



Photo credit: Open data portal

UNDP Partnership with the UK in Serbia

June 2025



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The United Kingdom has been a long-standing partner of UNDP in supporting the digital transformation of the Serbian government and economy, and in promoting accountability, reconciliation and peace in the Western Balkans following the conflicts of the 1990s.

Thanks to UK support, in 2015, even before digitalization became the government's top priority, UNDP led the National Open Data Initiative. Together, we promoted the opening of public data for re-use and enabled the creation of new digital services tailored to the needs of citizens and businesses.

Building on these achievements, UK provided USD 2,4M for the UNDP initiative “Serbia at your Fingertips - Digital Transformation for Development”, which ran from 2018 to 2021. It proved crucial for a comprehensive digital transformation of the Serbian government and economy, as it was followed by large investments from the Government of Serbia in this field. As a result, UK and UNDP contributed to development of the first eGovernment Development Programme, the establishment of the Government Data Centre, the development of the digital platform for vaccine management during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as to the implementation of the text-to-speech tool for the e-government portal and the government website.

Since 2019, the UK's support was also critical to the UNDP-led regional and national initiatives to strengthen criminal accountability for war crimes, promote the search for missing persons and the reconciliation process in the region.

Focus areas:



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

- Open Data
- eGovernment

- Digital Skills
- Women in STEM
- Cyber Security



GOOD GOVERNANCE

- War Crimes Accountability
- Improved Victim Support
- Promoting Reconciliation

UNDP projects supported by UK

▼ PROJECT TITLE	▼ FUNDING SOURCE	▼ PERIOD	▼ TOTAL BUDGET USD*
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION			
Open Data Open Opportunities	United Kingdom	September 2017 – March 2020	\$320,789
Open Data for Sustainable Development	United Kingdom Good Governance Fund (GGF)	July 2021 – April 2022	\$816,848
Open Data for Open Societies	United Kingdom	April 2024 – March 2025	\$504,002
Serbia Cyber Resilience	United Kingdom	April 2025 – March 2028	\$530,000
GOOD GOVERNANCE			
Advancing the Search for Missing Persons in Republic of Serbia	United Kingdom	March 2019 – September 2022	\$581,514
Regional War Crimes	United Kingdom	January 2019 – March 2022	\$815,877
EU Support to Confidence Building in the Western Balkans	United Kingdom contribution	January – December 2025	\$269,500 (\$36,500 for Serbia)

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

National Open Data portal for Open Societies

Photo credit: UNDP Serbia, Open data week

This initiative builds on the previous partnership between UK and UNDP in the field of Open Data, within the projects **Open Data Open Opportunities (2017 – 2020)** and **Open Data for Sustainable Development (2021 – 2022)** that UK supported with USD 1,2M in total. Within these projects, UNDP helped develop the **legal framework** and supported the **opening and reuse of public data**. We also facilitated the launch of the **Open Data government portal** that hosts all open public data and engaged the **tech community and civil society** to create **new data-driven products and services**. More than 110 public institutions in Serbia have **released over 2200 datasets**, enabling citizens to, for example, navigate 5 cities using open public transport data, get real-time air quality warnings, and to examine municipal budgets.

The overall goal of **Open Data for Open Societies** project was to benefit from the opening, sharing and collaborating around data to make better decisions, improve transparency and help tackle some of the most pressing societal challenges.



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Key Results:

- **Improved knowledge and skills of public administration professionals:** Trained around 100 public servants from national institutions and supported institutions in publishing open data, which resulted in 10 data visualisations showing open data related to air quality, waste management, and disability support maps.
- **Harmonizing Serbia's legal framework with EU standards:** Supported the drafting of the Law on Electronic Government and Regulation on the Open Data Portal, introducing high-value datasets (statistics, environment, mobility, company ownership) that brings the most benefits to citizens and the economy.
- **Open Data Guide for Institutions:** Created a practical guide outlining the steps for open data publishing and strategy development, with inputs from key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Public Administration and Local-Self Government, State Audit Institution, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia and the National Academy for Public Administration.
- **Improved digital skills of women entrepreneurs:** 43 women entrepreneurs from across Serbia completed the “Better Business through Data” programme, which enhanced their data skills and increased their competitiveness on the market.
- **Women in STEM:** Strengthened the “Women in STEM” network through meetups, including the largest November 2024 event “Her Journey, Her Story: Women Shaping Technology,” attended by 60 women from STEM fields.
- **Women in Data Science:** Partnered with the regional Data Science Conference to increase female speaker representation from 20% to 27%, which is the highest proportion to date, and expanded discussions on gender bias in AI and AI applications from a female perspective.



Photo credit: UNDP Serbia



Jelena from Kragujevac, founder of lavender plantation Lavender Paradise, who attended the training for women entrepreneurs “Better Business through Data” Photo credit: Jakov Simović

Serbia Cyber Resilience

Photo credit: Shutterstock

The new 3-year UK funded initiative “Serbia Cyber Resilience”, which started in April 2025, aims to **enhance the national cybersecurity capabilities** of the Republic of Serbia by strengthening institutional capacities, improving law enforcement, fostering cross-sector collaboration, and growing a skilled workforce. Building on the successful development of the Office for IT and eGovernment (ITE), the Project will establish and launch the new Office for Information Security (OIS) within ITE, support alignment with EU cybersecurity directives (including Network and Information Systems 2 directive) and contribute to Serbia’s broader digital and EU accession agenda. Through partnership with the Ministry of Information and Telecommunications (MIT) and ITE, and targeted capacity development, the initiative will improve risk management, strengthen public trust in digital services and lay the foundation for long-term cyber resilience.



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Key activities

Develop the foundations for the establishment of the Office for Information Security (OIS) within the ITE:

- Support the legal, structural, and operational design of the OIS, including staff recruitment, needs assessment, and training.
- Facilitate the development of the first Annual work plan for the ITE/OIS through a series of workshops with key stakeholders, such as MIT, ITE, Regulatory Authority for Electronic Communications and Postal Services (RATEL) and the British Embassy in Belgrade.

Support the capacity of the Ministry of Information and Telecommunications (MIT) for law enforcement:

- Assist the drafting of legislation and the development of the new annual inspection plan to help the MIT to implement and enforce the new Law on Information Security.

Enhance cross-sector collaboration and knowledge-sharing:

- Strengthen cooperation across public and private sectors and organise international and national knowledge sharing and cooperation events - to align Serbia’s cybersecurity practises with global standards.

Expand the capabilities of cybersecurity professionals:

- Develop a national cybersecurity workforce strategy by conducting an expert-led analysis of the current Serbian cybersecurity labour market and providing actionable recommendations to the government, universities and private companies.



EU Support to Confidence Building in the Western Balkans

Photo credit: UNDP Serbia

This newest, 1-year, EU-funded (with UK contribution) project that started in January 2025, aims to increase accountability for war crimes in the Western Balkans region, support victims' access to justice and services, and promote dialogue within societies and ethnic groups about the crimes committed in the 1990s. These EU, UK and UNDP efforts will strengthen the rule of law, support the EU accession process and help create a more favourable environment for solidarity, reconciliation and sustainable peace in the region, making communities more resilient.



GOOD GOVERNANCE

UK Support background and impact

The United Kingdom is a long-standing partner of UNDP in promoting accountability, peace and reconciliation in the Western Balkans. In this regard, the UK has funded with a total of 1.4M USD two projects that UNDP implemented from 2019 to 2022: “Regional War Crimes” and “Advancing the Search for Missing Persons”. These projects sparked the interest of the European Union, which resulted in the project “EU Support to Confidence Building in the Western Balkans”. The UK's contribution to this project is instrumental in enhancing its overall impact. By complementing the EU's efforts, the UK helps expand the impact of key initiatives to promote reconciliation and support victims of past conflicts.

Goals:

- **Improving Regional Cooperation:** UK support will improve the conditions for regional cooperation in war crimes proceedings through bilateral and multilateral high- and technical-level peer-to-peer meetings and policy dialogues.
- **Enhancing Judicial Cooperation:** To improve the ability of judicial and law enforcement authorities to handle war crimes cases at the national level, including through multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral approaches.
- **Supporting Victims and Witnesses:** The UK contribution will provide expertise and support to enhance victim-centred and gender-responsive approach to handling domestic war crime cases and improve the provision of support services to victims and witnesses.

Key Activities:

- **Enhancing Victim and Witness Support Services:** UK support contributed to organizing the Supervision Workshop for Victim and Witness Support Providers that gathered more than 25 support services providers from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. They are now able to provide better support to victims and witnesses of past conflicts. By improving the quality of psychological services, the project ensures that victims receive the support they need to heal and rebuild their lives.
- **Facilitating Regional Exchange with Croatia:** This exchange aims to strengthen regional cooperation and promote dialogue between Serbia and Croatia in handling war crimes, contributing to the overall goal of fostering peace and reconciliation in the region.
- **Knowledge sharing for legal professionals:** Engaging a diverse array of international experts to provide comprehensive training to judges, prosecutors, and lawyers, to ensure that they are well-versed in the latest developments and best practises in international humanitarian law.



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Photo credit: Jakov Simović
Marija, owner of flower shop Holi-Mar,
who attended the training for women entrepreneurs
“Better Business through Data”