



PROGRAMME STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Belgrade, 28 February 2017



Republic of Serbia



Programme Funded by EU



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



Implementing Partner

EUROPEAN 
PROGRES

I. Agenda

1. Introductory remarks
 - Branko Budimir, the Assistant to the Director of the European Integration Office of the Government of Serbia
 - Steffen Hudolin, the Head of Section Operations 2 in the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia
 - Chloe Milner, Head of Governance Department and Regional Advisor for Governance, Swiss Cooperation Office to Serbia
2. Approval of the minutes of the Steering Committee held in Priboj on 3 November 2016
3. Presentation of the Quarterly Report for 1 October – 31 December 2016
4. Presentation of options for European PROGRES no-cost extension
5. Voting: Quarterly Report 1 October – 31 December 2016
6. Other business

II. Minutes

Agenda item 1

Welcome and introductory speeches

Branko Budimir, the Assistant to the Director of the European Integration Office of the Government of Serbia and the Chairperson of the European PROGRES Programme Steering Committee (PSC) welcomed the participants and noted that the meeting should serve to review the achievements, future plans for the last year of the programme, and in particular to discuss successful finalisation of ongoing activities.

Steffen Hudolin, the Head of Section Operations 2 in the Delegation of the European Union (EU) to the Republic of Serbia welcomed all attendees and noted that although lately the focus has been on longer term plans i.e. the new Local Development Programme it is essential to successfully complete the ongoing programme and that PSC forum should be used to agree with the partners on the best way forward.

Chloe Milner, Regional Advisor Governance, Swiss Cooperation Office to Serbia (SDC) underlined that Programme focus for the Swiss partners remains on Good Government and Social Inclusion where the progress has been noticeable. Future goals include monitoring the ongoing activities to ensure achievement of maximum impact and sustainability as well as development of the new Programme, complementary to EUs local development initiative which will require close cooperation with EU and Government partners.

Graeme Tyndall, European PROGRES Manager said that the meeting will be the opportunity to discuss concerns, questions and opportunities. Although UNOPS, through the competitive process, has been selected for the implementing partner of the new Local Development Programme priority remains the successful completion of the ongoing Programme. So far the implementation is going according to plan although contingency planning should be considered as some projects might be delayed due to unforeseen circumstances. Additionally a funds surplus is expected after finalisation of the procurement process and as a result of (positive so far) exchange rate fluctuations. As EU and Swiss Programmes are officially scheduled to end in September and November respectively it would be desirable to both synchronise and possibly extend the set end dates. If No-Cost extension is decided the modality of approval and conditions of extension should be agreed and approved electronically to ensure timely implementation.

Marko Vujačić, European PROGRES national manager stated that the last quarter of Programme implementation was successful and according to plan - 2.8 million Euros were engaged in activities while four new CfPs were concluded bringing total number to 20. Additionally out of 247 projects completed 105 were completed in 2016. Some delays remain a challenge to Programme's timeframe and could require extension for effective implementation.

Dragan Mladenović, European PROGRES Good Governance Advisor gave a summary of the Good Governance (GG) activities.¹ Need based local governance reforms were initiated in eight

¹ Please refer to XI PSC presentation

municipalities while the trainings for the local experts on GG were completed to ensure sustainability of initiatives at the local level. Gender equality activities are implemented with United Nations Women (UNW) resulting in ten local parliamentary networks being established. The networks serve to train and empower women parliamentarians to advocate for woman rights. The Sector will also provide support for implementation of good governance principles in the realisation of infrastructure projects, making them more sustainable.

Answering SDC National Programme Officer **Petar Vasilev**'s enquiry on what is to be expected in the final year of implementation **Dragan Mladenović** noted that in terms of Local Government Expertise a dialog will continue with local self-governances (LSGs) to adopt regulations which will ensure permanent and sustainable solutions incorporated in the local administration. These mechanisms will further be strengthened through the new Programme while Local Government reforms modality will be spread to another ten municipalities. The process will be finalised through creation of the local policies and adoption of the new regulations while the overall expectation is that municipalities ultimately become accountable for activities and results in these areas.

Ana Nedeljković Good Governance and Social Inclusion Manager presented achievements and ongoing trends in the areas of Civil Service Organisations (CSOs) and Local Self-governments (LSGs) partnership projects, delivery of medical equipment concluding that project implementation is on track.

Nataša Ivanović, Programme Associate for Empowerment of Vulnerable gave overview of Social Inclusion of Roma projects which so far gave impressive results including 175 beneficiaries of the entrepreneurship and vocational training and increased access to education and health.

Graeme Tyndall commenting on success of the Roma that these results stem from the previous PSC decisions to fund these activities which were not originally foreseen by the Programme document. The results show that current modality used in support to Roma minority is very effective.

Ana Nedeljković Good Governance and Social Inclusion Manager presented the achievements of the previously concluded and an ongoing El Sistema projects – focused on inclusion of primarily minority children in to the formal musical education through existing, inclusive El Sistema methodology. So far 200 children and youth were included and 100 hour of classes realised. The project with the Programme support of 17,750 Euros is requested and approved to be extended to the end of school year 2017 with the final concert to be held at Kolarac Institute in Belgrade.

Jasminka Peruničić Allen, Senior Advisor in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD) gave a full support to the initiative noting that the El Sistema methodology is an official part of the Education system reform as the Ministry wrote an official recommendation note on the projects in September 2016.

Graeme Tyndall and Dragan Mladenović added that the system provides an opportunity not just to decrease social distance but also allows personal growth and provides future opportunities for children.

Jasminka Peruničić Allen also underlined the need to continue the Teaching Assistant project in Bujanovac and Preševo which gave great results both planned and in added benefits such as increased

motivation of students which now participate in Serbian language competition for the first time. Similar efforts would be beneficial in all stages of education ending with Faculty.

Graeme Tyndall suggested to have MoESTD coordination meeting in order to discuss activities for the new Programme that should also include Bujanovac Department of Subotica Faculty of Economics as this project is a social and economic generator and could be linked with the business sector. A mechanism should be put in place to pull all these efforts together.

Branko Budimir enquired about cooperation between Social Inclusion Sector and ENECA Company which implemented training and mentorship support for Women and Youth Entrepreneurs.

Ana Nedeljković responded that cooperation ENECA Company was a successful and comprised of general assessment of beneficiary needs followed by tailor made approach to capacity building. The overall goal was to strengthen new businesses in their inception period and to identify areas of further improvement.

Tatjana Mrvaljević, European PROGRES Officer for Competitiveness presented Competitiveness sector activities² in the previous quarter underlining achievements in the introduction of quality standards initiative as well as E-permitting activity implemented with NALED. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) equipment delivery for ten beneficiaries is underway with compulsory Corporate Social Responsibility activities to follow. The Municipal competitiveness index increased on the average by 18% in 26 LSGs. Programme Competitiveness portal which presents these results will be presented in the future period.

Graeme Tyndall gave an overview of the Competitive Portal development process and invited participants to attend a separate session to promote the Portal once it is finalised. The presentation would also be a forum to discuss which entity should inherit the Portal and ensure sustainability.

Marko Vujačić underlined that the Portal primarily allows monitoring of municipal progresses and identifies areas that require improvements. **Branko Budimir** recommended to use the Portal to identify the local needs covered by this tool have and use this information to inform the new Programme's Document of Action (DoA)

Petar Vasilev noted that a (similar) portal is being developed by SDC in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self Governments (MoPALSg) and thus it would be beneficial to exchange information. **Graeme Tyndall** noted that MoPALSg is a member of PSC whose more frequent attendance should be encouraged and concluded that in the new Programme the PSC members from the Ministries should have more ownership. In a current Programme more proactive approach will be undertaken to ensure information sharing.

Jasmina Ilić UNOPS Advisor for Infrastructure discussed most notable achievements³ in the Infrastructure sector namely Geographic Information System (GIS) and Detailed Regulation Plans (DRPs). Besides the direct benefits some indirect achievements were noted namely - 31 public viewings organised for general population and investors and municipal publications for potential investors to have an insight in potential opportunities. This has contributed to vertical dimension of good governance, thus showing that all sectors' activities are interwoven and underpin each other.

² Please refer to XI PSC presentation

³ Please refer to XI PSC presentation

Additionally GIS activity generated protocol signing between different administrations and technical services to allow exchange of information while National Geodetic Institute showed interest will use locally generated information through GIS as official data. Progress has also been made in the Golija capital infrastructure project implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunication.

Life cycle of the infrastructure project development is five to seven years starting with the technical documentation to the construction phase while its effectiveness as shown in anti-erosion works on the Raška river basin is seen only after implementation. Anti-erosion works saved Novi Pazar from serious floods, and the development of designs for the anti-erosion protection of the watershed of the Jablanica, Vlasina and Pčinja rivers is under way. The main design for the watercourse of Južna Morava is being developed while the LSGs is currently looking for investors for project realisation.

Infrastructure sector also presented the UNHCR request for procurement of the water pump for one of the Preševo Migration Centre wells. Detailed technical information on this request harboured in Public Utility Centre could not be acquired by the responsible agencies thus to project brief is incomplete. Existing information suggests that the previously procured pump is not sufficient to provide water supply to community of 4000 people. However due to insufficient information the procurement of the larger pump cannot guarantee sustainable resolution of water supply.

Branko Budimir noted that there is a number of sources for Migration projects and that European PROGRES should not be the first resource for such projects. This is one of many requests the Programme received over the past year. Focal points for such requests should be the Ministry of Labour and the Migration Centre and these are the two institutions SEIO will request the feedback from prior to deciding on the way forward.

Marko Vujačić concluded that so far the Programme should contribute directly to creation of 700 jobs, 142 projects are ongoing, that majority of activities are on target but that several interventions were under time pressure. .

Branko Budimir suggested that although the Quarterly Report format is now more effective it should be more focused on results and outcomes.

Ana Stanković agreed and gave the Table of Indicators contained in the Quarterly Report as an example of the good practice.

Ana Martinović Programme Support Officer gave an overview of the Programme finances. Out of the total budget (UNOPS contracts): 17,460,000 Euros 12,537,714 Euros (72%) was spent and 3,759,931 Euros (21%) is committed/planned. Total balance currently remains at 1,162,355 Euros while the exchange rate and return of unspent funds will possible further increase remaining funds.

Marko Vujačić underlined that some activities such as local infrastructure, good governance reforms, public-private partnerships and several other activities may require more time than predicted in the Programme timeframe. Additionally, no cost extension would enable the Programme to offer some assistance to the CFCU managed activities as well as utilisation of funding deriving from savings.

Steffen Hudolin concluded that carefully planning on how to utilise remaining funding and especially in terms of time restraint and procurement funding should be generated.

PSC members agreed that a draft request for No-cost extension should be produced by the Programme, while initial justification and recommendations should be prepared by middle March 2017.

Voting

The PSC unanimously approved the following:

- Quarterly Report 1 October – 31 December 2016
- PSC Meeting minutes November 2016

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS		
European PROGRES Steering Committee Belgrade 28 February 2017		
Organisation	Name	Position
STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS		
European Integration Office of the Government of the Republic of Serbia - SEIO	Branko Budimir	Assistant to the Director
Ministry of Economy	Miona Popović Majkić	Head of Group for Planning of IPA Projects
Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development	Jasminka Peruničić Allen	Senior Advisor
Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development	Biljana Stojanović	Head of Project Department
Government of Serbia Coordination Body for the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa	Jelena Marjanović	Assistant Director of the Coordination Body's Office
Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities	Ivan Milivojević	Assistant Secretary General for Services to Members
European Union Delegation to the Republic of Serbia	Steffen Hudollin	Head of Operations II
European Union Delegation to the Republic of Serbia	Ana Stanković	Project Manager
European Union Delegation to the Republic of Serbia	George Papagiannis	Programme Manager/Operations II
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	Chloé Milner	Head of Governance Sector
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	Petar Vasilev	National Programme Officer
Organisation	Name	Position
European PROGRES	Graeme Tyndall	Programme Manager
European PROGRES	Marko Vujačić	National Programme Manager
European PROGRES	Jasmina Ilić	UNOPS Advisor for Infrastructure

	European PROGRES	Dragan Mladenović	Good Governance Advisor
	European PROGRES	Ana Martinović	Programme Support Officer
	European PROGRES	Ana Nedeljković	Good Governance and Social Inclusion Manager
	European PROGRES	Ivana Popović	Communication Manager
	European PROGRES	Tatjana Mrvaljević	Programme Officer for Competitiveness
	European PROGRES	Nataša Ivanović	Programme Associate for Empowerment of Vulnerable
	European PROGRES	Marija Radulović	Communication Associate