



**EU**  
**PRO**

EUROPEAN UNION SUPPORT TO MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

*in step with  
Europe*

**#EY**  
**ЗА ТЕБЕ**



Republic of Serbia

 **UNOPS**

Implementing partner

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>BSO</b>	Business Support Organisation
<b>CB</b>	Coordination Body of the Government of the Republic of Serbia for the Municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>CSR</b>	Corporate Social Responsibility
<b>DEU</b>	Delegation of the European Union
<b>DRP</b>	Detailed Regulation Plan
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EU PROGRES</b>	European Partnership with Municipalities Programme
<b>GIS</b>	Geographic Information System
<b>IT</b>	Information Technology
<b>LSG</b>	Local Self-Government
<b>MEI</b>	Ministry of European Integration
<b>MESTD</b>	Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development
<b>OHMR</b>	Office for Human and Minorities Rights
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
<b>SNMT</b>	Serbian as non-mother tongue
<b>UNOPS</b>	United Nations Office for Project Services
<b>YPWD</b>	Young people with disabilities

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**Michela Telatin**

UNOPS Serbia Multi-Country Office Director

For over two decades UNOPS has been committed to building strong partnerships with national and international stakeholders in order to jointly contribute to building better lives for all citizens of Serbia.

A partnership that has proven to make a tangible and sustainable impact is the one forged with the Delegation of the European Union (DEU) and the Ministry of European Integration (MEI). This decade-long bond has so far facilitated over 100 million Euros worth of projects in a variety of sectors and most prominently in the area of local development.

Together and jointly with our many governmental and non-governmental partners and especially benefiting towns and municipalities, we have bolstered the Government's efforts to carry out demanding socio-economic reforms; helped facilitate the European integration process; promoted national ownership and engagement of beneficiaries; contributed to gender equality and empowerment of women; and advanced human rights protection and good governance.

When reinforcing these all-important local development interventions, as in all areas of its work, UNOPS, under the guidance of its partners, applies its signature holistic implementation approach. This is mirrored in the focus on strengthening capacities of local communities while simultaneously stimulating both the public and private sectors, governmental and civil society organisations and providing ample encouragement for their respective representatives to join forces and bring about changes together.

The impact of these interventions was gradual but sustainable and fruitful. UNOPS embarked on area based development in 2010 striving to design context-specific projects. Building on the success and practices of its predecessors EU PROGRES and European PROGRES, EU PRO is a third iteration of the local development initiative. Since 2018 the EU PRO Programme has been contributing to overall economic and social growth in 99 local self-governments in the regions of Šumadija and Western Serbia and Southern and Eastern Serbia. Over three years

have passed since and we brought this great initiative to close with tangible and impactful results.

The Programme conducted nine public calls and awarded over 18 million Euros of funds through 341 separate grants. A total of 55 local self-governments (LSGs) were awarded with 95 projects, 203 entrepreneurs received the support, as did 20 business support organisations (BSOs) and 21 civil society organisations (CSOs). These achievements translate into more tangible results over time – warmer schools, inclusive environments, new skills, higher employment rates and ultimately better living standards for the citizens of Serbia.

Throughout the EU PRO implementation the DEU, MEI and UNOPS partnership has been agile and as in previous emergencies it jointly and efficiently responded to the newest destabilising factor – COVID-19 outbreak, by procuring critical medical and non-medical equipment to meet the needs of the country's healthcare system.

The shared commitment of UNOPS and its partners to nurture opportunities for sustainable economic growth despite both existing and emerging challenges had the positive effect on the affected and least developed regions of the country mitigating regional disparities and becoming a driver for success of those territories all along driven by national and international normative and guided by the United Nations values, sustainable development goals and solidarity.

As the EU PRO Programme comes to an end, I am pleased to see that UNOPS commitment to its implementation was

supported by the guidance and contribution of many partners who ensured that this project could make a tangible and meaningful impact on people's lives.

I would like to thank the Delegation of the European Union, the Ministry of European Integration and all line Ministries and partners for ensuring that, together, sustainable development in Serbia can become a reality.

## ABOUT EU PRO



**H.E. Sem Fabrizi**

Ambassador and Head of Delegation  
of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia

EU PRO is a success story that may serve as initiator of positive changes and multiplier of other initiatives. It moved us from Belgrade and Corridor 10 and went much further to 99 local self-governments, thus achieving what is the goal of European integration – making positive effects of this process tangible and economic growth more evenly distributed.

The European Support to Municipal Development Programme – EU PRO, contributed to the overall economic and social growth of 99 local self-governments in the regions of Šumadija and Western Serbia and Southern and Eastern Serbia. The Programme contributed to the creation of a business environment conducive to new investments and job creation, more competitive enterprises, improved work of local self-governments and enhanced social inclusion.

## BUDGET AND PARTNERS

The European Union allocated a total amount of 25 million Euros for the realisation of this three and a half year initiative that commenced in January 2018.

A co-funding of 5.1 million Euros was provided, including 3.3 million Euros by the Government of Serbia through local self-governments (LSGs) and 1.8 million Euros by small and

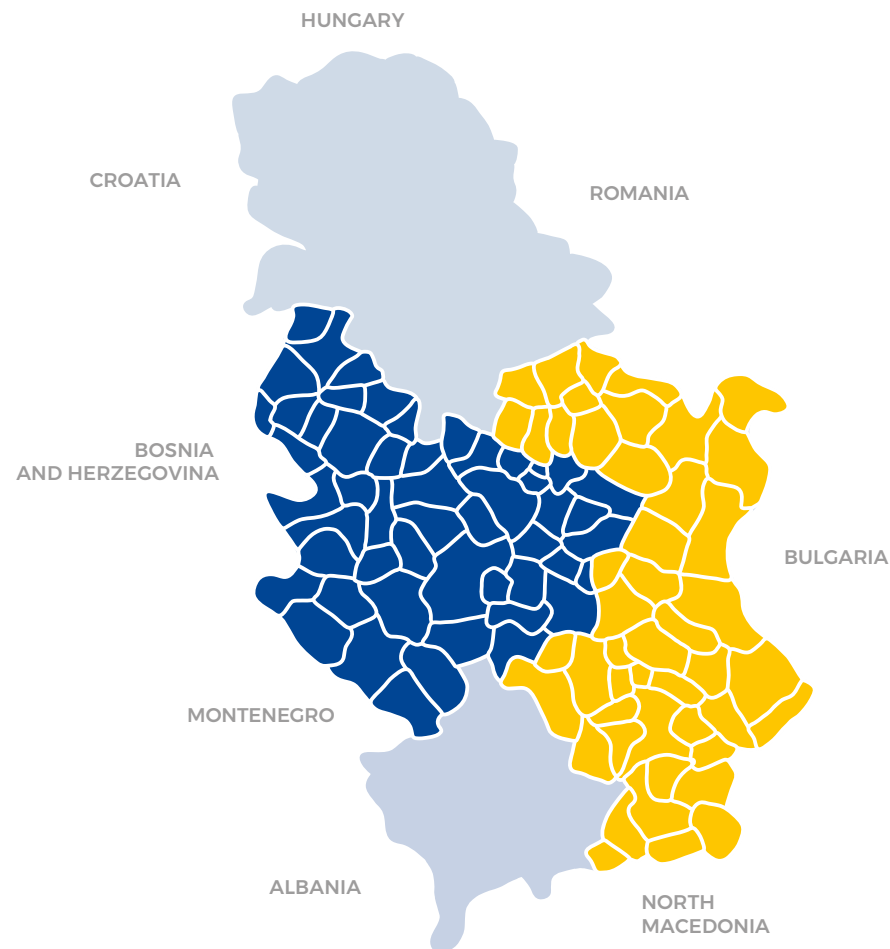
medium-sized (SMS) enterprises and business support organisations (BSO).

The Programme is implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in partnership with the Ministry of European Integration (MEI) and other line ministries and institutions of the Government of the Republic of Serbia.



### List of local self-governments:

Aleksandrovac, Aleksinac, Arandjelovac, Arilje, Babušnica, Bajina Bašta, Batočina, Bela Palanka, Blace, Bojnik, Boljevac, Bor, Bosilegrad, Brus, Bujanovac, Čačak, Čičevac, Despotovac, Dimitrovgrad, Gadžin Han, Golubac, Ivanjica, Jagodina, Knić, Knjaževac, Koceljeva, Kosjerić, Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Kruševac, Kučevo, Kuršumlija, Lajkovac, Lapovo, Lebane, Leskovac, Loznica, Lučani, Ljig, Ljubovija, Majdanpek, Mali Zvornik, Malo Crniće, Merošina, Mionica, Negotin, Niš, Nova Varoš, Novi Pazar, Osečina, Paraćin, Petrovac na Mlavi, Pirot, Požarevac, Požega, Priboj, Prijepolje, Prokuplje, Raška, Ražanj, Rekovac, Smederevo, Smederevska Palanka, Sokobanja, Surdulica, Svilajnac, Svrlijig, Šabac, Topola, Trgovište, Trstenik, Tutin, Ub, Užice, Valjevo, Varvarin, Velika Plana, Veliko Gradište, Vladičin Han, Vlasotince, Vrnjačka Banja, Zaječar, Žabari, Žagubica, Žitorađa, Bogatić, Crna Trava, Čajetina, Čuprija, Doljevac, Gornji Milanovac, Kladovo, Krupanj, Medveđa, Preševo, Rača, Sjenica, Vladimirci, and Vranje.



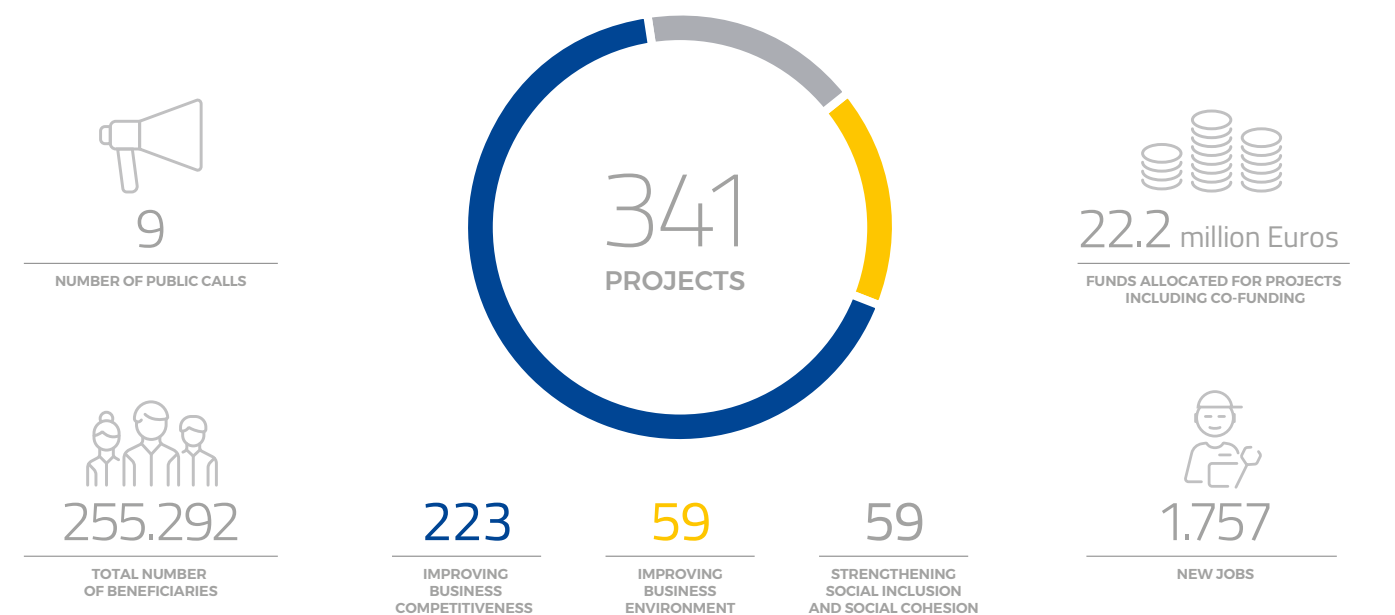
## PROGRAMME SCOPE

- IMPROVING BUSINESS COMPETITIVENESS**
- IMPROVING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT**
- STRENGTHENING SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SOCIAL COHESION**

The implemented activities were focussed on provision of assistance in the Serbian European integration process and support of equal socio-economic development in three result areas:



EU PRO Programme relied on the best practices and achieved results of its predecessor programmes EU PROGRES and European PROGRES. The projects supported within EU PRO are selected through public calls and are predominantly implemented through grant methodology.





**Jadranka Joksimović**  
Minister of European Integration

Through the EU PRO Programme, we managed to improve the business environment, entrepreneurship and innovation, as well as the availability of cultural and other content in local self-governments, and thus led to one of the most important goals of European integration, which is to reduce territorial disbalances and migration from rural to urban areas.

The Programme has achieved tangible impact during implementation and is expected to have even more significant and long term effects. A total of 1,757 jobs were created through various activities, 826 enterprises improved their competitiveness either through receiving grants or via support provided by the business support organisations (BSOs). Through backing of economic infrastructure and creation of technical documentation and main designs a pipeline of potential investments was created worth 182 million Euros. Finally, the results will have an encompassing positive impact on better living standards for the citizens of Serbia, as EU PRO Programme directly and immediately assisted close to 290,000 people.



**1,757**  
JOBS CREATED



**826**  
ENTERPRISES  
IMPROVED COMPETITIVENESS



**182** million  
Euros  
PIPELINE OF INVESTMENTS  
CREATED



**289,294**  
DIRECT  
BENEFICIARIES



## IMPROVING BUSINESS **COMPETITIVENESS**



EU PRO supported entrepreneurship and enhanced competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises through provision of new equipment and selected support services secured via business support organisations. In total, over six million Euros was invested to procure equipment and enhance work of businesses in order to create jobs and drive economic growth in the regions of Šumadija and Western Serbia and Southern and Eastern Serbia.





## SUPPORT TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP



**Katarina Obradović Jovanović**  
Assistant Minister of Economy

Together with the EU, we have been able to channel funds into priority projects for local economic development. Through the EU PRO Programme areas with less readily available resources were included in the activities which complement those implemented by the Government of the Republic of Serbia through the Ministry of Economy.

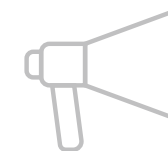
The European Union and the Government of the Republic of Serbia are focused on supporting continuous economic growth through cultivation of a strong private sector led by entrepreneurs.

To support competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), EU PRO provided direct assistance to entrepreneurs and enterprises and supported projects implemented by business support organisations.

### MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES

Through two public calls conducted in 2018 and 2019 EU PRO Programme supported 203 enterprises (33% female owned) selected out of over a thousand applicants. In total 6.16 million Euros was invested into activity of which the EU provided 4.37 million Euros while the entrepreneurs co-funded the projects with significant funds totaling close to two million Euros. The cumulative results generated 582 new jobs, of which 255 (44%) are women. Besides the job creation element, the overall support improved productivity as well as product quality and range, but has also contributed to the value chain of local suppliers.

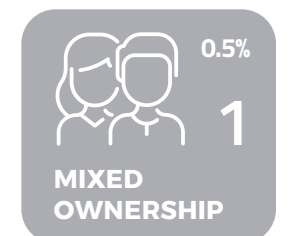
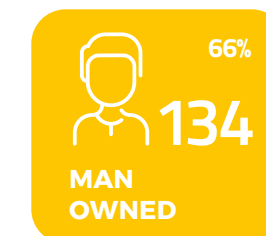
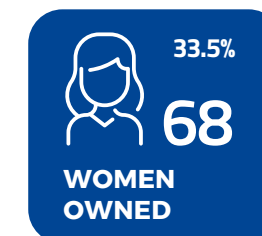
Supported enterprises were selected based on the proposed business idea, expected results and effects, sustainability and social impact.



**2**  
PUBLIC CALLS



**6.16 million Euros**  
TOTAL SECTOR INVESTMENT





## HELI HANDMADE ENTERPRISE FROM A HOBBY TO A SUCCESSFUL FASHION BRAND

Snežana Kocanović, the owner of the Heli Handmade brand, is a former health worker who lost her job after taking a maternity leave. For both economic and emotional reasons Snežana started creating a unique wardrobe for her newborn and soon after, delighted by her creations, neighbours and friends started placing orders for their own children.

Encouraged by the initial success Snežana's husband helped her get a bank loan to buy the first two sewing machines. This resulted in the expanded product range and new customer which soon became overwhelming for a makeshift workshop at her home.

Then, at the end of 2019, after consulting with the Regional Economic Development Agency for Šumadija and Pomoravlje, Snežana applied and was approved a grant through the EU PRO public call. The new equipment, worth 10,000 Euros, has advanced the company's production and the business started to expand intensively. Soon after Snežana hired the first worker and started working on expanding the product range to introduce baby towels and bathrobes.

As the mandatory corporate social responsibility activity Snežana, always keen on making children's life more colorful, chose to donate branded towels to the kindergarten "Poletarac" in Kragujevac.

"We are working on the first Heli Handmade product catalogue that will be marketed to companies. I am hoping this will further raise the demand and that our brand and team will continue to grow", concludes Snežana.

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The enterprises supported through the Programme are mainly engaged in the production of furniture, food, clothing, metal and wood processing. According to the data from the official financial reports, despite the problems caused by the pandemic that greatly affected the overall economy, these enterprises in 2020 increased the revenue by 28.8 percent or over 14 million Euros compared to 2019.

To increase the positive social impact of their projects, entrepreneurs were required to implement corporate social responsibility (CSR) in their local communities. The activities that have impacted over 34,000 beneficiaries amongst others included the donations of produced goods to the vulnerable population, renovation of social, education and health institutions, equipping playgrounds, conducting environmental actions, provision of scholarships and vocational training.



## BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

In addition to direct support to companies, the EU, through the EU PRO Programme also supported 20 projects implemented by business support organisations (BSO) with more than 620,000 Euros.

Selected through the 2019 public call, these projects, implemented by different BSOs, assisted a total of 623 small and medium-sized enterprises through organisation of training, mentoring and capacity building, introduction of standards, participation at fairs and study visits and procurement of joint production equipment. In addition, 26 beneficiary BSOs have also built their own internal capacities through training, certification and introduction of new services.

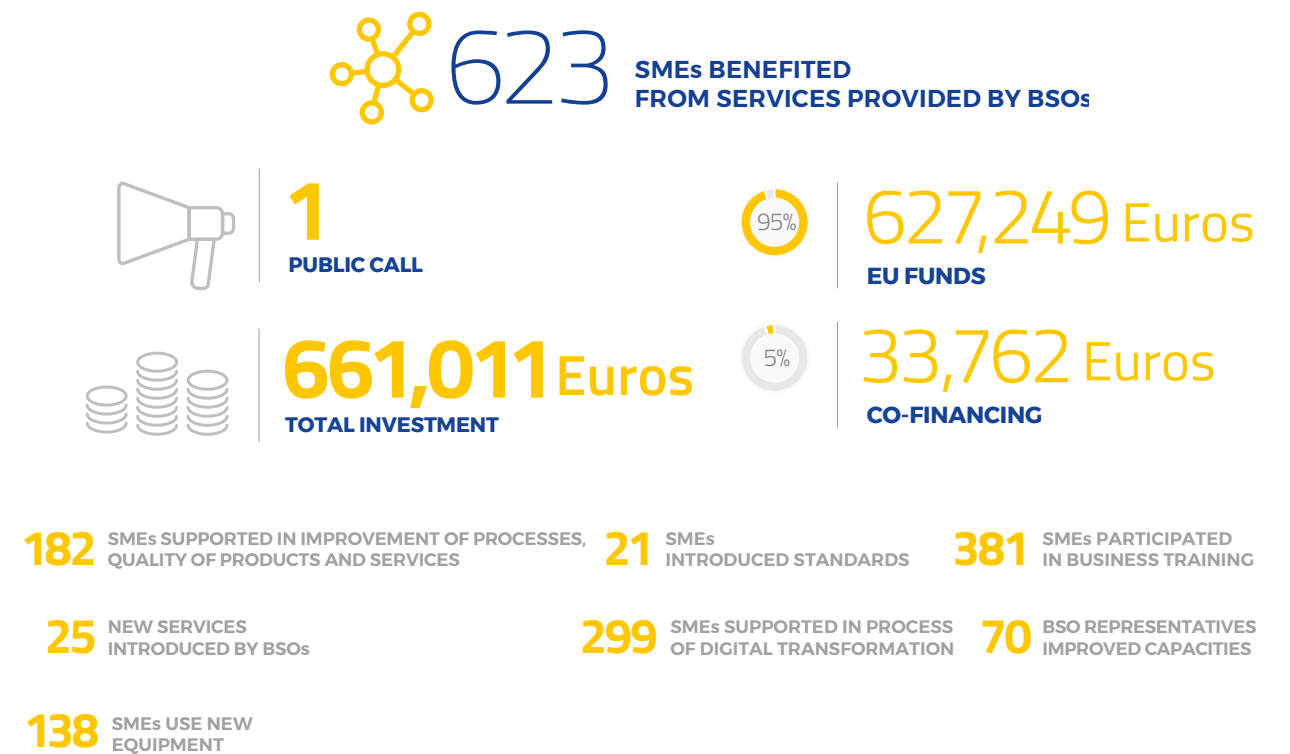
As a result the SMEs have improved their production processes and the quality of products and services, opened doors to new markets, and as particularly important in the year of pandemic, started their digital transformation and moved towards digital marketing.

Overall, the activity resulted in an increased eligibility and competitiveness of a number of Serbian enterprises to access the opportunities provided by the profitable but demanding European market.



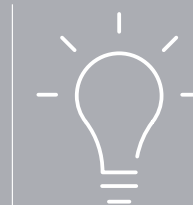
**Enis Ujkanović**  
EU PRO Small and Medium Enterprises  
Sector Manager

Responding to the needs of SMEs and creating tailor made solutions for them to tackle growth obstacles is a crucial part of improving competitiveness and strengthening enterprises in Serbia. Business support organisations are a key stakeholder in this process which aims to provide SMEs a competitive footing to enter the demanding European market.





## IMPROVING BUSINESS ENVIROMENT



Within efforts to enhance local competitiveness the EU through EU PRO facilitated 6.8 million Euros investment towards support to local governments, to create conditions for development of infrastructure and enhance quality of services they provide to enterprises and citizens, with the ultimate goal shared by the the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the European Union, to strengthen the overall business environment in Serbia.

EU PRO



## DETAILED REGULATION PLAN – UŽICE "OLD TOWN" PLANNING THE NEW LIFE OF AN OLD FORTRESS

The Old Town medieval fortress in Užice constitutes a symbol of the city. With its rich history and imposing location the old fortification presents an ideal tourist destination potentially significant for the entire region of the Đetinja Gorge and its surroundings. In order to achieve its full potential a detailed regulation plan (DRP) was developed for the area covering 28 hectares, setting the foundation for future development, protection and promotion of this natural and cultural heritage. The planning document received professional recognition at the 28th International Urban Planning exhibition, held in Niš in 2019, winning the second prize out of 26 DRPs submitted across Serbia.

Besides paying special attention to environmental protection, the DRP development followed all EU PRO requirements for participatory approach as Užice City organised the early public insight meeting attended by a large number of citizens and potential investors who actively participated in the debate.

Following the DRP adoption project-technical documentation for conservation and restoration was received and ultimately obtained 250,000 Euros in funding for reconstruction works on the citadel in the Old Town from the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications as well as more than 60,000 Euros from the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation for completion of the reconstruction of the Old Town.

EU PRO supported local self-governments to develop planning and technical documentation, digitalise geospatial data and improve business infrastructure contributing to better overall business environment and investment potential of the less developed towns and municipalities.

To this end the EU provided more than 6.8 million Euros into projects derived from four EU PRO public calls for proposals, namely – Proposals for Economic Infrastructure Projects, Proposals for Development of Execution Designs for Economic Infrastructure Projects, Proposals for Formulation of Detailed Regulation Plans and Proposals for Geographic Information Systems (GIS).



**Viktor Veljović**  
EU PRO Associate for Geographic Information Systems and Urban Planning

The key to developing detailed regulation plans is to have inclusive processes that consider the perspectives of all stakeholders, as this is the only way to guarantee the success of the final, planned project.

## DETAILED REGULATION PLANS

Detailed regulation plans (DRPs) represent a first step in realising obligatory preconditions for infrastructure investments. The Programme supported eighteen LSGs in development of DRPs worth over 236,318 Euros covering the area of 559.57 hectares in total. Nine DRPs<sup>1</sup> address development of industrial, production and commercial zones while remaining plans<sup>2</sup> provide a foundation for valorisation and preservation of natural and cultural heritage and tourism development.

Developed plans create a 49.07 million Euros investment pipeline while over 1.53 million Euros were already invested.

As its predecessor Programmes, the EU PRO continued with the best practices in DRP development – including the additional elements to support transparency, accountability and inclusion of relevant stakeholders in the DRP development process. A dedicated web page was created for each of the supported plans. This eased communication between plan developers and the general public. Additionally, public private dialogue supported at the beginning of the planning process contributed to quality and sustainability of developed plans.

<sup>1</sup> DRPs in Dimitrovgrad, Kraljevo, Kučevo, Merošina, Pirot, Rača, Raška, Topola, and Vlasotince

<sup>2</sup> DRPs in Čajetina, Surdulica, Velika Plana, Veliko Gradište, Zaječar, Aranđelovac, Leskovac, Majdanpek, and Užice

## ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The European Union provided 4.5 million Euros for the realisation of nine economic infrastructure projects with the aim of improving competitiveness at local level by upgrading conditions for business and attracting new investments.

Through the EU PRO Programme the conditions for new investments have been significantly improved in nine local self-governments, Bojnik, Kragujevac, Paraćin, Priboj, Smederevo, Sokobanja, Svilajnac, Šabac, and Užice enabling better business environment and conditions for attracting investments and increasing the number of employees and living standards of citizens.

A total of 630 hectares of land was infrastructurally equipped in industrial and business zones, where access roads were



**Dragana Novaković**  
Infrastructure Sector Manager

Developing economic infrastructure is a long-term investment. Better business environment attracts new investors which in turn strengthens the local self-government, and in this way initial investment always returns many times over through job creation and continuous economic growth.

built, communal infrastructure constructed or improved through provision of water supply, sewerage and electricity supply. The interventions increased investment potential of local self-governments and contributed to economic growth. The LSGs participated in the project realisation with more than 900,000 Euros.

Returns on this long term investments are expected through job creation and growth opportunities, and ultimately decrease in local economic migration as citizens should have better access to jobs and services in their own municipalities.

Twenty four million Euros (24.4) of investments have been realized in these zones so far, but more importantly, 1,080 jobs were created, and there is an investment pipeline of an additional 84 million Euros which could result in over 3,115 new jobs. Both domestic and foreign investors expressed interest to start their production in these cities and municipalities.

## ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE – PRIBOJ FREE ZONE NEW LIFE OF AN OLD GIANT

Priboj Free Zone was founded at the location of a former Yugoslavian industrial giant – Priboj Car Factory (FAP). In 2015 the Serbian Government acknowledged the potential of this town bordering Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina and opened the Free Zone covering almost 27 hectares. The local administration and the donors have since remained committed to its continued development.

The EU through the EU PRO Programme invested 280,000 Euros in the reconstruction of the old and construction of new water supply and hydrant network. The investment contributed to improved business conditions for the potential investors as well as for the ten existing businesses that employ 500 Priboj locals.

The Zone attracted both the domestic and foreign investors including the Turkish company Flex Academy – producer of hoses, steel pipes, hollow profiles and fittings. Flex production facility covers 20,000 square metres and employs 258 people. Dženan Smailbegović, Sales Director at Flexacademy and Priboj citizen noted the strong positive impact that the project had on his and other companies operating in the Free Zone especially the now enabled fire protection. “Moreover, the whole Zone is working better and this will generate new jobs in our town”, says Smailbegović.

## TECHNICAL DOCUMENTATION

Through the Programme 12 local self-governments<sup>1</sup> developed execution designs for business infrastructure as a prerequisite to expand the local economic infrastructure. EU supported the projects with almost 275,000 Euros while 130,891 Euros were provided by the local self-governments in co-funding.

The documentation enabled the establishment of industrial zones and technological parks, upgraded work of business incubators, start-ups, congress and training centres, as well as agricultural development. Developed technical documentation has to date facilitated 4.2 million Euros of in-

<sup>1</sup> The technical documentation projects were implemented in Bela Palanka, Čačak, Doljevac, Knjaževac, Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Kučevo, Niš, Smederevo, Topola, Vladičin Han and Vranje

vestments and created a pipeline for additional 20.4 million Euros of new investments.

A good example of the process is the municipality of Topola where procured works for the first phase of the irrigation system was financed with 1.6 million Euros by the Government of Serbia but has also ensured additional three million Euros for the second phase of the project deriving from the technical documentation developed through EU PRO.

## GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

GIS represents information technology (IT) tools that enable municipalities to collect, process and manage spatial data. The resulting information enhances development planning, utility and resource management, efficiency and transparency in service provision to both citizens and investors and facilitates decision making processes for the local administration.

The EU invested close to 1.7 million Euro to support 34 local self-governments<sup>2</sup> in implementation of 19 Geographic Information Systems (GIS) projects of which eight were conducted in partnership of two or more LSGs which maximised their development potentials and solved common or territory based issues.

Through the project LSGs procured GIS software and hardware and received support in the GIS introduction and development process as over 400 people were trained in use of GIS tools including 170 women.

As a result LSGs have developed a total of 134 applications grouped in five thematic areas: spatial and urban planning; improvement of public infrastructure, public property inventory; attraction of investments, rehabilitation/development of brownfield sites, underused and deprived areas, agriculture and rural development; preservation and valorisation of natural, cultural, architectural and urban heritage, tourism development; and environmental protection, climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management, and energy efficiency.

<sup>2</sup> Čajetina, Čačak, Arilje, Gornji Milanovac, Lučani, Požega, Kragujevac, Knić, Rekovac, Kraljevo, Kruševac, Aleksinac, Leskovac, Bojnik, Loznica, Krupanj, Ljubovija, Mali Zvornik, Niš, Novi Pazar, Tutin, Paraćin, Požarevac, Veliko Gradište, Rača, Batočina, Lapovo, Raška, Šabac, Sokobanja, Topola, Vranje, Žagubica, Zaječar

## GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM – CITY OF LOZNICA REGIONAL GIS – JOINT PUSH FOR TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

An idea for a GIS project implemented by four LSGs – the City of Loznica in partnership with three neighbouring municipalities of Krupanj, Mali Zvornik, and Ljubovija came about as a direct result of the EU PRO public call for GIS projects. However by the end of the project implementation the initiative went a step further and the Regional GIS centre for Podrinje was created.

The four-partite GIS established through the EU PRO Programme was used to collect, analyse, process and utilize geographic data in order to improve infrastructure planning and tourism, networking and standardised flow of information between local public companies.

The funds received through the project were used to purchase equipment necessary to establish GIS and to fund the training of local administration to use the complex GIS tool. Also a web based GIS portal and an Android application were established for tourism and ecology while the particular attention was then given to mapping degraded areas, as well as applications for reporting communal problems.

The formed regional GIS centre in Loznica will be used as a hub for further coordinated work including capacity building of administration staff of the Podrinje subregion. Additionally, the base stations have been opened in the three local governments – Krupanj, Mali Zvornik, and Ljubovija, where the respective working groups have been formed.



**Ljiljana Nikolić**  
Loznica City GIS Project Manager

To successfully implement a GIS project the time needs to be invested both in acquiring new knowledge and in the realisation of the project itself, as such complex projects can be implemented only with a plan and effort, but also with a full engagement of the local team and the support of decision makers.



**12**  
TECHNICAL  
DOCUMENTATION

**24.6** million  
Euros  
INVESTMENT  
PIPELINE

**90**  
JOBS

**4.2 MILLION EUROS**  
REALISED INFRASTRUCTURE  
INVESTMENTS



**18**  
DETAILED  
REGULATION PLANS

**49** million  
Euros  
INVESTMENT PIPELINE  
(1.5 M RELEASED)

**560** ha  
INCLUDED

**QUALITY OF THE PLANNING PROCESS**  
RECOGNISED BY  
THE EXPERT COMMUNITY



**19**  
GEOGRAPHIC  
INFORMATION SYSTEMS

**134**  
THEMATIC  
APPLICATIONS

**402**  
PERSONNEL TRAINED

**IMPROVED QUALITY**  
AND INCREASED  
TRANSPARENCY OF SERVICES



## SOCIAL INCLUSION AND **COHESION**



EU PRO effectively addressed issues related to social inclusion by facilitating better social cohesion and supporting development of an attractive living environment through improvement of small scale public infrastructure. The intervention was planned as a response to the needs identified in consultation with its key partners and beneficiary groups.

# EU PRO



## LEARNING OF SERBIAN AS A NON-MOTHER TONGUE THE POWER OF KNOWLEDGE

In partnership with the Republic of Serbia Coordination Body for Bujanovac, Preševo and Medveđa (CB) the continuation of a project for enhancing learning of Serbian as non-mother tongue (SNMT) among Albanian pupils was identified as one of priorities for multi-ethnic communities in South Serbia.

The initiative was initially supported through EU PRO predecessor – European PROGRES and had since proven a substantial, measured impact which merited a two year extension in August 2018.

The project supported the engagement of six teaching assistants aiding teachers of SNMT in four elementary schools in Bujanovac and Preševo. The project valued at close to 150,000 Euros was implemented through the civil society organisation “Group 484” with the support of the key institutions, the CB and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MESTD).

The project showed tangible results as 780 Albanian pupils demonstrated improved understanding of the Serbian language while their SNMT teachers in four schools in Bujanovac and Preševo adopted a more interactive mode of teaching. MESTD recognised the project as an important measure that contributes to the wider SNMT teaching reforms across the country.

With the COVID-19 outbreak the project was modified in March 2020 and finalised through the distance learning modality in June 2020. As an added value of the project, an e-manual of best practices in teaching delivered within the project was created contributing to the sustainability of the project.



**Biljana Kerić**  
Sector Manager for Social Cohesion

Social inclusion projects are diverse but all aim to break down prejudices and remove barriers – be they related to differences in living standards, ethnicities or language in order for everyone to exercise their full rights as citizens of their country.

As a part of its social inclusion and cohesion efforts, the Programme generated a needs based response in consultation with the relevant institutions, including the Office for Human and Minorities Rights (OHMR) and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MESTD) and Republic of Serbia Coordination Body for Bujanovac, Preševo and Medveđa (CB). The activities focused on contributing to implementation of the national minorities rights, better inter-ethnic understanding and relations, improved integration of national minorities and addressing the specific needs of excluded groups in multi-ethnic communities.

Through the public call opened for 32 local self-governments<sup>1</sup> with multi-ethnic composition according to the Law on Local Self-Government, as well as for the civil society organisations registered in one of these municipalities and cities, the EU supported the realisation of 21 best ranked projects with 372,931 Euros. The projects contributed to reduction of inequalities and discrimination, promoting inter-ethnic understanding and providing equal opportunities for each individual in local communities of 18 LSGs.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the position of national minorities was improved through establishment

<sup>1</sup> Babušnica, Bela Palanka, Bojnik, Boljevac, Bor, Bosilegrad, Bujanovac, Vladičin Han, Vranje, Golubac, Dimitrovgrad, Doljevac, Žagubica, Žitorađa, Koceljeva, Kučevo, Lajkovac, Lebane, Leskovac, Majdanpek, Medveđa, Merošina, Negotin, Novi Pazar, Petrovac na Mlavi, Požarevac, Preševo, Priboj, Prijepolje, Sjenica, Surdulica, and Tutin

<sup>2</sup> Požarevac, Bor, Priboj, Prijepolje, Sjenica, Tutin, Novi Pazar, Bela Palanka, Babušnica, Dimitrovgrad, Leskovac, Lebane, Vladičin Han, Vranje, Surdulica, Bujanovac, and Preševo

of institutional mechanisms for addressing their rights issues and through harmonisation of the pertinent local policies with the national regulatory framework and implementation of relevant strategic documents.

Through the projects, civil society organisations worked on economic empowerment of the vulnerable, primarily rural women, youth, and the persons with disabilities, while the focus was also on the improvement of the status of Roma community by enhancing the access to education, health and social services.

## SOCIAL INCLUSION – INCLUSIVE ACADEMY FOR EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES THE ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE

According to the latest census of population in Serbia approximately ten percent of Serbian population lives with some kind of disability while among them young people with disabilities (YPWD) are most often multiply marginalised in both private and work life.

The Association of Psychologists from Novi Pazar, the City with the youngest population in Serbia, recognised the importance of addressing this issue through the EU PRO Supported “Inclusive Academy” project.

Zehra Hasanbegović, president of the Association underlines the importance of empowering YPWD not just to acquire basic knowledge and skills needed to be included in the community but also to work on their employability as a part of the inclusion process.

Within the project, the Centre for Youth Career Development was established, and provided individual career guidance and counseling services for 20 young people with disabilities. They participated in 30 different workshops and improved their personal and professional competencies, communication, organisational and computer skills. All of them completed a two-month internship in four companies in Novi Pazar, where they had mentoring support in performing tasks. It was an important step towards their psychological empowerment and preparation to enter the labour market.

Under the social cohesion activities, the Programme contributed to the improvement of the socio-economic position of excluded groups and better positioning of the national minorities, directly benefiting over 4,600 citizens of which close to 60 percent women.

The onset of COVID-19 had a significant impact on the benefiting projects as 85% of the projects had to be extended from two to nine months, with an average extension of five months. In order to address the implementation issues caused by the pandemic, modification of the activities was enabled without affecting the objectives and expected results of the project.



**Emir Birčanin**  
project beneficiary

At workshops I learned how to apply and interview for a job and how to behave at work. We hung out, and I met new friends. Now, after two months of an internship where I learned a lot, I have a job as a waiter.



**22**  
SOCIAL COHESION PROJECTS  
IN MULTIETHNIC LSGs

**18** MUNICIPALITIES



**4,600**  
2,700 OUT OF 4,600  
DIRECT WOMEN BENEFICIARIES

## LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Within the efforts to improve social inclusion and cohesion in the Programme municipalities the European Union supported the realisation of 37 local infrastructure projects with the amount of 4.5 million Euros. The projects improved the standard of and access to communal, health and social services and created better conditions for the education of children and young people.

Upon completion these projects, selected through 2018 public call, contributed to better quality of life of over 162,000 people and especially vulnerable groups, all of whom benefited from the overall improved living and working conditions.

Through eight projects the conditions were improved in educational facilities benefiting 5,500 children and their teachers, while another 92,000 people benefited from 17 projects that enhanced sports and cultural infrastructure. Similarly, close to 10,000 people benefited from improved health and social care facilities in Žabari and Žagubica while ten of the projects contributed to better communal infrastructure which improved sanitary conditions in the settlements that house over 54,500 people providing them with better access to health and sustainable water supply.

The sustainability of all local infrastructure projects have further been ensured by good governance activities, implemented in partnership with the Swiss PRO Programme. These activities focused on building capacities of the municipalities for sustainable and transparent asset management, social inclusion, participation, as well as planning the allocation of the energy efficiency savings for further investments.



**Olivera Kostić**  
EU PRO Programme Manager

Improved quality of life is a precondition for a strong economy. Through investments in social infrastructure, EU PRO improved access to higher quality services and contributed to wellbeing and prosperity of communities.

Following good governance principles, 18 LSGs have adopted 21 regulations benefiting over 15,000 people especially those from vulnerable groups – 5,151 children and youth, 2,233 Roma, 802 persons with disabilities (PWDs) and 50 elderly. Namely, the implementation of seven regulations ensures accountable and transparent use of premises of public institutions or sport terrains as well as equal access to those public properties with formalisation of non-discriminatory provisions related to vulnerable groups. Eight regulations determined management accountability for public goods, three regulations formalise subventions for particularly vulnerable groups while three documents regulate further use and allocation of energy efficiency savings.



**37**  
SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS



**162,000**  
BENEFICIARIES



**17**  
SPORTS AND CULTURE FACILITIES  
92,000 BENEFICIARIES



**10**  
COMMUNAL AND UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE  
54,500 BENEFICIARIES



**8**  
EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES  
5,500 BENEFICIARIES



**2**  
SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH FACILITIES  
10,000 BENEFICIARIES



### LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT – “JASTREBAČKI PARTIZANI” ELEMENTARY SCHOOL A WARM AND COSY PLACE TO LEARN

Close to 200 pupils from the outposting department of the “Jastrebački Partizani” Elementary School in Balajnac village in Merošina Municipality are now attending classes in a completely renovated building. According to the kids, before the renovation the school was old and cold.

“We now have a new blackboard, the toilets were renovated and everything is new, nicer and warmer,” says one of the pupils from Balajnac.

As the local self-government in Merošina is focused on creating a better living and working conditions for all of the people and with the EU support they provided the local children with a new, tidy, modernly equipped facility and warm classrooms. Three million dinars were earmarked from the municipal budget for additional works on the electrical network, equipping the space for depositing pellets, and redecorating the teacher cabinet, with the goal to match the quality of education to that provided in the urban areas.

According to Emilija Petković, Deputy Mayor of Merošina, with improved conditions, children from the Roma community are encouraged to enroll. Both children and parents are actively involved in the process of education and extracurricular activities thanks to the good governance principles implemented in cooperation with the Swiss PRO Programme.



**Nenad Ramić**  
Balajnac Roma Community Representative

I went to this school and now my two children attend classes here, so I can see the positive changes made. We are all glad, parents and children, to have such a nice school in our settlement.





## COMMUNICATION AND **PUBLIC AWARENESS**



EU PRO activities and results were continuously and transparently communicated through the Programme. The benefits of these activities for the wider population in Serbia as well as the EU contribution to the general improvement of life standards locally were the focus of the communication effort which were actively communicated locally and nationally.

EU PRO



EU PRO Communication and Visibility activities were focused on underlining the opportunities, importance and results of the Programme activities. With a versatile target audience, ranging from youth to high level officials in national and international institutions, a range of approaches and tools were used to promote the process of European integration as it applies to citizens of Serbia.



**Paul-Henri Presset**  
Head of Information, Communication and Press, Delegation of European Union to the Republic of Serbia

The EU PRO website, recognised by high level stakeholders as the key communication and programme tool, was at the core of all information distribution as the most popular communication hub with approximately 5,000 unique visitors per month and surpassing 200,000 visitation for the duration of the Programme implementation. The website generated Programme Newsletter informed over 2,500 website subscribers about key Programme achievements.

To engage the traditional media, Programme issued 20 media announcements and 65 press releases while 21 interviews and statements were organised with Programme officials. The importance of the Programme work was recognised by 5,500 positive media reports, 40 percent of which in the national media.

Ensuring to extend the information to younger audiences the Programme's digital presence was substantially strengthened as the Programme nurtured the existing social media channels inherited from its predecessor – European PROGRES Programme. While also active on Twitter, Instagram and Youtube, the Facebook page proved to be the most successful digital communication channel achieving 88 percent increase in fellowship over the three year period with now

Serbia's integration into the EU is sometimes narrowly misinterpreted as an administrative process, but the reality is far away from this. EU integration process is all about shared values, people exchanges, overcoming together global challenges and building a brighter and sustainable future. It delivers opportunities for all citizens and especially the youth. Making it known is a crucial part of a successful integration process.

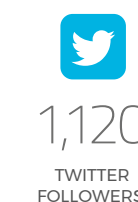
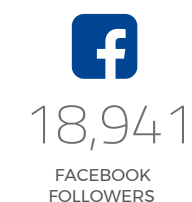
18,941 followers and a total of 521,446 reaches over the three years.

Continuously focusing on youth engagement, the Programme organised three annual art competitions attracting close to 1,000 artworks from high schools in the Programme area inspiring the pupils to depict themes relevant to the European values. The success of the Calendar Competition over the years was honored in 2019 when the EU Delegation in Serbia acknowledged it as its own official calendar maximising its outreach in raising awareness about the Programme and the European values amongst Serbian youth.

EU PRO Local Media Competition was also organised in partnership with the DEU and MEI focusing on local develop-

ment achieved through the Programme. The seven winners selected by a special jury from 26 submissions and 30 media received the IT, audio and video equipment to improve technical quality of reporting. Additionally, to broaden cooperation with the national media and improve technical quality of reporting from the Programme area, the broadcasting equipment was procured and delivered to three correspondence offices of the Public Service Media, Radio Television of Serbia in Leskovac, Kraljevo and Novi Pazar.

Finally, the Programme results were widely promoted via 120 written and video success stories each individually promoted through social and/or traditional media.





**Marko Vujačić**

Head of Programme, UNOPS Serbia Multi-Country Office

It was a genuine privilege to be part of the EU PRO Programme. As in the past decade through three area based support Programmes<sup>1</sup> UNOPS in partnership with the Government of Serbia and Delegation of the European Union, continued to support sustainable economic development of southern Serbia.

Throughout the implementation EU PRO exemplified excellence in developing partnerships and cooperation with the national institutions, the donor, and beneficiaries, as is best shown in the success achieved despite the COVID-19 pandemics. The team, besides the efficiency and effectiveness, demonstrated agility and dedication, and ability to find innovative solutions for what, at times, seemed to be unsurpassable issues.

The results are tangible and measurable – improved infrastructure and environment more conducive to business development and cultivation of a strong private sector led by entrepreneurs is now a fact in some of the beneficiary local self-governments. In others, habitually smaller local self-governments, change is more gradual and the need for additional support evident. This is a global proven rule of local development – larger, more dominant urban centres, even in the less developed areas of the country, are the locomotives of change.

With this in mind and the solid foundation layed by the previous initiatives, including the EU PRO, UNOPS will continue to further assist and finetune the local development approach securing the best and most productive modality for Serbia.

While continuing to support economic growth and social cohesion in less developed areas of the country, the future initiative will focus more closely on introducing integrated territorial development approach, while reflecting on EU territorial mechanisms and requirements linked to Serbia's EU accession process. This means that the future of development lies in shifting municipal

<sup>1</sup> EU PROGRES (2010–2014), European PROGRES (2014–2018) and now the EU PRO (2018–2021)

borders in favour of territorial potential where dominant urban centres should use their capacities to engage and strengthen less developed local self-governments in order to ultimately reach full potential of the given territory. It also implies adoption of a multi-sectoral approach and support to a mix of complementary interventions rather than to individual projects. This means blending of different funding sources in order to accelerate development, while enhancing sustainable impacts.

Of course, this is a long term goal and a process that will parallelly continue to respond to the needs and provide support where it's needed the most. UNOPS is fully invested into delivering yet another successful initiative contributing to larger development goals and strategies put forth by our trusted partners, the Ministry of the European Integration and the Government of Serbia as well as the Delegation of European Union in Serbia.

Impresum





Republic of Serbia



Implementing partner

#EY  
ЗА ТЕБЕ

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