the efficiency of public administrations, rendering the work and decisions of public officials more transparent. This leads to greater accountability and trust, as well as stimulating collaboration and citizen participation.

In 2015, in agreement with the Serbian Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, UNDP Serbia and the World Bank launched the 'Open Data Readiness Assessment', which showed that Serbia had adequate preconditions to start a national open data initiative. Consequently, open data was introduced to the national Strategy for E-Government Development and the Action Plan for Open Government Partnership (OGP).

UNDP supports the Government's Open Data Working Group, which today has 58 members from more than 25 government, civil society, industrial, academic and international organisations.

Open data features prominently in the current programme of the Government of Serbia. Speaking in her Keynote Address to the National Assembly upon assuming office, Prime Minister Ana Brnabić pointed out that opening up access to the data of all state institutions in Serbia could lead to GDP growth of one per cent and an improvement of up to two per cent in the employment rate.

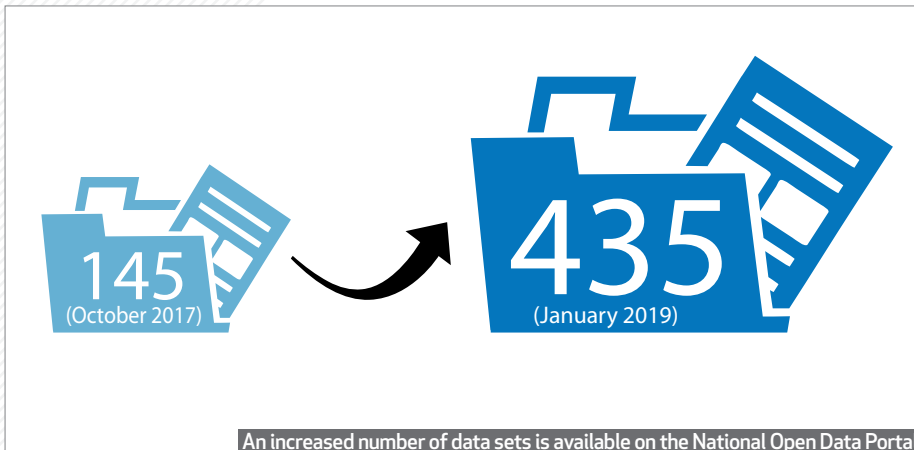
To help Serbia join the data revolution

and empower all stakeholders to participate and compete in an increasingly digital world, UNDP implements the "Open Data – Open Opportunities" project in partnership with the Government of Sweden, the World Bank and the UK Embassy, whilst working hand in hand with the Serbian Government Office for IT and e-Government (ITE).

The ITE took over the coordination of open data and launched the National Open Data Portal (<http://data.gov.rs>) in October 2017. Since then, ITE and UNDP have jointly supported 25 state institutions in six sectors that have now opened 435 data sets which are currently available on the Portal.

At the policy level, the National Assembly of Serbia adopted the Law on e-Government, which regulates the Open Data framework, while the draft law amending the Freedom of Information Act stipulates that state institutions should disclose information of public importance through Digital Information Directories in an Open Data format.

In order to create a dynamic Open Data platform and overall ecosystem, in addition to a favourable policy and regulative environment, and data supply by public agencies and institutions, there is a need for a demand for Open Data and its innovative reuse. For this reason, ITE and UNDP are connecting stakeholders from the private, public and civil sectors, as well as science and research organisations, through training courses, knowledge sharing, study visits and mentoring programmes. Ten different civil society organisations have to date received grants for open data work, while three open data challenges have recently been launched to solicit innovative ideas based on open data. In 2018, with ITE and UNDP support, the first Open Data Week in Serbia was organised, with 11 events throughout the country bringing together over 350 participants from the burgeoning open data community.

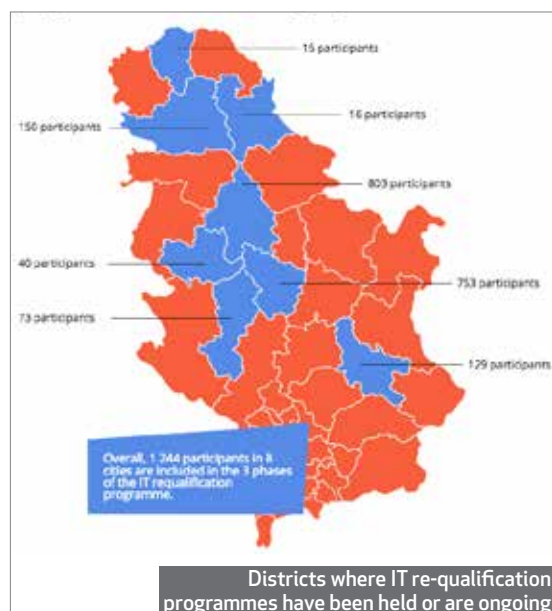


Public institutions produce and preserve huge amounts of data. When more of this valuable information is available online in an open form, the wider public may use it for new purposes, enabling innovation and accelerating development.

"After many years of hard work on the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Initiative, I am proud that we have established excellent cooperation and became true and equal partners with the civil sector" - Dragana Brajović, OGP Consultant at the Serbian Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government

Moving Towards Digital Transformation

“Digital revolution provides us with the opportunity for the economic development of our country. It gives us a chance to become competitive on the market and catch up with the developed countries. This technological revolution fundamentally changes our lives, it is inevitable and unstoppable. The Office has taken steps in this direction through the projects we implement in this field and we are successfully moving towards the digital transformation.” - Mihailo Jovanović, Director, Office for Information Technologies and e-Government



Digital transformation is high on the agenda of the Serbian Government, which considers the modernisation of government institutions, but also utilising the potential of digital in the economy. Among the top priorities is introducing e-services that are cost-effective, secure and citizen-centric, and coordinating the implementation of ICT policies, but also re-training in IT skills, to meet the demand of industry.

The Government of Serbia's Office for IT and e-Government (ITE) is leading the way on the implementation of this agenda, and in 2018 – along with UNDP and the UK Good Governance Fund – it initiated the project “Serbia at your fingertips – digital transformation for development,” to prepare and support the Serbian public administration and the economy in digital transformation, enabling the Government of Serbia to provide more transparent and accountable digital services by 2020. Key UNDP and ITE partners in this initiative include the Ministerial Council for IT and Innovative Entrepreneurship, the Coordination Council for e-Government and the Prime Minister's Council for Creative Industries, all of which work jointly to further advance e-governance in Serbia.

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UNDP is providing expert support in drafting the new National e-Government Strategy and implementing the new Law on e-Governance. A Contact centre for support to government institutions in the provision of e-services has been established within ITE, while support for the improvement of the ICT infrastructure required for the digital transformation of public administration is underway, with recommendations for Government Network and Cloud improvement, and the conceptualisation of the Government Data Centre/Disaster Recovery facility in Kragujevac.

In order to increase the number of IT specialists on the labour market, 731 individuals have been trained as junior programmers through the re-qualification programme in eight cities across the country. Via UNDP, the Government of Serbia piloted the outsourcing of various models for the provision of IT training for both employed and unemployed persons, seeking to institutionalise the approach based on lessons learnt. More than 10 services providers have so far participated in this endeavour, and trainees have started finding employment opportunities.

In August 2018, UNDP joined the Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (AI), a consortium of companies, academics and NGOs working to ensure that AI is developed in a safe, ethical and transparent manner. Founded in 2016 by tech giants Amazon, DeepMind/Google, Facebook, IBM and Microsoft, it has since been joined by both industry leaders and non-profit organisations.

This project builds on the work of recent years in terms of introducing software solutions to modernise the work of state institutions and render them more efficient. For example, UNDP supported the Serbian Business Registry Agency in enabling the online registration of entrepreneurs and one-member companies, making the registry not only simpler and faster, but also cheaper. Local assemblies across Serbia are installing custom-made software for monitoring local budget expenditures online, developed jointly by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, the Government of Sweden and UNDP, as well as e-parliament software supported by UNDP and the Swiss Government. The Public Procurement Office, with the support of UNDP, is taking open data a step further by introducing the open contracting standard. The management of public debt is more effective and efficient following the recent introduction of custom-made software for the Public Debt Administration. These are only some examples of areas where UNDP has sought to improve practices and processes through digital transformation over the past decade.

Proud to partner with:

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

European Union

Government of Japan

Government of Sweden

Government of Switzerland

Government of the United Kingdom

Government of the Slovak Republic

Government of the United States of America

Government of Germany

The World Bank

Government of Turkey

Government of the Russian Federation

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Government of Austria

Government of Italy

Government of Denmark

Council of Europe Development Bank

European Investment Bank

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe



National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia

Government of the Republic of Serbia

Prime Minister's Office

General Secretariat of the Government of Serbia

Ministry of Interior

Ministry of Finance

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry
and Water Management

Ministry of Environmental Protection

Ministry of Mining and Energy

Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Public Administration
and Local Self-Government

Ministry of Labour, Employment,
Veteran and Social Affairs

Local Self-Government Units

Commissioner for Protection of Equality,

Office of Human and Minority Rights

Commission for Protection of Rights
in Public Procurement Procedures

Coordination Body for Gender Equality

Coordination Body for Monitoring the Implementation
of the Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma

Public Investment Management Office

Office for IT and e-Government

Central Harmonization Unit

Public Debt Administration

Tax Administration

Public Procurement Office

State Audit Institution

National Academy for
Public Administration

Judicial Academy