



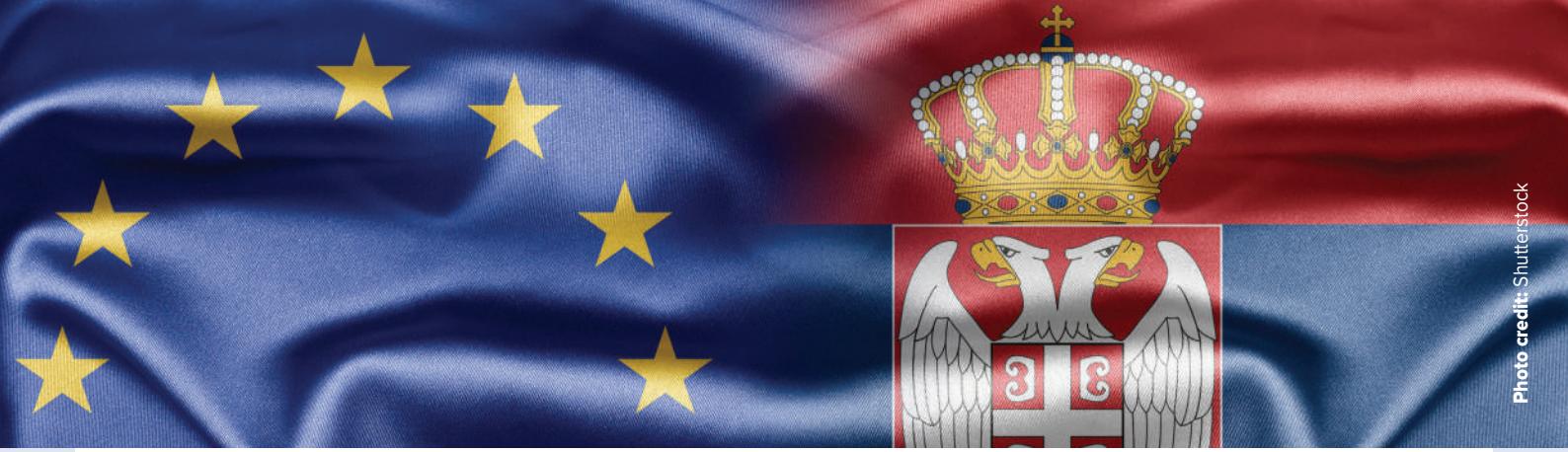
Funded by  
the European Union



Photo credit: EU Info centre Serbia

# UNDP Partnership with the European Union in Serbia

May 2025



The European Union (EU) has been a major partner and supporter of UNDP since 2004, working to boost resilience and recovery from crises in 140 countries worldwide. In Serbia, since early 2000s, UNDP has been combining international expertise with efficient and transparent service provision, supporting various aspects of the country's development, always guided by the national needs and priorities. Our strong partnership with the EU assisted the Serbian people and institutions during some of the most difficult times, from floods and migration crisis to COVID-19 pandemic. Together we ensured that the country not just recovers but also becomes better equipped and more resilient for the future, ready to embark on the path of Green and Digital transformation, towards sustainable development. In 2024, EU allocated approximately \$10,529,746.34 million to support UNDP-led initiatives in Serbia.

## Focus areas:



### RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT

- Disaster Risk Resilience
- Emergency Management
- Health System Resilience



### GREEN TRANSITION

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Innovation
- Digital & Green tools



### DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

- Digital public services
- E-health
- Emerging tech



### GOOD GOVERNANCE

- Public Finance
- Transparent local governance

### GREEN TRANSITION

- Civic engagement
- Support for Roma returnees
- Sustainable peace

## UNDP projects in Serbia supported by the European Union

▼ PROJECT TITLE	▼ FUNDING SOURCE	▼ PERIOD	▼ TOTAL BUDGET USD*
<strong>RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT</strong>			
EU for Civil Protection and Disaster Resilience Strengthening in Serbia	European Commission	Mar 2020 – Mar 2025	<strong>\$15.82M</strong>
EU for Enabling a More Responsive Healthcare System	European Commission	Feb 2023 – Feb 2027	<strong>\$12.92M</strong>
<strong>GREEN TRANSITION</strong>			
EU for Green Agenda in Serbia	European Commission	Dec 2021 – Jan 2026	<strong>\$8.11M</strong>
<strong>DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION</strong>			
Digital Service Design Hub: Clicking together with Citizens	European Commission contribution to the Joint SDG fund	Sep 2024 – Sep 2027	<strong>\$3.23M</strong>
<strong>GOOD GOVERNANCE</strong>			
EU Public Finance Management Facility	European Commission	Dec 2022 – Jan 2027	<strong>\$14.39M</strong>
EU support to Confidence Building in the Western Balkans	European Commission	Jan 2023 – Dec 2026	<strong>\$2.10M</strong>
Local Democracy in the Western Balkans ReLOaD 2	European Commission	Jan 2021 – Dec 2024	<strong>\$2.06 M</strong>
Local Democracy in the Western Balkans ReLOaD 3	European Commission	Feb 2025 – Jan 2029	<strong>\$1.37M</strong>
Strengthen national and local systems to support the effective socio-economic integration of returnees in the Western Balkans	European Commission	Oct 2020 – Dec 2024	<strong>\$1.32M</strong>

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



# EU for Civil Protection and Disaster Resilience Strengthening in Serbia (EU for Serbia Resilient to Disasters)

Funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP from March 2020 to March 2025, this USD 15.82M project significantly enhanced Serbia's resilience to disasters and climate change. It has improved capabilities and processes for managing disasters, establishing effective systems at both national and local levels. The project has also strengthened cross-sector and institutional cooperation, ensuring faster, more coordinated, and effective responses to natural and man-made disasters.



## RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT

### Key Achievements:

*Equipping the national-level and local community' responders to effectively handle emergencies:*

- Organized 15 air freights and delivered 721 tons of medical equipment and supplies during COVID-19 global crisis;
- Delivered 12 ambulances, 2 decontamination vehicles and 75 protective suits - to the national health system;
- Delivered 27 forest fire vehicles with ultra high-pressure system pumps, 9 fire and rescue water tender trucks, and an all-terrain vehicle and a special purpose cargo vehicle – to the national Sector for Emergency Situations;
- Delivered specialized and transport vehicles, safety and rescue equipment and highly durable uniforms to the Mountain Rescue Service of Serbia.
- Following the major floods in 2014, delivered 921 sets of uniforms to the West Morava River Basin (WMRB) civil protection unit, developed Mapping Report for this area's critical locations, and delivered 600 meters of mobile flood protection system (dams);

*Training emergency responders:*

- Established national pool of certified trainers and trained 1,126 local level actors coming from 91 LSGs on civil protection, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and recovery, and climate change adaptation;
- Developed targeted E-learning modules within the National Academy for Public Administration (NAPA) e-learning platform for civil servants in Serbia;
- Certified 14 experienced Mountain Rescue Service of Serbia's staff for helio, cable car and swift water rescue.

*Innovative DRR digital tools, supporting policy development and knowledge sharing:*

- Developed and set up a Disaster Risk Register platform;
- Drafted new DRR Strategy and the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment methodology to evaluate the impacts of a disaster on a country, and supported the development of the targeted academic curricula on the topic;
- Pioneering assessment of the impact of the post 2014 floods DRR measures 10 years after the crisis.



# EU for Enabling a More Responsive Healthcare System (EU for Healthcare in Serbia)



Photo credit: UNDP Serbia

This USD 12.92M initiative, funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP and WHO in partnership with Serbia's Ministry of Health, commenced in February 2023 and will continue until February 2027. The project aims to modernize and build the resilience and capacity of Serbia's healthcare system to effectively respond to public health threats, in alignment with EU and international standards.



RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT / DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

## Key Objectives:

- Upgrade the public health laboratory system;
- Build capacity and strengthen emergency preparedness and response of the health system;
- Improve Health Information System and establish the E-Health platform;
- Build capacity for communication and raising awareness in a health crisis.

## Key Results:

- Ongoing reconstruction and equipping of 35 microbiological laboratories in 3 Institutes of Public Health in Belgrade, Nis, and Kragujevac in line with Biosafety Level 2/2+ standards;
- The Disaster Risk Register upgraded with public health related risks, to ensure better emergency preparedness. Software developed with 121 data layers and 1 sub-system published. Ongoing development of a user-friendly e-platform for an even easier navigation and use of all Register's functionalities;
- The Health Information System (HIS) improved through the upgrade of the Electronic Health Record system with a focus on monitoring communicable diseases. So far, 39 HIS transferred to the Government Data Centre to secure the data and prevent failures;
- Ongoing e-Health platform implementation, with planned training on its use for Primary Healthcare Centers' staff and citizens;
- Emergency Awareness Raising Events on how to behave in emergencies organized for citizens - 2 local events held, and 8 more local events will be organized throughout 2025 i 2026.



Photo credit: UNDP Serbia



Photo credit: UNDP Serbia



# EU for Green Agenda in Serbia (EU4GAS)

This USD 18.1 M initiative, five-year initiative is implemented with the technical and financial support of the European Union and in partnership with the Ministry of Environmental Protection by UNDP, in cooperation with Sweden and the European Investment Bank (EIB), with additional funding from the governments of Sweden, Switzerland and Serbia. The project organized Challenge Calls and established Green Incubator, offering expert mentorship to nurture innovative green ideas and concepts and prepare them for practical implementation. These cost-effective solutions, technologies, and business models enhance social, economic, and environmental conditions for citizens in Serbia, aligning with the European Green Deal and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans.



## GREEN TRANSITION

### Key Project Results:

#### **Green innovations supported:**

- 89 pilot and scale up projects contributing to decarbonization, circular economy, cleaner air, biodiversity conservation and sustainable food production supported (50 through the EU contribution);

#### **Leveraging financing for green transition:**

- EU contribution attracted additional funding from the governments of Sweden (USD 2.1M), Switzerland (USD 7.1M) and Serbia (USD 8.11M);
- The total cofinancing provided for green innovations amounts to USD 5,9M (EU provided USD 3,36M);

#### **Policy and institutional support:**

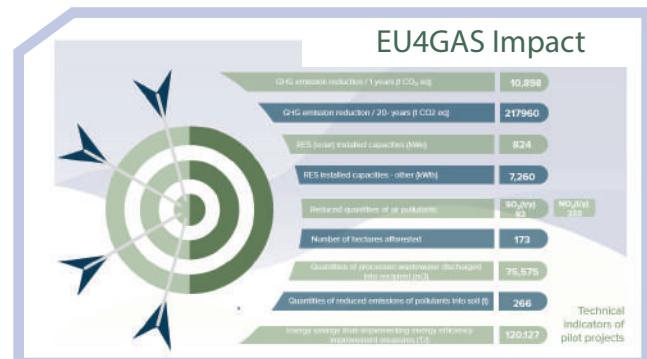
- Environmental Protection Strategy and Low-carbon Development Strategy drafted;
- Waste Management Law amended and more than 10 bylaws drafted, in cooperation with ministries for environment, energy and agriculture;
- Supported drafting two national reports under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change: the Biennial Updated Report and the 3rd National Communication.
- Developed the National Programme for Industrial Safety and Circular Economy Development Programme
- 20 plans in the area of air quality, waste management and forest restoration prepared on the local level;

#### **Trainings and expert support:**

- Almost 2.000 public servants from relevant ministries and agencies as well as professional Integrated pollution prevention and control (IPPC) and Emissions Trading System (ETS) operators, trained in the areas of GHG emission and pollution reduction, waste management and nature protection;
- More than 100 experts engaged to provide technical support for policy and regulatory improvements and the development of innovative green projects;
- 11 applications for IPPC permits prepared;

#### **Digital solutions:**

- IT system for monitoring, reporting and verification of GHG emissions developed (**e-GHG platform**);
- Pilot **online platform for traceability** of food products from producers to consumers developed - to promote short supply chains and domestic food production and improve consumer information.





# Digital Service Design Hub: Clicking Together with Citizens

This is a collaborative initiative under the UN Joint SDG Fund investment in Serbia, with a focus on expanding digital service accessibility. The initiative introduces an innovative, people-centered approach to public service delivery, aiming to overhaul access, quality, and effectiveness. It seeks to address exclusion and discrimination, enhance outreach to broader population, and pave the way for future-proof public services.



## Expected Key Results and Reach:

- **Citizen-Centric Services:** Redesigning digital public services to address access barriers, improve service quality, and enhance user satisfaction for approximately 2.45 million people, including vulnerable groups.
- **Rural Impact:** Co-designing services to foster more inclusive and efficient rural systems, addressing gaps in accessibility.
- **Building Government Capacity:** Establishing continuous education programs for civil servants, leveraging expertise from global leaders in service design, and fostering international collaboration through expert exchanges and initiatives like the International Telecommunication Union's GovStack programme.
- **Institutionalizing People-Centricity:** Embedding citizen-centered principles in national legislation and institutional practices to ensure long-term sustainability.
- **Design of Digital Public Goods:** Developing tools like the Service Design Manual and Design System to standardize and sustain people-first service development.



# clicking together with citizens



# EU Support for Public Finance Management in Serbia

The EU Public Finance Management Facility (EU PFM Facility) is a \$15.52 million initiative funded by the EU and implemented by UNDP in partnership with the Center for Excellence in Finance (CEF) and the Slovak Ministry of Finance. It supports Serbia to align its public finance system with EU standards and best practice for more efficient use of public resources. The initiative focuses on reforms in taxation, customs union, financial control and public procurement.



## GOOD GOVERNANCE

### Key Achievements

- Conducted Gap analysis of the national regulatory framework's compliance with the EU VAT Directive.
- Delivered and integrated hardware for the future Integrated Tariff Management System (ITMS) and trained Serbian Customs Administration staff on its usage.
- Introduced revised tools for reporting in primary and secondary schools across Serbia on Financial Management and Control and Internal Audit and developed unified annual reporting format for Public Internal Financial Control (PIFC) in schools.
- Prepared regulatory recommendations and foundational reports to support the establishment of analytical units at the central level, including an assessment of existing units and the institutional framework.
- Conducted a comprehensive gap assessment and developed a transition roadmap for adopting the new Global Internal Audit Standards, engaging over 300 internal auditors in orientation training sessions.
- Supported strategic planning and capacity building in public procurement by drafting the 2025 Action Plan, conducting a nationwide training needs analysis, and delivering targeted webinars to over 1,500 participants.
- Supported the Public Procurement Office in amending the Public Procurement Law and adopting implementing regulations, along with developing operational tools such as guidelines, instructions and manuals.
- Conducted a gap analysis of provisions on concessions and Public-Private Partnerships.
- Provided the Public Procurement Office with EU comparative analyses and practical recommendations to increase the use of the most economically advantageous tender criteria, enhance transparency, and boost competition, as well as supported improvements to the Public Procurement Portal's functionalities.

### Impact

Increased transparency, accountability, and interoperability of Serbia's public finance institutions, supporting sustainable governance and advancing progress in EU accession.



**EU Public Finance  
Management Facility**

# Regional Programme on Local Democracy in the Western Balkans 2 (ReLOaD 2)

The Regional Programme on Local Democracy in the Western Balkans 2 (ReLOaD 2) built on good practices of the Regional Programme on Local Democracy in the Western Balkans (ReLOaD, 2017-2020) and Local Democracy Strengthening Project (LOD, 2009-2016), also funded by the European Union (EU). ReLOaD2 was implemented as a regional initiative in 6 Western Balkans countries and territories, including Serbia. The project focused on strengthening partnerships between local governments (LGs) and civil society, by scaling a successful model of transparent project funding of CSOs from LGs budgets, aimed at greater citizens and youth participation in decision-making processes and improving the provision of services in local communities.



## GOOD GOVERNANCE

### ReLOaD Project Results in Serbia\*:

- **12 LGs** across Serbia participated as partners in the project (Dimitrovgrad, Kragujevac, Kuršumlija, Paraćin, Šabac, Babušnica, Vladičin Han, Vrnjačka Banja, Kruševac, Novi Sad, Subotica, and Topola).
- An analysis of financing mechanisms for CSOs was conducted in all **12 LGs**.
- **101 CSO** initiatives received financial support for implementation of local projects directly benefiting more than **15,000 citizens**.
- More than **50 representatives from 12 LGs working with CSOs** completed 5 modules of training on project management and the application of methodology for transparent CSO financing (LOD methodology).
- **Representatives from 300 CSOs** completed project management training.
- LGs provided training for **248 young** women and men in soft skills (communication, business, interpersonal skills). The trainings were conducted by **14 soft skills trainers** educated within the project.
- **23 young people** completed training on human rights, Sustainable Development Goals, and business and assertive communication, after which they were engaged on United Nations Volunteer (UNV) contracts in local institutions.

\* including the 1st phase

#### Next steps:

From 2025 to 2028 the project will continue as the Local Democracy in the Western Balkans 3 (ReLOaD 3) with a total budget of \$1.37M provided by the EU. It will build on the the previous two phases of the initiative to strengthen participatory democracies and the EU integration process in the Western Balkans, including Serbia. ReLOaD 3 will partner with 5 LGs in Serbia to empower civil society to actively engage in decision-making and citizen oversight, while stimulating local governments to create a supportive policy, legal and financial environment for civil society.



Photo credit: Momira Marković

# EU Support to Confidence Building in the Western Balkans

This is a regional initiative implemented in the Western Balkans countries and territories, including Serbia. It aims to increase accountability for war crimes in the region, support victims' access to justice and services, and foster dialogue within societies and ethnic groups about crimes committed during the 1990s. This will strengthen the rule of law, help the EU accession processes, and contribute to establishing a more favorable environment for solidarity, reconciliation, and sustainable peace in the region, leaving more resilient communities.



## GOOD GOVERNANCE

### Key Achievements in Serbia

- **Strengthening Judicial Cooperation:** More than 20 judges, prosecutors, and lawyers from Serbia exchanged experiences in war crimes prosecution with regional counterparts.
- **Training for Judicial Professionals:** More than 60 legal practitioners (judges, prosecutors, judicial and prosecutorial assistants, and lawyers) attended training sessions, seminars, and discussions on handling war crimes cases.
- **Improving legal framework:** In 2024, authorities in Serbia drafted the Law on Missing Persons. This has been the most significant step forward in Serbia over many years regarding reparations to victims. Once adopted, this law will comprehensively address and regulate many rights of the families of missing persons based on the principle of social solidarity, including their right to compensation.
- **Training for Victim Support Professionals:** Victims and witnesses have improved access to professional support, thanks to workshops for more than 50 representatives of legal and psychological assistance services.
- **Support to Local Initiatives:** A total of \$627,000 has been allocated to support 12 CSO initiatives for raising public awareness about transitional justice and reconciliation, as well as for supporting victims and witnesses of war crimes.



Photo credit: Jakov Simović

# Strengthen national and local systems to support the effective socio-economic integration of returnees in the Western Balkans

The project ran from 2020 to 2024 as a regional initiative in 3 Western Balkan countries, including Serbia. The total project budget for Serbia was 1.32 million USD. The overall goal of the project was to contribute to the effective reintegration of vulnerable returnees from the EU with particular attention to Roma. The project was focused on addressing key institutional barriers for reintegration of vulnerable returnees, and drivers of social and economic exclusion and outmigration, such as limited work opportunities, low-paid jobs, large informal sector and poor quality of social services. In Serbia, the project activities were implemented in partnership with 3 local governments: Novi Sad, Valjevo and Bujanovac.



## GOOD GOVERNANCE

### Key Results:

#### Policy Level

- Supported the consultative process for drafting of the **National Reintegration Program 2024-2026** - 3 regional workshops organized in cooperation with the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees And Migration with participation of CSOs and other interested parties.
- Local Action Plans for Reintegration of Returnees** adopted and implemented in partner LGs: Novi Sad, Valjevo and Bujanovac.
- Returnee-centred models for reintegration** are in full implementation in Bujanovac, Valjevo and Novi Sad. Each model is related to the policy, institutional and local context of the partner-locality, while models are embedded in the local action plans and strategies ensuring ownership and sustainability.

#### Services for Returnees

- 165 specialists** from the public sector and CSOs in Serbia trained to provide more effective support and services to returnees.
- 777 returnees** benefited from enhanced access to a wide range of services - obtaining personal IDs, access to social assistance, registering for employment mediation, support for enrolment of children in schools.
- 12 local, majority Roma CSOs** implemented a wide range of social cohesion initiatives (youth camp, employment fair, art workshop) in Novi Sad, Bujanovac and Valjevo, reaching **1,478 persons** across various age groups.

#### Skills & Employment

- 176 Roma & returnees** trained in **soft skills**, **150 Roma & returnees** trained in **IT & digital skills** and **120 Roma & returnees** completed the training and received nationally recognized certificates for **technical & vocational education and training (VET) skills**.
- 53 Roma and returnees** received support to establish a new business or to acquire equipment and develop business plans for their existing business. This resulted in establishment of **20 new businesses** and **60 new employments**.



Photo credit: Momira Marković



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Photo credit: UNDP Serbia