



PROGRAMME STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Novi Pazar, 03 November 2015



Republic of Serbia



Programme Funded by EU



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



Implementing Partner



I. Agenda

1. Welcome and introductory speeches
2. Presentation of City of Novi Pazar (short film)
3. Approval of the minutes of the Steering Committee held in Gadžin Han on 29 July 2015
4. Presentation of the Quarterly Report 1 July 2015 – 30 September 2015 and discussion
5. Announcement of Event Marking the Signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) about Good Governance Interventions between European PROGRES and 34 municipalities
6. Overview of results of gender equality project and presentation of concept for the follow up action
7. Presentation of requests for approval
 - Provision of women entrepreneurship business start-up grants, Ana Nedeljković, Programme Associate, Social Inclusion and Good Governance Sector
 - Criteria for provision of assistance to agricultural producer groups, Olivera Kostić, Sector Manager for Competitiveness
 - Provision of grants for development of Geographic Information System, Viktor Veljović, Spatial Planner
 - South and South West Serbia Anti-erosion and Flood Protection Project, Jasmina Ilić, Sector Manager for Infrastructure
 - Update on project for finishing the construction of a new block within Vranje Hospital, Vranje Hospital representative
 - Update on the construction and equipping of the building for emergency services in Novi Pazar Health Centre, Novi Pazar representative
8. Voting
9. Other business

Minutes

Agenda item 1

Welcome and introductory speeches

The meeting commenced with a welcome address by **Meho Mahmutović, Mayor of Novi Pazar** who commended the value of European PROGRES assistance and expressed gratitude that Novi Pazar was selected as the host for the PSC. European PROGRES and the Government of Serbia provide substantial support to the City on its path to meet European standards and compete for European Union (EU) and other funding. Regional partnerships are the key to improvement of competitiveness and on national level this translated in to EU membership.

Dejan Gojković, Head of Planning, Programming, Monitoring and Reporting on EU assistance in the European Integration Office of the Government of the Republic of Serbia (SEIO) who chaired the meeting thanked the Mayor for hosting the event and said that that the meeting should be industrious as the Programme is already half way through implementation.

Isabel Perich, Director of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) commended the Programme for the achieved goals but also asked Mayors to expedite those projects that are experiencing delay. All municipalities were asked to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on implementation of Good Governance (GG) principles at the ceremony to take place on 10 November 2015. She expressed satisfaction with the interest shown for both Geographic Information System (GIS) and Women Entrepreneurship (WE) Call for Proposals.

Ana Stanković, Project Manager with the Delegation of the European Union (DEU) acclaimed the Programme and partners for the achieved results: three Citizen Involvement Fund (CIF) projects completed the building to house the University of Nov Sad, Subotica Economics Faculty – Bujanovac Department constructed and initial response to the migrant crises successfully implemented. She noted that eighty percent of the partner municipalities are actively participating in the Programme and the results so far confirm the Programme's successful cooperation with local self-governments (LSGs).

Dejan Gojković reminded the participants that one of the European PROGRES key goals is to prepare LSGs to absorb much larger funds. Until recently the focus was on building the central level capacities but now this focus shifts to local levels while the next phase is progressive development phase.

Graeme Tyndall, European PROGRES Programme Manager said that the Programme is at the mid-point of implementation and pending the approval of the new projects the number of allocated grants will exceed 100 meaning that the potential impact on the competitiveness of 34 municipalities is steadily growing. The Programme also strongly supports strategic mainstreaming of gender issues, human rights and good governance at the local level and these cross-cutting issues will be further strengthened in the coming the coming period. In European PROGRES the infrastructure aspect is twofold: support through the Department for Contracting and Financing of the EU Funded Programmes (CFCU) with the Programme providing technical support, or provision of direct implementation such as Bujanovac Faculty of Economics building. Municipalities whose

applications were not successful through the Call for Proposals so far will be supported to develop better projects in the future. He invited all municipalities to participate in the discussion to ensure the Programme responds to the needs of the beneficiaries.

Agenda item 2

[Presentation of City of Novi Pazar](#)

A short movie on Novi Pazar presented the multicultural area which covers 742 km², has 99 settlements with 125 000 inhabitants of which 68,749 live in the urban settlement. Located in the Raška District and the historical region of Sandžak this is the area with the youngest population in the country. The City is well known for its textile, shoes and furniture industry while the unemployment rate reaches 53% percent. In the future the City will work on capitalising on its tourism potential.

Agenda item 3

[Approval of the minutes of the Programme Steering Committee meetings](#)

The PSC unanimously approved the minutes of the Steering Committee Meeting held in Gadžin Han on 29 July 2015.

Agenda item 4

[Presentation of the Quarterly Report 1 July 2015 – 30 September 2015 and discussion](#)

Marko Vujačić, European PROGRES National Programme Manager, presented the Quarterly Report covering the period from 1 July 2015 – 30 September 2015. Vujačić highlighted that the Programme currently implements 103 grants, while the first five projects and two Calls for Proposals (CfPs) were successfully completed, including the construction of the building for the Bujanovac Department of the Subotica Faculty of Economics. Decreasing interest of the municipalities to participate in the Programme was ascribed to the lack of infrastructural projects and was identified as an issue. The delays in implementation of the grants for local tax administration and main designs have been remedied and are now under control.

Agenda item 5

[Announcement of Event Marking the Signing of MoUs about Good Governance Interventions between European PROGRES and 34 municipalities](#)

Dragan Mladenović, European PROGRES Good Governance and Social Inclusion Sector Manager announced the event of signing the MoUs about GG Interventions between European PROGRES and 34 municipalities. MOU signatories will receive technical assistance to ensure GG mainstreaming in the municipality through free and tailor made municipal packages.

Agenda item 6

[Overview of results of gender equality project and presentation of concept for the follow up action](#)

Milana Rikanović, UN Women representative recapitulated the achievements of the Mainstreaming of Gender at the Local Level project jointly implemented with European PROGRES. The project

supported establishment of 34 Gender Equality Mechanisms and the strategic framework which ensured municipal ownership over the activity strengthening sustainability in the process. Similarly 26 LSGs signed the European Charter for Gender Equality of Women and Men in Local Life while 12 prepared gender equality local action plans. Gender responsible budgeting, to be enforced from the central government in the upcoming period is already in place in eight of the Programme municipalities. She noted that the new legislature will have an impact of Gender Equality Mechanism (GEMs) and that in the future work with LSGs will ensure that all of the gender related activities are in line with the new legislature.

Agenda item 7

Presentation of requests for approval

7.1 Provision of women entrepreneurship business start-up grants

Ana Nedeljković, European PROGRES Good Governance and Social Inclusion Sector Programme Associate gave an overview of the concluded Women Entrepreneurship CfP – 134 applications were received of which 48 were recommended after the thorough selection process. The total amount of the assistance to be issued is EUR 368,000. The Call did not generate significant interest amongst minority population and further cause analyses will be conducted to explore the reasons behind this.

7.2 Criteria for provision of assistance to agricultural producer groups

Olivera Kostić, European PROGES Competitiveness Sector Manager presented the criteria for Provision of Support to Agricultural Producer Groups (APG) in the total amount of EUR 280,000. The goal is for at least 50 agricultural producers, members of APGs, to use new techniques and technologies in their production. All APGs, with at least ten active members who have registered households listed as of 2014 in 34 Programme LSGs are eligible to apply. The comments from the previous PSC were adopted thus both the equipment and storage capacities were included in this CfP.

Meho Mahmutović advised the Programme to reach out directly to LSGs when it comes to the CfPs that concern different realms of population. For example if the outreach for Women Entrepreneurship was conducted through LSG it would be significantly more successful as recently local branch of National Employment Services had 120 applications for self-employment programme, 40 of which were women entrepreneurs. Mahmutović suggested that since there are over 9,000 registered farms in Novi Pazar it would be beneficial to work directly with LSG in preparation of the CfP for Provision of Support to APG.

Olivera Kostić reiterated that this has already been registered as a potential risk and that the Sector is already reaching out to beneficiaries directly but will extend this through other networks.

Dragan Mladenović retorted about the Women Entrepreneurship grant that 140 women initially responded to info session held in Novi Pazar but that the interest declined once the criteria were presented.

Samiha Kačar, President of the Sandžak Human Rights Commission underlined that market sustainability is the key issue in women entrepreneurship as beneficiaries are supported in starting up the business but LSG does not support their further development.

Dejan Gojković said that European PROGRES thoroughly prepares for each of its CfPs but all of suggestions on how to improve the process are welcomed especially from municipalities as they best know how to reach the local population. This can only result in more and better applications.

Hazbo Mujović, Mayor of Sjenica said that European PROGRES has been very supportive but that LSGs at times do not follow through with their obligations. When it comes to responding to CfPs beneficiaries are at times not ready to conduct necessary preparations and meet the criteria set by the CfP.

7.3 Provision of grants for development of Geographic Information System

Viktor Veljović, European PROGES Infrastructure Sector Spatial Planner presented the process behind the selection of grantees for development of Geographic Information System (GIS). The Call was open from 26 May to 13 August 2015 and attracted 28 applications from 32 LSGs. Sustainability was a key criterion in the final selection of 11 applications in total value of EUR 1,159,868. The municipalities which were not selected will receive feedback on how to further develop the current application or other future applications.

Faruk Suljević, the Deputy Mayor of Novi Pazar recognised the importance of GIS and suggested that he was pleased that Novi Pazar was amongst approved projects. He asked about the possibility to finance the regional GIS projects especially in the domain of tourism to link Novi Pazar, Raška, Sjenica and Nova Varoš municipalities. Such projects would contribute to economic development of the region.

Viktor Veljović, responded that the recently completed GIS CfP promoted such partnerships but none such applications were received. Joint projects often require close cooperation of all municipalities in both preparation and implementation stages which is at times weighed by political issues. In this round of GIS four bi-municipal projects were received and one recommended for funding.

Milomir Zorić, Mayor of Ivanjica supports the joint GIS venture suggested by Novi Pazar and expressed interest to, as a neighbouring municipality, join in the project of developing Golija Mountain. Zorić requested for the results of the GIS CfP to be publically announced as apparently some municipalities are already informed of the results. Noting that Ivanjica has been a part of PROGRES Programmes since 2006 and that the projects related to Golija Mountain were already developed with the municipality any further development of this tourist potential should be done in consultation with Ivanjica.

Viktor Veljović confirmed that the following municipalities were recommended for funding under GIS CfP – Novi Pazar, Leskovac, Vranje, Surdulica, Bela Palanka, Preševo, Kuršumljija, Prokuplje, Merošina-Aleksinac partnership, Sjenica and Raška.

Graeme Tyndall, added that inter-municipal cooperation is one of the Programme's priorities and that Golija project has a strong economic potential. However, local and national level administration have to show interest first. In this case the Ministry of Tourism formed the Working Group and included European PROGRES. This should now be followed by advocacy to include Golija into the National Project Pipeline which would allow the Programme to discuss the engagement on this project with PSC. This is true for all large projects. LSG in all municipalities should advocate with the national Government to bring larger projects into the national project pipeline.

Dimitrije Paunović, Mayor of Nova Varoš addressed the issue of grants being allocated exclusively to larger municipalities. This is unfair competition as larger municipalities have better capacity and will always have better proposals. To balance this situation Paunović suggested guaranteed fund allocation format where smaller LSGs would know what amount would be allocated to it.

Ana Stanković said that although this would be popular amongst the municipalities it would be a step back. The competitive process is mandatory as the Programme is geographically focused and thus already favours Programme municipalities on national scale. However municipalities should utilise the offered technical support to define the local priorities and to develop relevant project proposals. The current competitive model will remain in place but LSGs are always welcome to use the Programme to develop projects then to look for another modality of funding outside of the Programme.

Nagip Arifi, Mayor of Bujanovac underlined that the Faculty built in Bujanovac is a higher education facility that belongs to the municipality but is rented to Subotica Faculty of Economics -an institution recommended by DEU. Arifi questioned whether the Programme supported minorities as out of six women entrepreneurship applications from Bujanovac only one was recommended. "We also know that our GIS application was not accepted because someone from European PROGRES office in Belgrade suggested that the project writing should be outsourced to a company in the capital. We did not accept these terms as I personally feel that these companies were formed for money laundering."

Viktor Veljović responded that each non-funded application will receive detailed explanation of why the project was rejected. Bujanovac application had serious methodological issues as it was not linked with any national institution which obstructed the exchange of free data and made the Programme irrelevant on a larger scale. Furthermore as the information flow from national institutions was budgeted the project was not sustainable.

Dejan Gojković reminded participants that there will be an official response to all applications through the Programme.

Nenad Krstić, Mayor of Trgovište noted that the predecessor, EU PROGRES was far more effective than the current Programme. Novi Pazar received both GIS and the Hospital while the smaller municipalities were overlooked even though most applied and are continuously trying to participate. Smaller municipalities need a modality that would respond to their needs as the current practices are discouraging.

Dimitrije Paunović requested for applicants to take part in the evaluation of the applications.

Dejan Gojković explained that being the applicant and the evaluator in the process would be against the procedure.

Meho Mahmutović clarified that Novi Pazar was initially also discouraged by the rejection rate but had since invested time and developed capacity in Local Economic Development (LED) office to write project proposals. The City also ensured that all of the necessary technical documentation is in place when applying for infrastructure projects. There are no shortcuts to getting the funding, and the rules should be obeyed. Vranje received more funding than Novi Pazar because their project is better even though the needs are lesser than Novi Pazar's. The LSG learned from the experiences of other cities in and outside of Serbia and Novi Pazar LED offices is willing to help the neighbouring municipalities to do the same. Also European PROGRES provides technical assistance to all municipalities for the duration of the Programme. This Programme is orientated towards educating the participating municipalities to do better and be equipped for the future fund attraction.

7.4 Presentation of the South and South West Serbia Anti-erosion and Flood Protection Project

Jasmina Ilić, European PROGES Infrastructure Sector Manager presented the request for South and South West Serbia Anti-erosion and Flood Protection Project valued at EUR 745,833.

7.5 Update on the construction project to complete the new block within Vranje Hospital

Vladimir Stamenković, Vranje Health Centre Director updated the participants on refurbishment of a new block within Vranje Hospital. The project will secure necessary medical aid delivered to population of Pčinja District in South Serbia and Pomoravlje District in Kosovo. Some EUR 4.5 million was initially invested from 2006-2013 into revival of the centre. The value of remaining construction and installation works that will be contributed through European PROGRES is EUR 2.8 million.

7.6 Update on the construction and equipping of the building for emergency services in Novi Pazar Health Centre.

Aleksandra Popović, Mayor of Surdulica commented that the support of the health care in smaller municipalities should also be Programme's priority. The Health Centre internal medicine facility in Surdulica is devastated and it services 50,000 citizens from Surdulica, Bosilegrad and Vladičin Han. She commended the work of European PROGRES and suggested that the next PSC takes place in Surdulica.

Faruk Suljević, Deputy Mayor of Novi Pazar gave the update on the construction and equipping of the building for emergency services in Novi Pazar Health Centre. The Programme will contribute with EUR 810,340 towards construction and equipment of the Emergency Service Block. In total 100,410 citizens of Novi Pazar and around 85,000 of the citizens of neighbouring municipalities (Tutin, Sjenica, Raška, Zubin Potok and northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica) will benefit from this project.

Agenda item 8

Voting

The PSC unanimously approved the following:

- The Quarterly Report 1 July 2015 – 30 September 2015
- In principle approval of the concept for the second phase of gender equality project

- Provision of business start-up grants for Women Entrepreneurship (EUR368,000)
- Criteria for provision of assistance to Agricultural Producer Groups (EUR280,000)
- Approval of grants for development of Geographic Information System (EUR 1,159,868)
- South and South West Serbia anti erosion and flood protection project (EUR 745,833)
- Confirming decision on finishing the construction of a new block within Vranje Hospital (EUR 2.8 million)
- Confirming decision on construction of the building for emergency services in Novi Pazar Health Centre (EUR 920,340)

Agenda item 9

Other business

Sead Biberović, NGO Urban IN representative confirmed that the Programme is very important for the City of Novi Pazar but suggested that due to their crucial role in the local community more attention should be given to Civil Service Organisations (CSOs). He questioned why only CSOs have the obligation to partner-up with the municipalities.

Dragan Mladenović reminded participants that CSOs were supported through Citizens' Involvement Fund (CIF) which allocated EUR 400,000 for various socially responsible projects especially those focussed on vulnerable population. Partnership with the municipalities was stipulated in order to meet those citizen needs that were not met through the existing structures as well as to ensure the sustainability of the projects. The second round of CIF projects is expected in mid-2016.

Vasvija Gusinac, Bosniak Minority Council Vice-president, suggested that the Programme should mainstream the engagement of the national minorities and possibly introduce the tracking of the human development index in the Programme municipalities.

Dejan Gojković suggested that human development index could be included on the Programme website.

Hazbo Mujović noted that capital infrastructural projects are far behind the schedule and questioned if the CFCU of the Government of Serbia's Ministry of Finance is capable to deal with the task. He suggested that alternative solution should be considered when it comes to infrastructural projects.

Nataša Šimšić, Head of the Department for Contracting and Financing of the EU Funded Programmes (CFCU) reiterated that the process of evaluation has started and the first phase is completed. She reminded that the new process is much more complex than that previously practiced by UNOPS. By December 2015 the municipalities who have passed the initial selection will be informed and asked to send the needed documentation to proceed with the procedure. In all after the initial delay the process is now moving on according to reconsidered schedule.

Zlatko Vukosavljević, President of the People with Disabilities Association from Raška thanked European PROGRES for its support and said that over 50 people with disabilities have been employed due to assistance received through CIF.

Dejan Gojković thanked the attendees for participation and officially closed the PSC.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS			
European PROGRES Steering Committee Novi Pazar, 03November 2015			
Organisation	Name	Position	
STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS			
1.	European Integration Office - SEIO	Dejan Gojković	Head of Panning, Programming, Monitoring and Reporting on EU assistance
2.	The Department for Contracting and Financing of the EU Funded Programmes (CFCU) of the Government of Serbia's Ministry of Finance	Nataša Šimišić	Head of the Department for Contracting and Financing of the EU Funded Programmes(CFCU), Assistant to Minister
3.	Ministry of Economy	Miona Popović Majkić	Head of IPA Unit
4.	Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection	Branislav Veljković	Head of Rural Development Sector
5.	Government of Serbia Coordination Body for the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa	Jelena Marjanović	Assistant to the Director
6.	Standing Conference of Towns and municipalities	Vladimir Zafirović	Project Manager in the Economy and Finance Department
7.	European Union Delegation to the Republic of Serbia	Ana Stanković	Project Manager
8.	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	Isabel Perich	Director
9.	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	Petar Vasilev	National Programme Officer
Host			
10.	City of Novi Pazar	Meho Mahmutović	Mayor
MUNICIPAL REPRESENTATIVES			
municipality	Name	Position	
1.	Babušnica	Jelena Milenović	Programme contact person
2.	Bela Palanka	Goran Miljković	Mayor
3.	Blace	Ivan Burgić	Mayor
4.		Gordana Kitanović	Head of Public Land Fund
5.	Brus	Radula Ratković	Head of LED office
6		Arandjel Stojković	Deputy Mayor

7.	Bojnik	Boban Petrović	Assistant to the Mayor
8.		Saša Dodić	municipal Associate
9.	Bujanovac	Nagip Arifi	Mayor
10.		Fazila Azemović	Head of LED office
11.	Doljevac	Jasmina Zlatanović	Head of LED office
12.		Neda Jovanović	LED Associate
13.	Gadžin Han	Saša Đorđević	Mayor
14.		Marija Cvetković	municipal Council Member
15.	Ivanjica	Milomir Zorić	Mayor
16.		Milanka Kolarević	Chief of municipal Administration
17.	Kuršumlija	Radoljub Vidić	Mayor
18.	Lebane	Goran Janjić	Mayor
19.		Dragan Jović	Coordinator
20.		Srđan Perić	Assistant to the Mayor
21.	Merošina	Bojan Nešić	Mayor
22.		Maja Milosavljević	municipal Associate
23.	Nova Varoš	Dimitrije Paunović	Mayor
24.	Prokuplje	Vesna Živković	Head of Urban Development Department
25.		Maja Bašić	municipal Council Member
26.	Preševo	Ragmi Mustafa	Mayor
27.	Priboj	Krsto Janjušević	Assistant to the Mayor
28.	Prijepolje	Emir Hašimbegović	Mayor
29.	Raška	Ignjat Rakitić	Mayor
30.		Tijana Pajević	Assistant to the Mayor
31.	Sjenica	Hazbo Mujović	Mayor
32.	Svrljig	Jelena Trifunović	Mayor
33.	Surdulica	Dragan Kitanović	Hospital Director
34.		Aleksandra Popović	Mayor
35.		Ankica Žegarac Milenković	Economic Development Office
36.	Trgovište	Nenad Krstić	Mayor
37.	Tutin	Šemsudin Kučević	Mayor
38.	Vranje	Boban Stanković	Assistant to the Mayor
39.		Siniša Mitić	Vice-president
40.	Vlasotince	Zoran Todorović	Mayor
41.		Marinko Đorđević	LED Coordinator
NGO			
Organisation		Name	Position
43.	Regional Development Agency of Sandžak	Samir Kačapor	Director
44.		Emina Musić	Officer
45.		Džemil Huseinović	Officer
46.	FAO	Aleksandar Mentov	National Project Manager
47.	UNWomen Serbia	Milana Rikanović	Officer
48.	Roma National Minority Council	Dragan Ristić	Culture Board President
49.		Ljuan Koka	Secretary

50.		Slavko Jovanović	Executive Board President
51.	Bosniak National Council	Vasvija Gusinac	Vice-president
52.	Sandžak Board for Human Rights	Semiha Kačar	President
53.	Urban-In	Sead Biberović	Coordinator
54.	People with Disabilities Assistance Association	Zlatan Vukosavljević	President
55.	Coordinator for Roma Issues in the City Administration of Novi Pazar	Elmaz Omerović	Coordinator
Organisation		Name	Position
56.	Vranje Hospital	Vlada Stamenković	
57.	Vranje Hospital	Goran Stanković	
EUROPEAN PROGRES PERSONNEL			
Organisation		Name	Position
58.	European PROGRES	Graeme Tyndall	Programme Manager
59.	European PROGRES	Marko Vujačić	National Programme Manager
60.	European PROGRES	Dragan Mladenović	Sector 1 Manager
61.	European PROGRES	Olivera Kostić	Sector 2 Manager
62.	European PROGRES	Jasmina Ilić	UNOPS Infrastructure Advisor
63.	European PROGRES	Ivana Popović	S4 Manager
64.	European PROGRES	Radule Ristović	Regional Coordinator for South
65.	European PROGRES	Nermin Hasanović	Regional Coordinator for West
66.	European PROGRES	Mladen Cvetković	Programme Associate
67.	European PROGRES	Viktor Veljović	Programme Associate
68.	European PROGRES	Aleksandra Radivojević	Regional Associate
69.	European PROGRES	Ivana Todorović	Regional Associate
70.	European PROGRES	Evgjenije Isljami	Regional Associate
71.	European PROGRES	Slobodan Derikonjić	Programme Coordinator for Priboj, Prijepolje and Nova Varoš
72.	European PROGRES	Edin Bašić	Programme Assistant