



Enhancing Good Governance
and Social Inclusion for
Municipal Development

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Enhancing Good Governance and Social Inclusion for Municipal Development – Swiss PRO

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Executive Summary

The Swiss funded “Enhancing Good Governance and Social Inclusion for Municipal Development” Programme (Swiss PRO) will improve local capacities primary in 99 municipalities in Šumadija and Western Serbia, and South and Eastern Serbia regions to apply good governance (GG) principles in practice, to implement efficiently and effectively local social inclusion measures and policies and deliver public services, and thus increase social cohesion. Overall, the Programme will contribute to the improved rule of law at the local level, increased accountability, transparency and efficiency and effectiveness of the local governments (LGs), and ultimately improvement of quality of life of citizens, especially excluded citizens.

The Programme has to fulfil two main goals: one is the contribution to the organisations’/officials’ knowledge and skills, and the second is the change in the scope and quality of public services rendered to citizens, especially to those from excluded groups. In addition, capacity building will be provided to local civil society organisations (CSOs) as well as institutions dealing with social inclusion and gender equality. The activities will be specifically designed based on an assessment at the start of the Programme, which will show the current state of GG and resources at the local level. A set of measurable indicators will be identified to evaluate the changes the Programme assisted the LGs in achieving, at the levels of: outputs, outcomes and the expected impacts.

The Government of Switzerland has allocated CHF 6.9 million (USD 6.9 million) for the Programme implementation in the period from 1 January 2018 until 31 December 2021. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) will be responsible for the implementation of the Programme in cooperation with the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM).¹

The Programme will coordinate its activities with the key line-national-level institutions,² while observing the national strategies, laws and relevant development documents, which will contribute to sustainability, ensure national ownership and develop national capacities.

The content and the scope of the Programme will significantly complement the European Union Support to Municipal Development – EU PRO Programme.³ For example, the EU PRO will implement infrastructure projects that will be in conjunction with the GG principles, which is an opportunity for decision makers to focus on the important issues of project management, improving regulation and sustainability projects. As a part of harmonising with the EU PRO Programme, the joint Programme’s Coordination Committee (PCC) will be established to discuss projects with agreed complementarity, to provide guidance for achieving synergies and enhancements of the expecting results; and to secure coordination

¹ The national association of local authorities in Serbia

² The list of key national-level institutions is presented under the Section 3.4.1

³ The Programme will be implemented by UNOPS, with the EU funding of 25 million Euros, over 36 months and is focused on improving business environment for small and medium enterprises and entrepreneurs, including building infrastructure to improve local economy, quality of life and the efficiency of local authorities in property management.

of activities in regard to stakeholders/beneficiaries involved. The Ministry of European Integration (MEI) will be responsible for overall coordination and chairing of the Programmes' Coordination Committee (PCC), whose members will be the representatives of the Swiss Cooperation Office (SCO)/ Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Delegation of European Union (DEU), line ministries, and SCTM and UNOPS with no voting rights.

The Programme will enable direct work with municipalities through presence in the field, the approach that enables better insight into the needs of municipalities and also timely identified certain barriers in project implementation. It will establish vertical cooperation between the national and local governments in implementing the activities, their networking and communication. The Programme will encourage all relevant stakeholders to adopt pro-active commitment to gender mainstreaming.

One of the key risks that has been identified and analysed during the preparation of the Programme is the lack of understanding of the concept of the good governance among the local decision makers. In order to mitigate the risk, the Programme will prepare a communications outreach plan to present all planned activities to LGs, including examples of good practice. Other measures will involve identifying GG contact persons and signing Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with the LGs.

The primary goal of the communications will be to promote the objectives of the Programme, especially the behavioural change of the involved governmental structures. The Programme will contribute to the overall visibility of the SCO/SDC in Serbia and its support to Serbia's development, but also to better understanding of the GG principles and social inclusion policies at the local level. The Programme's logo will prominently feature the logo of the SCO/SDC, while the name of the Programme will be developed in consultation with the SCO/SDC.

The Programme's progress will be monitored with the aim to track progress over time against the planned targets within the logical framework matrix. The SCO/SDC has budgeted at least for one external review from their resources independent from the Programme budget.

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Abbreviations

ACAS	Anti-corruption Agency of Serbia
AoR	Area of Responsibility
AROPE	At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate
CB	Government of Serbia Coordination Body for the Municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa
CBSS	Community Based Social Services
CFP	Call for Proposals
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSW	Centre for Social Work
CSP	Centre for Social Policy
DEU	Delegation of the European Union
EC	European Commission
ESRP	Employment and Social Reform Programme
EU	European Union
EU PRO	EU Support to Municipal Development
GEM	Gender Equality Mechanisms
GIZ	German Society for International Cooperation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GG	Good Governance
GGCU	Good Governance Competence Units
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
HDI	Human Development Index
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IT	Information Technology
LAP	Local Action Plan(s)
LED	Local Economic Development
LFM	Logical Framework Matrix
LGA	Local Governance Assessment
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex
LTI	Local Transparency Index
LG	Local government
MEI	Ministry of European Integration
MLEVSA	Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPALSG	Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self Government
MSP	Municipal Support Packages
NAD	National Priorities for International Assistance in the Republic of Serbia 2014-2017, with projections until 2020
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NIPAC	National IPA Coordinator
NUTS	Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics
PD	Programme Document
PCC	Programme Coordination Committee
PSSC	Programme sub-Steering Committee
PWD	People with disabilities
RSOC	UNOPS Serbia Operations Centre
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SCTM	Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities

SCO	Swiss Cooperation Office in Serbia
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SILC	Survey on Income and Living Conditions
SIPRU	Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services

1 Context

The content and the scope of the Enhancing Good Governance and Social Inclusion for Municipal Development Programme (Swiss PRO) will significantly complement and contribute to implementation of the European Union Support to Municipal Development Programme (EU PRO), focussed on improving business environment for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs, including building infrastructure to improve local economy, quality of life and the efficiency of local authorities in property management. Through synergies of the interventions, where pertinent, the Swiss PRO will further empower the local governments (LGs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) in the EU PRO to enhance good governance and social inclusion at local level, thus contributing to improved overall local development.

The Programme will be doing this, through focussed and continuous support to LGs to adopt and implement good governance (GG) principles (efficiency and effectiveness, transparency, accountability, rule of law, participation, and equity and non-discrimination), in their everyday practices. In addition to this, the focus will also be on the intervention for the improvement of social inclusion, gender equality, and enhancement of excluded group's position in the community.

The LGs will be empowered for the development and implementation of local policies in practice, improvement of working efficiency, development and establishment of e-services in order to ensure more effective services for citizens.

The Government of Switzerland has allocated CHF 6.9 million (USD 6.9 million) for the Programme implementation period of 48 months. The United Nations Office for Project Services, Serbia Operations Centre (UNOPS RSOC), as the implementing agency, will be responsible for the Programme implementation. In addition, the European Union (EU) has selected UNOPS, in a call for expression of interest, as the implementing agency of a 25 million Euros funded EU PRO Programme that is planned to last 36 months.

The Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM), as the national association of local authorities in Serbia, represents interests, provides services and supports the development and improvement of LGs in accordance with the EU standards. The SCTM is important partner both to national and local authorities and international partners, in implementing system reforms, but also in strengthening LGs in Serbia. UNOPS and SCTM will partner for the purpose of improving good governance at local level and will sign a Grant Support Agreement which will regulate roles and responsibilities in the Programme implementation.⁴

⁴ More information has been provided in the Section 5: Organisation, Management and Administration.

The Swiss PRO builds on the development momentum created by its predecessors, six projects funded by the EU and the Government of Switzerland,⁵ and takes into account the lessons learned during their implementation over the past ten years.

1.1 General Background

The Republic of Serbia, with 7.2 million inhabitants, is at the crucial stage of its political and socio-economic development. Since 2001, Serbia has been implementing reforms aimed at international reintegration and development. After the phase of economic growth, poverty reduction and prosperity of the population, the progress was halted in 2008 due to the global economic crisis, which put Serbia in a new challenging position on its way of further reforms and development processes. The challenges were reflected in demographic trends, in particular in depopulation and aging, cessation of economic growth, high unemployment rate, low levels of investment and social spending. Despite the challenges, Serbia has officially started its accession negotiations in 2014.⁶

According to the **Regulation on Establishing a Unified List of Regional Development and Local Government Units for 2014**⁷, there are 44 LGs in the IV group of underdeveloped (development level below 60% of the national average), of which 19 are classified as devastated (development level below 50% of the national average). The highest concentration of underdeveloped and devastated municipalities is in the South and South West Serbia.

Serbian economy once again drifted into recession in 2014 due to the floods which caused damage amounting to 864 million Euros and resulting in 648 million Euros in losses.⁸ Economic position of Serbia has deteriorated, which resulted in worsening the position of excluded groups, high unemployment rate, and growth of poverty.

The main goals of the Republic of Serbia economic policy are recognised in the **Fiscal Strategy for 2016 with forecasts for 2017 and 2018**⁹, and they include, *inter alia*, the removal of obstacles to economic growth and increased competitiveness, which would be achieved through implementation of comprehensive structural reforms and continuation of structural reforms, especially in the area of public enterprises and improving the efficiency of the public sector.

The Report on the World Governance Indicators¹⁰ from 2015 demonstrated that Serbia had moved from 68th to 58th position out of 189 countries in the world covered by this indicator. Compared to other European countries, Serbia stands on 32nd among 34 countries.

⁵ PRO 1, PRO 2 in the Southwest Serbia, MIR 1 and MIR2 in the South Serbia, EU PROGRES in 25 municipalities of the South and Southwest Serbia (<http://www.euprogres.org/oprogramu.php>), and European PROGRES in 34 municipalities of the Southeast and Southwest Serbia (<http://www.europeanprogres.org/kosmo/en/55/>)

⁶ Strategic Partnership Framework Report for the period 2016-2020, World Bank, 2015

⁷ Official Gazette of Republic of Serbia, no. 104/2014

⁸ Strategic Partnership Framework Report for the period 2016-2020, World Bank, 2015

⁹ Fiscal Strategy for 2016, Government of the Republic of Serbia, <http://www.mfin.gov.rs/pages/article.php?id=11753>

¹⁰ World Governance Indicators, World Bank Data <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#reports>

Observing certain indicators with respect to 2014, in the areas such as voice and accountability, and government efficiency, the indicators are in stagnation, and somewhat lower positions were recorded in the areas of political stability, quality of regulations and rule of law. The indicators point out to areas which require intensive reforms on Serbia's way to the EU accession.

During the past years Serbia has been establishing national-level legal, administrative and other systemic preconditions for further development of good governance at the local level. In the process of general public administration reform and societal system and relations, especially in Serbia's harmonising with the EU integration requirements, the issue of good governance in public affairs becomes one of the fundamental points of further reforms. One of the important initiatives was the adoption of the Public Administration Reform (PAR) Strategy and its Action Plan. The main objectives of this reform are to: "Increase of citizen participation, transparency, improvement of ethical standards and responsibilities in performance of public administration activities".¹¹

Given the variety of definitions of good governance,¹² while having in mind numerous experiences, it can be said that local-level practice should include the good governance principles in line with the SCO/SDC governance practice and these are: accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness, participation, equality and non-discrimination and rule of law.

Human Development Index (HDI) in Serbia for 2014 was 0.771 - places the country on 66th position among 188 countries. From 1990 to 2014, the value of the HDI for Serbia had increased from 0.726 to 0.771. The possibilities for the increase in the HDI in Serbia are still great. Reducing poverty, modernising healthcare infrastructure, improving the conditions for education, adopting the adequate strategic documents and other measures can considerably enhance human development, thus increasing the value of the HDI.

Serbia is characterised by an expressive depopulation trend, with high mortality rates, unfavourable age structure and low birth rate.¹³

In the course of 2015, population standard was further exacerbated due to the reduction in real net salaries of -2.1% and 5.2% of pensions, compared to 2014.

The at-risk-of poverty or social exclusion rate (AROPE), the key monitoring indicator for the Europe 2020 Strategy, stood at 43.2% in Serbia in 2014 and it was higher than in any EU Member State, except Bulgaria.¹⁴

¹¹ Specific objective No. 5 of the PAR Strategy and AP

¹² One of the most comprehensive attempts to define this concept in LG context is the Council of Europe 2008 Strategy for innovation and good governance at the local level. This important document recognises 12 principles of good governance: (1) Fair Conduct of Elections, Representation and Participation, (2) Responsiveness, (3) Efficiency and Effectiveness, (4) Openness and Transparency, (5) Rule of Law, (6) Ethical Conduct, (7) Competence and Capacity, (8) Innovation and Openness to Change, (9) Sustainability and Long-term Orientation, (10) Sound Financial Management, (11) Human Rights, Cultural Diversity and Social Cohesion and (12) Accountability.

¹³ Employment and Social Reform Programme in the Process of Accession to the EU, Government of the Republic of Serbia, May 2016, p.9, <http://socijalnouklucivanje.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/SIPRU-ESRP-2016-English.pdf>

The **Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC)** from 2015 is one of the main sources of data for monitoring the poverty and social inclusion in the EU. Based on the survey, the official risk-of-poverty rate (the share of people with disposable income below the 60 % of the median disposable income) was estimated at 24.5%. This rate means that there are close to 1.8 million poor people in Serbia.¹⁵

Based on the research **The Poverty Map of Serbia**¹⁶, poverty estimates at the municipal level ranged between 4.8% in parts of Belgrade region and 66% in parts of Šumadija and Western Serbia. Additionally, estimates of poverty rates in South and East Serbia range between somewhat more than 13% in Medijana and somewhat more than 63% in Bojnik, with the average of 33% in the region. The Report reaffirms relevance of the Programme's geographic coverage on the one hand and of activities that support enhanced social inclusion on the other.

Based on this overview, it is clear that there is no improved local community without improved local governance and vice versa – social development of towns and municipalities will have positive feedback on institutional, human resource and financial strengthening of LGs.

This is why the Swiss PRO intervention will be focussed on the improvement of life quality in local community, fulfilling the rights, needs and interests of local population, from the aspect of improving good governance and social inclusion at local level.

1.2 Features of the Sector, Problems to be Addressed and Drivers of Change

The intention of the Programme is to promote reforms and development at local level, with the aim to make participating municipalities more efficient and effective, transparent and accountable, while improving the position of the excluded groups. Relevant assessments, studies, and reports indicate improvements that Serbia has made in the domains of public administration and social inclusion but also point out the need for further improvements.

Serbia, according to the **European Commission (EC) 2016 Progress Report**¹⁷, “is moderately prepared in the area of public administration reform”. There has been progress “with the adoption of public financial management reform programme, strategies on e-government and on regulatory reform and policy-making, and on procedures, public salaries and...civil servants”. Furthermore, the new **Law on Employees in the Autonomous Provinces and Self-Government Units**¹⁸ “extends the state civil service framework to local level and introduces

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 10

¹⁵ SIPRU web site:

<http://socioalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/rs/socioalno-ukljucivanje-u-rs/statistika/opsti-kontekst-ekomske-i-socioalne-politike/>

¹⁶ Poverty Map in Serbia Report, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, The World Bank, 2016, p.15,

<http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/859541477472336209/Poverty-Map-of-Serbia.pdf>

¹⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_serbia.pdf

¹⁸ http://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_zaposlenima_u_autonomnim_pokrajinama_i_jedinicama_lokalne_samouprave.html

merit-based human resources management system”.¹⁹ The EC Report also praised the efforts in strengthening the tax administration and reform of local government finance but pointed that “preventing corruption in local government requires greater attention”. The document indicates that the local administrative capacities remain weak and confirms that significant disparities among municipalities persist. It calls for enhanced human resources management, simplification of administrative procedures, clearer definition of responsibilities, and further improvements of services that are provided to citizens and businesses.

The **openness of public administration** as a concept started developing especially after the introduction of the Internet as a means of communication which enables higher visibility and proneness to participation and better public control. The obligation of LGs to consult citizens/public currently exists only in relation to developing planning documents and establishing the rate of original income. Measuring the degree of public administration transparency can partly be seen in the annual reports of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection.

In 2015 some 24% of complaints on access to information submitted to the Commissioner were related to LGs while some 25% of LGs did not publicise their information booklets. Only around half of LGs organised training for employees on their obligations stemming from the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance. According to Transparency Serbia’s (TS) 2015 **Local Transparency Index (LTI)** with 87 criteria, the situation in LGs in general in 2015 was not satisfactory. LTI points to significant difficulties e.g. only 63 out of 168 cities and municipalities held public debates or polling and consultative meetings on budget. Even less number of LGs publicised the so-called citizens’ budget, i.e. budgeting guidelines for citizens (six LGs) or updated information on budget expenditures on their websites (12 LGs). It is especially worrying that 50 LGs never organised public debate on increasing the rate/amount of public income, despite legal obligation.

The **Public Administration Reform Action Plan** envisages a number of reform activities for involving CSOs and citizens in the processes of creation, implementation and monitoring of local and national public policies. In addition to this AP, in 2014 the Government adopted **Guidelines for Inclusion of CSOs** in decision-making process to streamline public administration bodies in ensuring participatory and transparent approaches in their work. This document suggests four levels of participation of CSOs in the process of preparation, adoption and monitoring of regulations: informing; consulting; inclusion; and partnership. Taking into account the volume of reforms to be initiated with new/amended legislation and strategic documents, namely the Strategy for Creating an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development in the Republic of Serbia 2017–2020, LGs will need significant assistance for operative implementation of these reform processes and tasks.

¹⁹ Serbia 2016 Report, European Commission, 2016,
https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_serbia.pdf

In addition, capacity development should enable LGs to plan and implement their activities independently. This further enables sustainable change, but it also requires an inclusive approach to resource management and service provision and highlights the need for reform through policies and institutional reforms.

The **Training Needs Assessment of LGs Employees Report**²⁰ demonstrated that there were two groups of identified needs - general needs, related to systemic challenges such as leadership skills, modern techniques in human resource management, performance management, project management, local economic development, anticorruption and urgent needs relating to administrative procedures, auditing, public assets management, electronic administration, financial management, public procurement etc. To achieve the desired capacity building, it is necessary to provide specific professional training programmes for the management layer at highest level, and specific programmes for staff, based on identified needs in line with the self-assessment system.

Serbia has a legal and institutional framework for the **suppression of corruption** in place, since the corruption is the one of the largest obstacles for implementing good governance. The EC 2016 Progress Report for Serbia observes that some level of preparedness has been reached in the prevention and fight against corruption, but it remains prevalent in many areas. **Anti-corruption Agency Serbia (ACAS)** analyses²¹ identify numerous corruption risks in the work of LGs and show that the current legal obligations are not sufficiently implemented, as only just over a half of LGs have adopted integrity plans. Therefore, LGs especially those less developed, will need substantial support, primarily through technical/expert assistance for the elaboration and implementation of local anti-corruption related documents.

The **Assessment of Good Governance in 34 municipalities in the South East and South West of Serbia**²² analysed LGs performance against five good governance principles²³, while considering service providers and service users perspectives. While there were differences between municipalities, the findings showed in particular that LGs must invest more efforts to enhance citizens' participation in design, implementation and monitoring of policies as well as to improve efficiency. The key conclusions of this research served for further planning and defining GG approach in this Programme.

According to the results of the **E-Government Development Index (EGDI)**²⁴ all LGs, except for one are represented online. The best placed LGs come from Belgrade region, while the lowest ones are from Jablanički, Pčinjski and Mačvanski districts, which confirms a general conclusion that the level of income per region is a general indicator of the achieved level of

²⁰ Training Needs Assessment of LGs Employees Report, January 2017, Council of Europe

²¹ Anti-corruption Agency analysis for LGs, December 2016: <http://www.acas.rs/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Analiza-pravnog-okvira-na-rizike-od-korupcije-lokalna-samouprava-FINAL-cir.pdf>

²² The Assessment was conducted in 2015 through development programme European PROGRES that was funded by the European Union and the Government of Switzerland, and in cooperation with CeSID.

²³ Accountability, efficiency, transparency, participation and non-discrimination.

²⁴ Social Development Index for Towns and Municipalities - the indicator available only for 2014: <http://www.socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/indeks/>

economic development, and as such influences the development of e-Government. Taking into account these indicators, the Programme will provide support to LGs in improving the level of e-government with the aim to establish inclusive, responsible and citizen-oriented services.

On its way to the EU accession, Serbia has a very important task, and this is participation in the social inclusion process. In order to fulfil requirements and follow the EU trends, Serbia needs further development and improvement of institutional framework and methodology for monitoring the social inclusion policies and practices at the local level.

The Social Development Index of Towns and Municipalities²⁵ is a composite index which enables comparison of the achieved level of social development between towns and municipalities in Serbia.²⁶ According to the review, the lowest index was recorded in Golubac, followed by Gadžin Han and Kučevo, while the highest index was recorded in Belgrade municipalities of Savski venac, Stari Grad, New Belgrade. In the area of social protection, the lowest index was recorded in Koceljeva, Bojnik and Malo Crniće. Based on the index, realistic expenses for social protection were declining in the observing period, having been reduced by as much as 8%. This trend put under question the capacity of the state to provide adequate protection to citizens in the period of poverty growth and reduction of living standard.

Within the **Assessment of Institutional Capacities, Employability of Vulnerable Groups and Social Protection**²⁷, implemented in 2016 on a sample of 34 municipalities, it was concluded that municipalities showed significant lack of capacities for strategic planning and achieving development goals, and that LGs should work on the improvement of capacities in their internal organisations, development of human resources and financial management. The community based social services (CBSS), as a delivery mechanism, in these 34 municipalities are mainly underdeveloped or are not accessible to users yet. The offer of services is very modest, with relatively small number of users. Additionally, greater number of services is not sustainable, since most LGs spend small budget funds for these services. Also, CBSS (c.f. activity 2.2.1) are commonly established without a solid legal framework.

Findings from recently conducted research **Mapping of Social Protection Services under Jurisdiction of LGs**²⁸ show that provision of social protection services within LGs is not at satisfactory level in terms of their variety, sustainability, availability, efficiency and quality. As an example, availability indicators show that 17,000 children and youth with disabilities

²⁵ Initiated by the Team Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, and covers the period 2011-2014. <http://www.socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/indeks/>

²⁶ The index has value between 1 and 100, where higher value of the index stands for better living conditions in a specific LGs. The areas of analysed social development are: demography, economic activity, education, healthcare, social protection, housing conditions, security, social participation and excluded groups and human rights.

²⁷ Assessment of Institutional Capacities, Employability of Vulnerable Groups and Social Protection in 34 towns and municipalities in Serbia, was conducted by the European PROGRES Programme in cooperation with the Centre for Social Policy (CSP).

²⁸ Mapping of Social Protection Services under Jurisdiction of LGs, SIPRU, Centre for Social Policy, 2016 <http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Mapiranje-usluga-socijalne-zastite.pdf>

are in need of social services while only 1,500 beneficiaries from this category are actually having access to the services provided by LGs.

In addition, due to set criteria and conditions for financing of LGs from the Republic budget envisaged by the current **Regulation on Earmarked Transfers in Social Welfare**²⁹ LGs primarily need support in proper needs assessment of social inclusion beneficiaries at the local level, the causes for exclusion occurrences, as well as in regular monitoring and evaluation of social protection services.

In order to contribute to reduced level of the social exclusion in LGs, the Programme will provide support in establishing social services, strengthening collaboration with the CSOs and LGs in joint approach to meet the needs of communities and monitoring the policies of social inclusion at local level.

In the course of the past decade, a number of institutions were established at local level related to **gender equality**. According to the SCTM, 129 LGs have established gender equality mechanisms, 38 municipalities have signed the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, and 43 LGs have implemented projects for the promotion of gender equality. Serious financial and economic crisis in Serbia has greatly affected the state budget, which has resulted in the reduction of allocations for institutions addressing gender equality. Discontinuity of gender-related institutions due to deficiencies in human and financial resources, indicates low capacity of these institutions for adopting, coordinating and implementing the effective and efficient gender equality policies.³⁰

The **Gender Equality Index** in Serbia is 40.6%, which reveals gender inequality, and indicates that Serbia lags behind the average EU-28 in overall gender equality. Compared to the EU-28, Serbia has the lowest score of all the Member States in the area of labour.

The **ethnic structure** of the population in the South East and South West Serbia is diversified, with national minorities representing a high percentage of the total population.³¹ Roma, especially Roma women, are the most discriminated against, while other excluded groups include persons with disabilities and long-term unemployed people with low qualification. In some parts of South and South West Serbia³² a minority forms the majority of the population: e.g. 70% inhabitants of Bosilegrad are Bulgarian, 89% of Preševo and 55% of Bujanovac are Albanians, 90% of Tutin, 77% of Novi Pazar and 74% of Sjenica residents are Bosniaks.

Building further on its understanding and practice from the previous two iterations, this Programme recognises that the main Drivers of Change are result of the *interactions* among the following factors:

²⁹ Official Gazette of RS 18/2016

³⁰ Gender Equality Index for Serbia Report, 2015, p. 22,

http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/lzvestaj_Indeks_rodne_ravnopravnosti_2016_EN.pdf

³¹ <http://popis2011.stat.rs/>

³² 2011 Census <http://popis2011.stat.rs/?lang=en>

- **the contextual:** Serbia as a transitional society, relatively recently emerging from post-conflict situation, with degraded social and human capital, inadequate economic dynamism, deteriorating infrastructure, impoverished citizens and demographic decline;
- **the institutional:** pre-eminence of politics and politicians over expertise in local administrations; lacking of concordance between local politics/politicians and local civil servants (permanence in following through on policy implementation is often non-consistent); inadequate capacities of local admin-staff, often due to rather high frequency of internal shuffles and changes, following political changes, lead often to erosion of overall institutional capacities for efficient and effective service provision to the citizens; patronage of politics at local level produces high risk of corruption; local parliaments are often subject to substantial interferences by local decision makers; gender inequality is still visible in local governments and other local public entities, especially when it comes to availability of different functions/positions and political participation and representation;
- **agents of change:** experts within local administration and other public entities, willing to contribute and work for change; local political leaders and decision makers, with sense of responsibility towards the electorate and the citizens, and with matching competencies and personal qualities (e.g. integrity, drive for improving quality of life for the citizens, etc.); civil society organisations, with organisational and management capacities to support a drive for improvement of public services provision, advocacy for the interests/needs of the citizens, fight against corruption, discrimination and gender equality; local business leaders and business support organisations; local media outlets; national level organisations and institutions, such as the line Ministries; the donors and the donor community in Serbia, their objectives and coordination in delivery of socio-economic development activities, and their interaction with the Government and local governments.

This holistic approach to supporting a drive for change at local level, envisages engagement with the partner municipalities on different axes, fostering in a planned and coordinated manner processes related to improvements of local governance, strengthening of local institutions, increased citizens participation, and improved efficiency and effectiveness in equitable public service delivery.

1.3 Link to the relevant policy and legal framework

The Programme intervention is fully in line with main country strategic documents relevant for the outcomes such as Indicative Strategy Paper for Serbia 2014 – 2020, Strategy for Public Administration Reform, Anti-Corruption Strategy 2013-2018, Strategy of Professional Training of LGs Employees, the Regulatory Reform Strategy with the Action Plan, Strategy for the Development of e-Government in Serbia 2015 – 2018, Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma for 2016-2025, the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2016-2020, with the Action Plan and the Employment and Social Reform Programme – ESRP.

Additionally, the Programme has compliance with legal framework relevant for efforts of Serbia to EU accession i.e. Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) between European communities and its member states and the Republic of Serbia, Europe 2020 Strategy, the European Commission Report for Serbia 2016, National Priorities for International Assistance in the Republic of Serbia 2014-2017, with projections until 2020 (NAD) and the National Plan for Adoption of the Acquis 2014-18 (NPAA).

The Programme is also contributing to achieving 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provides new global sustainable development framework.

The special focus is on Switzerland's new Cooperation Strategy with Serbia 2018-2021 that identifies relevant areas mainstreamed across interventions into every project supported by Switzerland.

More details on link to relevant policy and legal framework are presented in *Annex II*.

1.4 Other Relevant Interventions

The Programme is designed as a continuous support for the development of municipalities, especially underdeveloped ones, based on experience, needs assessment and the results of previous and ongoing Programmes.

The Programme will continue to regularly cooperate with the complementary interventions in Serbia in order to foster synergies and promote coherence with other Swiss as well as EU interventions.

In *Annex III* a brief overview of the relevant projects and interventions is presented, which complement the Swiss PRO Programme.

2 Results and lessons learned from the previous interventions

2.1 Programme results

The UNOPS in Serbia has strongly been supporting endeavours of the Government and the donors for seven years, by responsibly implementing two major development programmes³³ in the South and South West Serbia, focussed both on achieving the assigned objectives, and on adding value by embedding the good governance principles and practices, and gender equality aspects, into the overall Programmes' outcomes.

³³ European Partnership with Municipalities programme - PROGRES, 2010-2014, in 25 municipalities; European PROGRES, 2014-2017 (on-going), in 34 municipalities

The work on **good governance (GG)** as a cross cutting theme distinguishes the two development Programmes, EU PROGRES and European PROGRES, from other similar interventions in Serbia. Through these interventions, a theoretical concept of GG and ensuing principles, such as accountability, efficiency, or non-discrimination, were transformed into practical content, useful to local governments and to other actors.

The Programme worked with LGs to identify which aspects of a particular infrastructure project, that they were implementing, needed to be addressed in order to enhance governance – how to organise the processes and establish accountability structures, or how to use/share benefits deriving from new equipment etc. The solutions were turned into as many as **55 new or revised local policies and regulations**³⁴, each and every enhancing one or more GG principles. Three years after completion of these interventions, UNOPS was able to confirm that majority of regulations, are still in use and positively contribute to work of these local institutions.

European PROGRES is supporting municipalities to establish a permanent **GG competence human resources and structures** within local administration, which will be assisting the LGs in development of GG aspects of all future public projects. Also, local governance reforms aiming at increasing accountability, transparency and efficiency in the selected municipalities are currently underway.

Both Programmes contributed to promotion of **gender equality** agenda at local level through provision of technical assistance and implementation of over 30 specific projects and initiatives. The local Gender Equality Mechanisms (GEMs) were established and strengthened throughout the Programme area (25 in the previous iteration and 34 municipalities in the current Programme). Most of them have developed local action plans for gender equality, and 32 adopted the European Charter for Equality of Men and Women in Local Life. Introduction of **gender responsive budgeting** practices was also supported at local level. As a result, for example, nine municipalities have allocated over RSD 4.5 million for gender equality and economic empowerment of women in their budgets for 2016.

One of strongest features of the both PROGRES programmes was assistance to **excluded groups**, such as Roma, disabled, youth, unemployed, elderly, and women. Support has been multi-dimensional, from provision of free legal assistance, funding of small scale partnership projects of civil society and LGs, to infrastructure interventions and economic empowerment. The Programmes supported over 120 **partnership projects of civil society and LGs**, which benefitted primarily local excluded groups.

Involvement of the SCTM as a Programme partner is seen as one of important strong-points for the Programme's successful implementation and a guarantee for the sustainability of its results. Specific methodological approaches and tools developed by the SCTM over the years of assisting LGs, as well as the very infrastructure, bodies (general assembly, presidency and

³⁴ Local policies and regulations were developed and adopted within the EU PROGRES Programme.

committees), networks³⁵ and communication channels of the SCTM towards all levels of government, are part of Programme's design and are entirely in the function of its effectiveness.

Modernising local administration, improving its capacities and promoting the perspective of European Administrative Space for LGs are in-a-nutshell objectives of the majority of actions undertaken by the SCTM. Such mission of the SCTM is also influenced by relevant policy documents³⁶, which give the SCTM an important place and role in policy implementation at the local level. It is equally relevant for local reform processes that the SCTM is regularly enrolled in the course of preparation and/or amending some of the systemic laws which feature the spirit of the right to good administration.

2.2 Lessons learned

The results achieved so far and **lessons learned** are based on experiences gained through previous programmes implemented in direct cooperation with LGs. The lessons presented below were taken from the predecessors, and they are still an important direction for further work, especially for cooperation with LGs:³⁷

- The greatest challenge in implementing the activities on GG was reflected in understanding the GG concept, and in the matter that LGs should take more active role in developing reform programmes and implementation thereof. The Programme has provided significant assistance to LGs in developing skills and knowledge in this area. In order to develop ownership over the process, the Programme will continue to promote the GG concept, especially among decision-makers. Additionally, signing a MoU with municipalities and advocating the improvement of local governance, have proved to be good practice, and will be continued through this Programme as well.
- Implementation of capacity building programme, in parallel with the establishment of working bodies for GG composed of several persons, enabled the improvement of horizontal learning about GG in LG. Identifying the persons responsible for GG in municipalities turned out to be the first important step in establishing the basis for further intervention and implementation of activities. These steps will be specifically important for new municipalities which have not been involved in the Programme so far, and the same approach in promotion of GG at local level will be applied.
- Developed capacities quite commonly face political changes at local level, which weakens their role and importance in the process of improved local governance. These

³⁵ Within the remit of SCTM there are as much as 20 different expert Networks whose members are dominantly employees from town and municipality administrations competent for certain issues/areas. Some of these Networks are seen as particularly suitable for the analytical tasks and for dissemination of project-related updates and achievements (e.g. Network of Heads of local administrations, Network of HRM managers, Local Finances Network, Gender Equality Network, etc.)

³⁶ These are the documents that provide the framework for good governance in Serbia, such as: Action Plan accompanying the PAR Strategy, Strategy and the AP for Professional Development of LG Employees, Public Financial Management Reform Programme 2016-2020, Action Plan accompanying the Strategy for Regulatory Reform and Improving the Management of Public Policies for period 2016-2020, Action Plans for OGP implementation, etc., where SCTM participated in the preparation and is stipulated as the partner in implementation. This is also the case with the Draft Strategy (and AP) for creating an Enabling Environment for the Civil Society Development in the Republic of Serbia.

³⁷ Midterm and final evaluations of MIR 2 and PRO programmes

changes are often completely beyond the Programme's control. In order to ensure continuity and sustainability in municipalities where these capacities have already been built, the Programme will continue to strengthen their role by including them in preparation of the reform programmes and project proposals. Additionally, directing the decision makers to already existing resources, especially in preparing project proposals, will enable additional credibility of municipal capacities and their notable role.

- Local Gender Equality Mechanisms (GEMs) are poorly visible, not recognised in local structures and not included in policy making, budget planning and drafting of other documents for gender mainstreaming at local level. The Programme will work on ensuring stronger support to decision makers by promoting and linking women parliamentary networks to local GEMs and by providing relevant technical support.
- Involvement of local CSOs in preparing strategic plans, but also being partners in implementation of grant schemes is a comparative advantage.
- Coordination and partnership with national sectoral projects, as well as with relevant ministries and national institutions, resulted in synergic effects both in programming and financial aspects of actions.
- Provision of direct support to the selected LGs through Municipal Support Packages (MSP) within the other programmes/projects implemented by the SCTM has shown as highly effective, since they secure comprehensive tailored support to the selected LGs in improvement of specific processes and services at the local level.
- Regional and on-line trainings provided to all LGs by the SCTM, through different programmes/projects, secured common level of understanding and capacities within all Serbian LGs which is of high importance for the full implementation of the national policies and legislation across the whole country.

3 Objectives

3.1 Overall Goal (Impact)

The overall goal of the Programme is to contribute to improved governance by enhancing local capacities and resources to apply good governance principles in practice, and to implement effectively local social inclusion measures and policies in order to improve citizens', especially excluded citizens, life conditions.

In order to achieve this objective, the Programme will focus on **three outcomes**:

- LGs enhanced use of good governance principles, resulting in better and inclusive services for citizens
- Increased inclusion of excluded groups
- Enhanced gender equality

The outcomes of the Programme will contribute to system changes and will improve good governance at the local level. Outputs will be focussed on capacity building, improvement of integration of GG principles in local policies and regulations, institutional, technical and human capacities for the enhancement of e-services, strengthening capacities of local CSOs

as well as institutional strengthening of social inclusion and gender equality. Achievement of these outputs will improve already existing processes or create new ones, which will promote models for policy development and local reforms.

3.2 Impact hypothesis

The Programme embedded an outcome-based approach in all of its phases, including its design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation, and will be operating under the following **Impact Hypothesis**:

- The Programme contributes to improved rule of law at local level, increased accountability, transparency and efficiency and effectiveness of the LGs, and by this contributes to increasing and mending both the public sector's responsiveness to citizens' rights and needs, including those from excluded groups and to public services delivery (in its quality, scope and outreach).
All this contributes to improved local governance, decreased levels of social exclusion, increased social cohesion of local communities and overall improvement of quality of life of citizens in the participating municipalities.
- This endeavour is comprised out of a set of focussed activities that are implemented for improving and strengthening the overall local good governance practices (including updating and streamlining local regulatory framework) and pertained processes (including civic participation in local public-policy development /formulation and decision making).
To this end, the Programme supports enhancement of existing or development of new organisational/institutional capacities (both in local public and civil sectors), as well as the capacities of local elected and/or appointed public officials.
- The Programme thus contributes to induction of positive changes in the overall local governance system, making it more accountable, transparent, efficient and effective.

The Key Assumptions for the Intervention:

- There is a pressing need, recognised and pronounced both at national and local levels, for a sustained and comprehensive endeavour in improving accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness (as well as of other governance aspects) of local governments, in both their operational functioning and in processes for formulating and implementing local public policies
- The line national level institutions/bodies endorse the need for the intervention and its objectives
- The participating LGs take full ownership of the processes and responsibility for their outputs and outcomes.

The Approach to Change: A Brief Overview

The Programme will design, develop and carry out a comprehensive assessment of the current needs for capacity development (CD) of participating public actors at local level and

their key personnel (elected and appointed officials), that are expected to be included in all planned activities. This approach will move on from often passively-received CD activities, to a pro-active organisational learning process.

Based on the results, findings and recommendations from the assessments, the Programme will design topic-specific learning processes, which will define how the Programme will approach to each change-striving activity; what Government tier is to be involved and in which capacity; what local staff-level positions are planned to participate in the process, and how all it will contribute to personal and organisational capacities and the overall knowledge capital.

The Programme will engage at early stages of the planning and later on in the implementation processes, some of the key line-national-level institutions (c.f 3.4.1) and other relevant institutions, for securing necessary support for and a pertinent involvement to the intervention.

This will also potentially increase the commitment of the participating LGs to achieving the shared objectives of the Programme, and consequently acceptance of LGs' ownership over the processes that will be taking place in their communities.

The Programme will design and monitor, from the assessed baseline, sets of measurable indicators, that will depict, at the end of the intervention, the changes the Programme assisted the LGs in achieving, at the levels of: outputs (within the Programme's life), the outcomes (measurable or reasonably expected to be happening within the Programme's life or within three years after its ending) and the expected impacts-informed, baseline data-based projections on what plausible should be expected in regards to the planned intervention objectives, in the period five-years past or later.

This process will have two main stages and goals: one is the learning process, as the Programme's contribution to the organisations'/officials' personal volume of body of knowledge and skills³⁸ and the second is the actual change in the scope and quality of public services rendered to citizens, especially to those from excluded groups, and local businesses as well.

The process and the lessons learned from it will be documented and proposals for developing new, or amending existing local policies and regulations or procedures, will be developed and submitted to relevant municipal authorities/bodies for adoption and implementation.

The Programme intervention is focussed on the improvement of LG system through everyday application of good governance principle, social inclusion policies, all with the aim of more effective provision of services to citizens, especially to excluded groups. Establishing the process and approach for introduction of good governance principle, LGs will be in

³⁸ The Programme will apply tools such as, but not limited to, blended learning, coaching, mentoring or customised on-the-job training, and application of the tools for collecting data on the change in knowledge, skills and behaviour resulting from the process.

position to implement the activities under their competence in more efficient, transparent and responsible way, and to improve the quality of services at local level.

3.3 Target group

As the main target group, the Programme will consider people with disabilities, refugees, IDPs and returnees, rural and other vulnerable women, Roma and any other individual/group with multi-layer vulnerability.

This Programme will be considering the following social groups, both from urban and rural areas, as excluded groups that will also be taken into account, where relevant: elderly (especially those over 65 years of age); people with disabilities; women; children and youth (15 to 24 years of age); one-parent families; long-term unemployed; ethnic and religious minorities; refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and returnees; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) people; and extreme-poverty stricken people in general.

The citizens of all participating municipalities will benefit from improved local governance, especially in terms of more efficient and effective delivery of public services. This includes, among other, improved efficiency and effectiveness of local administration in providing services to citizens and businesses; improved capacities of LGs for rights-based planning for socio-economic development; improved capacities of local administration and other local actors, including civil sector, to work on constant upgrading of local governance; upgraded capacities of relevant local public entities to apply rights-based development of social-services, improved access of citizens, including those from the excluded groups, to participate in local political and decision-making processes, as well as to access information relevant to their well-being; improved local capacities for addressing discrimination at local level, including the gender-based one, and other.

Through the support to municipalities to improve and/or upgrade their local e-Government system and resources, the Programme will contribute to improved quality of life of at least 5,000 people from excluded groups, which will be provided with opportunities to much more efficiently resolve their various administrative needs, such as for official documents and other.

By supporting up to 50 municipalities from the AoR to develop new or upgrade existing local social protection services; or to establish /upgrade monitoring and evaluation mechanism for their delivery; or to implement specific activities tackling social exclusion in cooperation with local civil sector; or to provide Citizens Advisory Services and tackle gender equality challenges at local level, the Programme will contribute to improved well-being of at least 10,000 vulnerable, out of which at least 2,000 will belong to the especially excluded groups.

Another target group will be local elected and/or appointed officials and selected staff from LGs and other public entities, whose awareness and understanding of good governance will be raised and improved, and who will be engaged in introduction and incorporation of concrete governance-related processes into their organisations' body of knowledge and

practices. With these activities, including those conducted by SCTM, the Programme will support acquisition of GG-how-to knowledge and practices by up to 75 LGs and other local public organisations/institutions, while in the same time support development of GG expertise and capacities in at least 1,600 local staff/ officials.

3.4 Outreach

3.4.1 Beneficiaries and Parties Involved

Key stakeholders, at the same time the main beneficiaries will be LGs and its institutions. In addition, the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-government (MPALSG), the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs (MLEVSA), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Centres for Social Work (CSW), will be the beneficiaries of the Programme.

The final beneficiaries are the inhabitants of the area where the Programme will be implemented (est. 3.5 million citizens in the Programme Implementation Area of 99 municipalities).

The following institutions will be involved in the Programme implementation:

- The Ministry of European Integration³⁹
- The Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government
- The Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs
- The Office for Information Technologies and e-Government⁴⁰
- The Anti-Corruption Agency of Serbia
- The Coordination Body for the Municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa
- The Coordination Body for Gender Equality
- The Coordination Body for monitoring the implementation of the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma
- The Office for Human and Minority Rights of the Government of Serbia
- The Commissioner for the Protection of Equality
- The Office for Cooperation with Civil Society
- The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit
- The Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection
- The Ombudsman Office.

³⁹ At its session held on 26 June 2017, the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Law on Amendments to the Law on Ministries, establishing new Ministry for European Integration that will carry out state administration and professional tasks related to coordination, monitoring, reporting on all processes related to the EU accession (Official Gazette 62/2017, Article 13a).

⁴⁰ At its session held on 26 June 2017, the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Law on Amendments to the Law on Ministries. On the date of the entry into force of this Law, the Directorate for e-Government cease to exist. During the preparation of the programme document, at its session held on 27 July 2017, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Regulation for establishment of the Office for Information Technologies and e-Government, which will be located at the service of the Government of RS, under the supervision of the Prime Minister of the RS. The Office will have a larger scope of work and mandate for coordination with the state administration and LGs.

The Ministry of European Integration (MEI), the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs, the Swiss Cooperation Office (SCO)/ Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Delegation of the European Union (DEU) as the donor of the complementary EU PRO Programme and the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM) are the key partners in the Programme implementation and at the same time members of the Programme Coordination Committee (PCC) (c.f. Section 5).

3.4.2 Programme Implementation Area

Taking into account complementarity with the EU PRO and for achieving the synergy of the intervention and upgrade of the support process, **the Programme main area of intervention** will cover municipalities in two NUTS (Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics) regions⁴¹: Šumadija and Western Serbia, South and Eastern Serbia, i.e. **99 municipalities**.

The intervention will be implemented in municipalities of different levels of development, so different approaches or criteria will have to be applied during the implementation process in the procedure of project selection or intervention coverage.

In the inception phase, consultations with the national and local stakeholders will enable identification of needs, areas and criteria for further work with municipalities.

The assessment of the e-government status will be conducted on a sample of LGs from the entire Serbia, while all other activities implemented by the UNOPS will be in line with the AoR of the EU PRO.

The **SCTM, will implement its activities in the entire Serbia**. The criteria for the selection of municipalities for participation in some of the assistance and capacity building programmes will be further determined upon the completion of Local Governance Assessment (LGA, c.f. activity 1.1.1) to provide insight into the status of municipalities in the area of good governance. The SCTM and UNOPS will strive to develop synergy and complementarity with the EU PRO Programme.

3.5 Content and Scope of the Programme Outcomes

This section describes the approach, but also outputs for three identified Programme outcomes. Additionally, it provides information about models for activities implementation and indicators, but also models for inclusion of partnership institutions, as well as certain instruments in implementation.

Outcome 1:

Local governments (LGs) participating in the Programme enhanced use of good governance principles resulting in better and inclusive services for citizens.

⁴¹ In accordance with the Law on Regional Development, Official Gazette, 89/2015

Output 1.1:

Raised awareness and general capacities for implementation of good governance principles at local level

Implemented by the SCTM

Activities:

1.1.1 Conduct Assessment, based on Good Governance Index, on LG performance and capacities for applying good governance principles

Initial assessment of local governments on performance and capacities for applying good governance principles will be performed with the experts visiting representative sample of LGs to measure Good Governance Index (GGI).⁴² Through analysis of the GGI results, as well as the desk research and interviews with the selected national and local stakeholders, the initial Assessment will identify gaps in practices and provide baseline and recommendations for fine tuning of the capacity building interventions within the Programme (trainings, workshops, Municipal Support Packages (c.f. activity 1.2.1), etc.).

During the Programme implementation all LGs will be invited to perform GGI self-assessments as benchmarking and learning tool.

During the last year of the Programme, the final Assessment of the same scope will be performed with the aim of measuring the results of the Programme interventions, including the good governance reform processes that have been implemented at local level.

1.1.2 Creation of Knowledge and Information Hub on good governance at the local level

The Programme will establish Knowledge and Information Hub on good governance at the local level which will provide the following services to the LGs:

- Provision of an on-demand direct advisory support to LGs on specific issues related to introduction/implementation/improvement of good governance principles.
- Establishment of the Q&A section at SCTM's web platform for implementation of good governance principles.

⁴² Good Governance Index (GGI) for performance assessment of local governments in the implementation of GG principles will be developed in close cooperation between MPALG, SCTM, UNOPS, and supported through GIZ PAR Project, European PROGRES and Institutional Support to SCTM – phase two (SDC) projects. GGI will be based on the already existing tools for performance evaluation of LGs such as "Good Governance Club" developed by the MPALG, European PROGRES Good Governance Index, SCTM on-line Self-Assessment Tool for Assessment of LG capacities in different areas of LG's competences as well as other available relevant resources such as LG Transparency Index developed by Transparency Serbia. GGI should measure the existence and quality of the processes within the LGs in relation to the legal requirements and best practices in the GG areas such as: (1) predictability and efficiency of local administration; (2) accountability and anti-corruption; (3) openness, transparency and participation and (4) equality and non-discrimination. Once developed, it will be integrated in the existing SCTM on-line Performance Assessment Tool (ucinak.skgo.org), and through web platforms of the MPALG, UNOPS and SCTM, available to all LGs for evidence based self-assessment of their capacities for implementation of GG principles. Following already developed methodology of SCTM Performance Assessment Tool, GGI will be developed also to provide on-line generic recommendations to LGs how to improve their capacities and processes with references to available relevant handbooks and best practices. Given the self-assessment nature of the tool, GGI scores of single LGs will not be publicly available, but LGs will be able to see their total score and their overall rank in respect to other LGs.

- Establishment of a knowledge database (publications, articles, reports, analysis, web-pages, etc.) on good governance at local level, that will be available through the SCTM's web-portal⁴³
- Provision of short educational videos, which will be used to inform the general public about good governance principles application at the local level. The videos will be uploaded on the SCTM's web platform, as well as on social networks and LGs websites.
- Development and provision to the LGs of the Handbook for Implementation of Good Governance Principles at the Local Level, as a reference tool, whose usage will improve Good Governance Index in LGs.

The Knowledge and Information Hub will not be specific organisational unit within the SCTM, but will present a coordinated set of services provided to LGs by the SCTM Advisory and Training centres and Advocacy sector in the GG area. The Knowledge and Information Hub will be a specific type of the Centre for expertise and excellence, which is to be used primarily by LGs, but also by other interested stakeholders (national institutions, NGOs, international development partners and institutions), by providing leadership, advisory support and training, exchange of best practices, researches and analyses in the area of good governance at the local level.

Creation of the Knowledge and Information Hub within the SCTM upon completion of the Programme will secure: (1) sustainable organisational framework for monitoring of the implementation of GG principles at the local level, needed for evidence based formulation of the reform proposals and integration of the GG principles into the sectorial public policies, (2) provision of the knowledge and tools for improving capacities for applying the GG principles to the interested LGs, (3) sustainability and availability of the results and experiences and the developed tools to LGs.

1.1.3 Capacity building of LGs for implementation of GG principles through regional and on-line trainings

The Programme will develop and deliver regional and on-line trainings⁴⁴ as well as peer-to-peer workshops with an aim to raise the capacities of all LGs to introduce good governance principles into their practices, which are embodied in relevant national policy/strategic documents and legal framework.

At least 50 regional trainings, with at least 1,000 participants, will be implemented on the following topics: local administration efficiency and effectiveness, anti-discrimination and human and minority rights in LGs, communication and citizens and civil society participation in LG activities, transparency of LG activities, accountability and anticorruption, the rule of law, gender budgeting, etc. Topics will be finally selected and aligned with the needs identified within the initial Assessments on LG performance and capacities for implementation of good governance principles.

⁴³ Educational videos, Q&A section and knowledge database will be linked/shared to the web portals of MPALG and UNOPS

⁴⁴ Trainings will be developed in line with the MPALG Rulebook on the mandatory elements of general and special training programmes and the Law on Employees in Autonomous Provinces and Local Self Governments.

Following a strong impact of the ten SCTM's on-line courses already organised for LGs' representatives on various subjects, with more than 3,000 participants in total, the Programme will develop and implement four six-week long on-line trainings on the concept and principles of good governance for the LGs representatives (local officials, employees, councillors) and other relevant stakeholders at the local level, with at least 500 trainees in total.

Additionally, 12 peer-to-peer workshops for selected GG areas will be organised to provide exchange of best practices between LG officials and practitioners. Some of peer-to-peer workshops will include modified *living library*⁴⁵ concept.

1.1.4. *Conducting the national competition for the best practice in implementing the principles of good governance in local government*

In order to promote and disseminate best practices in the implementation of GG principles at local level the Programme will support the establishment and implementation of the annual national competition for LGs. The annual competitions will be conducted for the following categories: (1) efficiency and effectiveness, (2) transparency and participation, (3) accountability and rule of law, and (4) equity and non-discrimination. The national competition will be jointly established by the Ministry for Public Administration and Local Self-Government (MPALGS) and SCTM, and will be organised in close partnership with UNOPS and relevant national institutions tasked with certain issues that constitute GG principles. The Programme will support the following activities:

- Developing methodology, application documentation and evaluation criteria;
- Organising the work of joint body (led by MPALGS) for evaluating applications from cities and municipalities;
- Promotional activities;
- Organising a national awarding ceremony event for each annual competition.

The Programme funds amounting CHF 11,000 per year⁴⁶ (USD 11,000) will be used for financing the prize fund for awarding the four best examples. The concrete amount, i.e. the form of award (funds, equipment etc.), of the best four examples will be agreed between the organisers of each annual competition. The National competition for the best practice in implementing the GG principles in LGs should become form of sustainable partnership between MPALSG and SCTM, i.e. to be continued upon completion of the Programme.

Output 1.2:

Enhanced integration of GG principles in selected public affairs managed by LGs

Implemented by the SCTM

⁴⁵ The Living Library is an equalities tool that seeks to challenge prejudice and discrimination. In the Living library concept, Books are people, and reading consists of a conversation i.e. discussion from the concrete experiences.

⁴⁶ The option for equal financial contribution to the yearly award to be budgeted by the MPALG will be discussed upon formation of the new Government.

Activities:

1.2.1 Implementation of Municipal Support Packages in the area of efficiency, accountability and rule of law, transparency and participation in selected number of LGs

The Programme will provide direct support to the selected LGs through development and implementation of up to 42 Municipal Support Packages (MSP). The MSPs are a methodological tool developed by the SCTM, which represents tailor made consultancy support to LGs, selected upon a public competition, in specific areas of LG competences/services. The MSPs include provision of support to LGs in improving selected services, procedures and documents; training, advisory, and *ad hoc* consultation and mentoring; as well as implementation of the best practices, peer-to-peer learning and networking with other LGs.

Some of the areas that will be covered by Municipal Support Packages are:

- Improvement of efficiency and effectiveness of procedures and organisation of local administration, standardisation of local administrative procedures (both for citizens and private sector) and their harmonisation with the reformed legislative framework (MSP - efficiency).
- Development of local anticorruption plans, preparation and implementation of local integrity plans and codes of conduct for LG employees (MSP - accountability and the rule of law).
- Implementation of participative decision-making processes, especially in the budgeting; implementation of gender budgeting; establishment of the transparent system for local CSOs' financing; and the establishment of transparent system for informing the public on LG finances (MSP – transparency and participation).

The final decision on the areas and content of MSPs will be taken upon finalisation of the initial Assessments on LG performance and capacities for implementation of the Good Governance Principles. The selection of LGs for the implementation of the MSPs will be implemented through the open call, where LGs will be in position to apply for specific areas of support, with clear evaluation and selection criteria applied.

For this, the Programme will offer its GG expertise and assistance specifically to the EU PRO's Result 2: Improved conditions for business operations through more efficient administrative service provision, better land management and specific small-scale infrastructure investments.

This activity is complementary to the EU PRO Programme since it will include improvement and standardisation of all administrative procedures, including business related procedures which will increase efficiency and effectiveness of LGs services towards businesses.

Output 1.3:

LGs capacities for integration of GG in development of policies and implementation of projects enhanced

Implemented by the UNOPS

Activities:

1.3.1 Support establishment and capacity development of GG competence units and/or expertise in LGs where they are not currently available

Taking into account the findings from the Local Governance Assessment (see Activity 1.1.1), the Programme will organise up to four regional-level consultative workshops with all municipalities that were assessed and those whose GG expertise wasn't developed and established during European PROGRES. These consultations will be organised and delivered with appropriate participation and support from the Ministry for Public Administration and Local Self-Governments (MPALSG).

The objective of the consultations will be to reach common understanding among the Programme and the participating municipalities on what this good governance initiative is, what it entails, and what benefits for the citizens and local economy the intervention will bring on both immediate and long-term basis.

The consultative process will yield a specific set of mutually agreed actions that will be translated into a comprehensive and reciprocally binding written Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on all good governance activities that will be carried out in a municipality. The MoU will demonstrate clear political support to the intervention by the local decision makers, and thus will secure the overall ownership of the process by the municipalities. This will be conducted in close cooperation with the MPALSG.

Based on the signed MoUs, the Programme will develop a comprehensive set of capacity development activities, for the local staff designated by each participating municipality. The capacity development process will be a mix of a theoretical part (knowledge acquisition on good governance, its concept and the principles) and a practical process (actual work on real-life examples on how to make the GG principles tangible and applied in practice). For this process, the Programme will engage and rely also on the technical resources and expertise already built in the municipalities from the previous iterations, for transferring the experiences and the acquired know-how.

This will be planned and implemented in synergy with the activities that will be delivered by the SCTM, with the aim of broadening and enhancing the targeted LGs and local officials' comprehension of good governance concept and incorporation of related processes in LGs' overall functioning, including delivery of public services.

Eligible to apply for this activity will be the municipalities from the AoR, that weren't supported for this activity in the previous Programme. Priority in selection process will remain with those municipalities that are selected to participate in the complementary EU

PRO Programme, which will provide some of the real-life examples (infrastructures) to apply GG principles.

This activity will last at least up to three years and result in capacities to address good governance at local level developed, and expertise on GG established in a sustainable and lasting manner (measurable through a pre-set indicator stating the LGA baseline and the desired outcomes), formally/administratively endorsed by an appropriate LG body, in at least 20 participating municipalities.

1.3.2 Support further enhancement of capacities and resources of existing GG Competence Units (GGCU)

This activity will support further capacity development and/or institutional strengthening of at least 15 Good Governance Competence Units established in European PROGRES Programme. This activity will last at least three years and will be carried out utilising existing in-house UNOPS GG expertise, but also using the GG capacities the European PROGRES built in the municipalities. These local GG capacities will be further enhanced and capacitated in order to become more adequate in transferring the acquired GG knowledge and experiences know-how transfer to local public entities.

The Programme will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with municipalities that have expressed their willingness and commitment to increase and improve available human capital dealing with GG within their organisations and other public entities, to strengthen/expand their established institutional framework for improving governance at local level and thus to introduce relevant and feasible changes to local governance system and practices. The MoU will clearly state the mutual responsibilities and tasks, as well as the expected end outcomes of the process. The ownership of the whole intervention, as well as of the achieved outcomes, will remain with the participating municipality.

The Programme will, in accordance with the Law on Employees in Autonomous Provinces and Local Self Governments⁴⁷, and having in mind the Training Needs Assessment of the LGs Employees,⁴⁸ support at least 15 local staff members of at least 15 LGs, that have previously been certified by European PROGRES as local experts for GG, to expand their knowledge and test it through concrete examples.

These examples will stem from the Local Governance Assessment (LGA)-identified needs of each participating municipality, on following topics: how to recognise, assess and analyse governance bottlenecks in everyday functioning of an LG; how to develop a proposal for measures to tackle the identified issue; and how to provide technical support, guidance and advices to relevant local organisational entities in preparation, adoption and enactment of

⁴⁷ www.paragraf.rs/propisi/download/zakon_o_zaposlenima_u_autonomnim_pokrajinama_i_jedinicama_lokalne_samouprave.pdf

⁴⁸ <http://www.mduls.gov.rs/doc/Publikacija-%20Procena%20potreba%20za%20strucnim%20usavrsavanjem%20zaposlenih%20u%20JLS.pdf>

the measures needed to achieve the relevant changes. This will result in at least ten such processes identified.

1.3.3 Support LGs to develop and implement processes and tools for strengthening citizens participation and voice in public services delivery

The Programme will provide support to at least 30 LGs, selected in a public call, to pilot strengthening citizens participation and voice in planning for and delivery of public services, and to increase the level of the local public administrations' and other relevant public entities' responsiveness to citizens' needs.

More specifically, this activity will:

- enable selected LGs to assess, in a structured and relevant process, using a statistically valid survey as an instrument, citizens' and local business entities' (the customers') satisfaction with the quality of public services delivered to them, including the performance of the public administration;
- capacitate relevant LGs bodies, such as municipal/city councils, to interpret the findings from the assessment, to generate actionable insights and based on them to formulate recommendations for other competent elements of a local government (mayors, local parliaments) on what needs to be done to improve service delivery to the customers, both on short-and long-term-basis.
- support selected LGs to:
 - set up or improve existing channels of two-way communication with the customers, including designated IT services, such as cost-effective local e-Grievances system, which would contribute to increased levels of the citizens' soft-participation in local decision-making processes and in active political participation, including capacities for conducting e-Public Hearings, which could be piloted in a limited sample;
 - improved management of the customers' complaints (including LGs legal/statutory obligations, relevant staff communication and other customer-oriented skills, internal procedures etc.);
 - increased accountability, transparency and efficiency and effectiveness of relevant LGs departments (such as local inspection service etc.);
 - and consequently - improve overall responsiveness of the local public sector to local customers' needs and priorities.

For this activity, the Programme will use direct implementation, providing technical assistance to the selected LGs by engaging a professional expertise for the subjects described above, selected in a public and transparent process.

At least 30 Citizens' Satisfaction Surveys will be administered and produced in this activity. At least 30 specific recommendations for improving service delivery will be formulated. At least 200 relevant local staff will gain/improve knowledge and skills on customer relations and customer management, including on establishing and maintaining public-private

dialogue. At least five LGs established (procedurally and technically) functional e-public hearings system.

The ownership of the LGs will be the key in implementation of this activity and only those LGs that meet the criteria of the CfP will be offered support for this intervention.

One paper, with the analysis of the process, its main findings, conclusions and recommendations for LGs and the line national level institutions, produced and delivered at the end of the intervention.

1.3.4 Support municipalities participating in the complementary EU Programme to develop and adopt procedures to ensure the GG principles were embedded and applied into effective investment processes, including planning, implementation and monitoring of public projects

The Programme will provide support to the public projects funded through the complementary EU PRO Programme, as per need and expressed request by the involved public entities (e.g. LGs, or public enterprises etc.) and in all cases that were deemed appropriate and relevant for developing and embedding into these projects good governance activities and measures. The EU PRO Call for Proposals (CfP) for infrastructure will give additional points to proposals which include GG approach to the management of their project (see below). The duration of this activity will correspond to the implementation of the complementary EU PRO's activity.

Furthermore, the Programme will provide support to the municipalities to acquire new or enhance existing knowledge and skills for essential aspects of public investment planning and management, including: assessment of long-term impacts and/or risks, stakeholders' engagement during the investment cycle, financial resources assessment and mobilisations, further capacity strengthening of local officials and institutions involved in the public investment planning, decision making, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation processes.

The objectives of these interventions will be to improve rule of law, accountability, transparency, and efficiency and effectiveness of public entities involved into development and implementation of the said processes; to ensure public participation in decision making, where relevant and needed, and to support local implementing entities to recognise the human rights aspects of projects they will be carrying out, especially the rights and needs of excluded groups, wherever it would be pertinent and relevant.

The GG interventions in the EU PRO's projects for public entities, will underline their relevance, add specific value (e.g. enhanced accountability in project development and implementation) and enhance their overall outcomes and results, thus also contributing to their sustainability.

This Programme will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with each EU PRO-identified LG it will be supporting through this activity, stating mutual responsibilities, specific tasks and expected outputs and outcomes from each intervention, while emphasising the involved municipality's overall exclusive ownership of all pertaining processes.

For this, the Programme will offer its GG expertise and assistance specifically to the following EU PRO's activities:

a) EU's PRO Activity 2.1.3 - Development of urban plans related to economic development

For this EU PRO activity that envisages support to LGs to develop Detailed Regulation Plans that can enhance economic development, this Programme will support the participating municipalities, according to their established needs and expressed requests, in:

- Developing new and/or enhancing existing capacities for applying Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA)⁴⁹ in local planning for socio-economic development, programming, monitoring and evaluation processes.

The Programme will utilise in-house expertise to provide technical assistance and guidance for this activity. Up to 80% of the municipalities participating in this EU PRO activity, that requested support for the said aspects of their projects, will receive adequate support from the Swiss PRO Programme.

b) EU's PRO Activity 2.2: Development or improvement small scale infrastructure with economic impact, and Activity 3.1: Improving public infrastructure in municipalities

The Programme will provide technical assistance and/or guidance to at least 25 municipal-level projects with a subject of building new or upgrading existing public economic, social or communal infrastructure, on applying GG principles in project planning, implementation and monitoring. This activity will be carried-out with the Programme's in-house GG expertise.

In the development stage of this EU PRO's activity (preparation of criteria and other elements of the Call for Proposals (CfPs), the Programme will elaborate and contribute with a set of GG guidelines, requirements and/or criteria, an applicant for the EU PRO's infrastructure project will need to follow, answer to and meet in order for the application to attain the maximum number of points in the evaluation process (i.e. observing the GG requirements will bring additional points to the applications; the exact number of GG-points is to be defined during development of the CfP and in cooperation with the EU's PRO.).

⁴⁹ HRBA means also that Human Rights where in focus when setting local developmental objectives. This secures that developmental processes - from planning through implementation and monitoring & evaluation – are non-discriminatory, inclusive, accountable, transparent and participatory.

The Programme will support the municipalities in linking GG principles to the planning and implementation of their local infrastructure projects, making the process and the outcomes more accountable, transparent and efficient.

Through this activity, the Programme will support municipalities in at least the following:

- setting up organisation of each specific project;
- resolving processes issues (e.g. ownership, steering or management aspects),
- analysing and assigning internal tasks and responsibilities, as well as establishing monitoring and reporting processes and mechanisms
- other activities that may be applicable, as per a specific situation and a request from a municipality.

c) EU's PRO Activity 3.2: Support projects enhancing inter-ethnic dialogues and improving social cohesion

Complementary interventions will take place in the Outcome 2.

Output 1.4:

Institutional, technical, and human capacities for implementation of e-Government enhanced

Implemented by the UNOPS

Activities:

1.4.1 Conduct assessment and analysis of the current state of e-Government at local level

Through a public tendering process the Programme will acquire an e-Government Assessment for all Serbia LGs based on a representative sample of LGs, which will provide data and analysis of the current state of e-Government capacities and resources in the municipalities eligible to participate in the Programme.

This assessment will last at least six months and will screen the municipalities for the following (but not limited to):

- existence and nature of local procedures/protocols and other relevant legally and procedurally binding framework for functioning and running of the local e-Government system and services;
- on-line availability of information relevant to citizens and business (e.g. G2G, G2C, G2B, G2E procedures and services, etc.);
- availability of multi-language accessibility to e-Government services in municipalities where the Law requires official usage of a minority language;
- availability for accessing the existing e-Government services for people with vision/hearing or other pertained impairment and disability;
- availability and quality of business-oriented e-services

- existence of online tools for citizens' participation in decision-making process /governance;
- existing physical IT capacities and resources (e.g. software engineers, IT and auxiliary equipment/resources, networking infrastructure, etc.)
- other aspects, as per need and requirements defined later in the process.

The Assessment will be designed in close co-operation with and the support from the Office for Information Technologies (IT) and e-Government.

The Assessment will provide for and serve as a baseline for tailored-made proposals for providing support to the participating municipalities for improving/upgrading their e-Government framework, policy and technical basis for provision of better services to citizens and businesses.

One paper, summarising the Assessment process, findings, conclusions and recommendations for next steps, will be produced and submitted to the line national level institution(s).

1.4.2 Support LGs from the AoR in developing local procedures and protocols relevant to e-Government, especially those required by and in accordance with the Law on General Administrative Procedure (LGAP)

Based on the Assessment's findings and recommendations, the Programme will plan for and offer to a cluster-of-LGs technical assistance and other interventions, including procurement of the IT hardware and/or software, digitalisation of documents and analogue information systems, databases creation - including provision of technical and technological resources if needed; trainings of the appointed staff, and similar, for the municipalities committed to developing, upgrading or advancing their e-Government local regulatory framework, specific e-Government services for citizens and businesses and/or of physical resources. This activity will last at least two and half years.

This activity will therefore also work in a synergy with the EU's PRO and contribute to improvement of the overall local business environment by increasing efficiency and effectiveness of the participating LGs in providing services to local businesses.

Specific support, including procurement of IT equipment and on-the-job training for relevant staff, will be offered and provided to LGs and other local public entities, to identify and adopt e-accessibility standards and to introduce necessary assistive ICT technologies, in order to enable or facilitate people with disabilities (PWDs) and elderly people's access local e-Government services and to other local sources of public information (e.g. local public utility companies, libraries etc.). This will be conducted in close cooperation and coordination with local PWDs CSOs, especially on establishing the needs and priorities for this intervention.

For this, the Programme will develop a public Call for Proposals (CfP) for all municipalities encompassed with the Programme, stating the eligibility criteria stemming from the findings and results of the e-Government Assessment. Among other eligibility criteria will be the readiness of a municipality to participate financially in covering the costs of the equipment and/or software with minimum of 10% of the total value of the procurement.

Up to 40 municipalities that met the criteria will be awarded with a grant to carry out the activities envisaged in the CfP. As the results of this intervention it is expected that at least 40 municipalities will have their local e-Government system established, or improved/upgraded. At least 20 LGs adopted new or revised existing municipal policies to enhance institutional and/or organisational frameworks for e-Government. Technical capacities for e-Government services enhanced in up to 40 LGs through provision of IT equipment. At least 20 new local e-services are introduced to citizens and businesses in the participating municipalities. At least ten LGs developed and adopted line local policies on provision of e-accessibility for PWDs and elderly, had their web-portals met the set criteria and introduced appropriate assistive technologies. In addition, through trainings and on-the-job support, at least 30 LGs will be supported in provision of e-Government services. One paper on the process, its course, results, findings, conclusions and recommendations for the line national level institutions, produced and delivered.

The LGs that have also participated in the SCTM MSPs activities and/or in developing local GG capacities, will be awarded with additional consideration during the project proposals evaluation process.

The ownership of the described processes and its results remains with the participating LGs.

1.4.3 Support development and introduction of multi-lingual e-services in those multi-ethnic LGs where a language of an ethnic minority is in official usage

The Programme will offer and provide technical and financial assistance to the participating municipalities that are eligible under the provisions of the Law on Official Usage of the Language and Script⁵⁰, to introduce or - if existing – to adapt/upgrade multi-lingual e-Government/e-services provided to local citizens and businesses. This activity will be developed in consultations with the line Ministries, the Office for Human and Minority Rights, the Office for IT and e-Government, and the pertaining National Minority Council.

This activity will last at least one year and result in at least five municipalities, chosen through an open call for project proposals, developing or updating/upgrading their e-Government assets to meet the requirements for provision of bi/multi-lingual services.

The activity will encompass both technical assistance/provision of relevant outsourced expertise and support to municipalities to address procedural and technical and

⁵⁰ Official Gazette of RS, 30/2010

technological demands of the intervention (e.g. websites upgrades and expansions, translations, etc.).

This activity is complementary to the EU PRO activity 3.2, especially with the part that will contribute to increased social integration in multi-ethnic communities. The Swiss PRO Programme will insure full coordination and compatibility of its activities with this EU PRO activity.

1.4.4 Provide support for raising awareness on availability of new and/or improved local-level e-Government services for citizenry and businesses

The Programme will design and conduct an awareness-raising campaign on benefits of the e-Government. This campaign will be implemented by an outsourced entity, selected in a public tendering process.

The overall objective of the intervention is to inform the citizens and businesses on existing or new e-services whose introduction was supported through this Programme, including but not limited to:

- for citizens: financial support for social care, children or unemployment; personal identification documents (ID cards and passports), car-registration related; birth, marriage or death certificates; communal inspectorate services etc., and
- for businesses: services such as taxation information (payments, due taxes etc.), construction and environmental requirements and permits; property registry, health insurance and pension requirements and payments; business and income registration, VAT, public procurement and other.

The purpose of the campaign, however, will be to facilitate the introduction and adoption of the e-services by the widest possible base of local users, especially those from excluded groups.

A special feat of this campaign will be an outreach segment towards the excluded groups, which is to have a separate set of objectives, activities, tools and expected outcomes.

This outreach will be specifically designed to provide information to excluded groups, living both in urban and rural areas, such as: elderly; one-parent families; long-time unemployed; PWDs; racial, ethnic and religious minorities; women (especially those with multi-layer vulnerability); children and youth; refugees, IDPs and returnees; LGBTI people; and poverty-stricken people in general.

The outreach-to-vulnerable part of the awareness raising campaign will begin by scanning the involved municipalities for pockets of vulnerability, establishing their nature, distribution and other essential information. This snap-research will be designed in a way to take into account perceptions of the excluded people themselves as well as inputs from relevant local CSOs/NGOs working with the said groups.

The prioritisation process, that will follow the data analysis, will yield at least five specific excluded groups from the list above that will be the focus of the outreach campaign. The campaign approach and ensuing activities will be designed in accordance to this list. The groups may be clustered, including for an inter-municipal coverage, where intervention is deemed to be relevant and founded on the research findings and recommendations.

For each targeted excluded group, the campaign will design a specific and cost-effective approach, methods and set of activities, that will be most approachable for the targeted group (e.g. organising group workshops in local Community Offices, with an option for one on one support; direct communication, such as door-to-door visits; posting information at the places most important for the excluded groups, such as Centres for Social Work (CSWs), LGs, schools, medical centres, NES offices, local pharmacies, nursing homes, etc.; organising mobile teams for information dissemination to excluded groups in rural areas; organise public events on e-Government, with participation of local institutions, relevant CSOs and local media; organise focussed SMS campaigns on a specific e-Government topic; support adoption and use of Internet and social networks, wherever feasible; etc.).

As for some excluded groups e-Governance tools may not be appropriate, in addition the Programme will support Citizens' Advisory Services (output 2.3).

An appropriate monitoring and evaluation system will be designed within the same intervention to measure and assess whether awareness raising and outreach parts of the campaign have met their aims and objectives, produced expected outputs and provided basis for achieving anticipated outcomes and impacts.

Outcome 2:

Increased inclusion of excluded groups

Output 2.1:

LGs capacities enhanced to develop and implement local social protection services and to monitor and evaluate social inclusion and employment measures

Implemented by UNOPS

Activities:

2.1.1 Support LGs in assessing the rights and needs of excluded, and in developing and implementing relevant evidence-based local policies for improving social services and social inclusion policies at the local level

The Programme will support through this activity an elaboration of an integrated approach to capacitating and strengthening local social protection institutions and mechanisms for assessing and addressing the needs of the excluded, and fostering the increase of compatibility, synergies and efficiency of the existing local social protection services.

The Programme will through an open Call for Proposals (CfP), award up to 25 municipalities/Centres for Social Work (CSW) with grants for establishing new or extending the range of existing local social protection services that were deemed vital and/or currently missing/needed. This may include support for licensing and/or accreditation processes for eligible local CSOs. These services may include Day Care Services in the Community, Support Services for Self - Sufficient Life, Accommodation Services and Counselling - Therapeutic Services.

The Programme will endeavour to ensure higher representation of those municipalities with less developed social protection services, through direct consultations in the field, information exchange and informative sessions about the public call. Additionally, CfP will comprise criteria which will give specific advantage to municipalities with less developed social protection services in order to enable their further development and provision of adequate services to citizens in exercising their needs and rights.

A municipality or a CSW, whose project proposal is approved for a grant, must contribute to the realisation of the project with at least 10% of the costs covered by the Programme.

The Programme will within this activity also provide support for establishment or upgrade/strengthening of monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms on all locally provided social protection services, as well as offer its technical assistance for developing or updating relevant local strategic framework, if and when the National Strategy for Social Protection is adopted.⁵¹

Specifically, the Programme will provide technical assistance to LGs, selected in a publicly conducted process, to:

- Develop new or upgrade existing local social protection services. This process will start with an assessment of which existing social services LGs would want to upgrade and which new they would like to introduce, with feasibility of both in a specific municipality, as the key criteria.
- Evaluate existing levels of institutional and knowledge/skills capacities of local public and civic mechanisms for addressing social inclusion
- Design and implement a process for their institutional or organisational strengthening
- Support the involved municipalities in developing and applying systemic tools for identifying, measuring and analysing local excluded people and their needs, as well as for designing and implementing appropriate local policies and activities to mitigate the established state;
- Support municipalities in developing protocols and procedures on cooperation between

⁵¹ Bearing in mind that during 2016, with the support of SCO/SDC, SCTM developed the Guide with models and recommendations for the implementation of the legislative framework in the field of social protection, as well as SCTM plans for 2017, to develop similar materials which should support development of Local programs for improvement of the social protection, these materials will represent one of the basis for supporting municipalities in these matters.

the different local actors in implementation of public social inclusion policies, including those with CSW.

- Collaborate with the SIPRU to develop a plan in at least ten municipalities for an integrated policy approach to address social inclusion at the local level, which will aim at improving access to job market of excluded groups, while taking into account multiple factors, such as education, health, housing, social engagements, inter-ethnic/-cultural interaction etc. The plan will be a basis for interventions to come.

For this activity, the Programme will engage an outsourced expertise, selected in a public process.

The activity will produce one experience-based written guidelines, with process description and recommendations for replicating in other municipalities. At least ten LGs identified the excluded population groups and for each of them analysed their specific exclusion factors and assessing their situation and needs. At least ten municipalities have developed and applied integrated policy approach for social protection services, contributing to reducing social exclusion of excluded groups in their communities.

This activity will last up to two years and will be developed and implemented in close coordination with the SIPRU Team and with consultation with the line Ministry, for enhancing the activity's outcomes and avoiding any overlapping that might occur.

Output 2.2:

CSOs capacitated/supported to implement community based projects benefiting excluded groups

Implemented by the UNOPS

Activities:

2.2.1 Support informed citizens and/or local CSOs to engage in local decision-making and to contribute to collaborative local governance initiatives for addressing the needs of the excluded population

The Programme will support, using the grant methodology, and through an open and competitive process, up to 30 LGs to select and award a local CSO to develop and implement up to two community-based projects, that will be addressing the needs of local citizenry from the excluded groups.

There are at least two objectives of this intervention: one is to examine, re-assert and if need-be (re)establish policy, accountable and transparent local regulations and practices considering the processes pertained to approving and assigning local-budget funds to local CSOs/NGOs (see 1.2.1), thus improving overall local good governance practices; and the second is to address the recognised needs of local excluded groups, thus improving the overall quality of their life.

This intervention goes for awarding the eligible municipalities with grants to conduct the process of selecting local CSOs/NGOs, and provide them with funds that would come from the Programme. The funds would be transferred to CSOs/NGOs with no-cost to local civil society, for implementation of a specific activity. The Programme will retain throughout the process the guidance/capacity development, controlling and overseeing, as well as monitoring roles.

The process will start with at least a month-long information dissemination to potential applicants, both to LGs and CSOs, on project criteria, timeframe, evaluation and other relevant information. The projects from this activity will last up to 18 months.

The Programme will support the selected municipalities in acquiring or strengthening capacities for screening the existing local policies on distribution of funds available in annual local budgets for local CSOs/NGOs; amending and/or upgrading those policies if need be, or developing and adopting new ones; and in operational processes for developing, advertising and awarding the grants to local CSOs.

The topics this mechanism will support include:

- social innovation projects, focussing on identification of social needs and on designing, proposing and implementing required solutions to those needs;
- social inclusion activities addressing the specific needs of excluded groups in local communities;
- policy advocacy at local level on needed social inclusion measures, leading to an actual change of the policy in question, ratified at the end of the process by a competent LG body.

This activity aims at provision of actions that will positively affect the lives of the end users, i.e. the excluded groups, including Roma, and will require, as it will be one of the criteria, a substantial and track-record proven existing capacities of the implementing entities at local level to deliver so.

Output 2.3

Support LGs in developing capacities and mechanisms to provide effectively the excluded citizens' access to their rights and entitlements

Implemented by the UNOPS

Activities:

2.3.1 Support LGs in establishment of Citizens' Advisory Services

The Programme will support at least 10 municipalities to establish, organise and deliver free-of-charge Citizens' Advisory Services to local excluded groups in need to resolve any of their standing issues pertained to their access to rights and/or entitlements guaranteed by

relevant Laws. These will include both administrative and/or legal advice/assistance/guidance, short of legal representation. The project is to last up to a year and a half calendar year.

This activity is to provide support to the participating LGs to develop and implement a methodology and practice for supporting the excluded citizens to attain their rights and entitlements.

The rationale and the design of this activity may be re-addressed in the case the Law on Free Legal Aid (FLA) is being adopted in Serbia⁵². This activity's overall intention, however, is in line with the Serbia EU accession process, because the FLA will be sooner rather than later at the EU-Serbia negotiating table.

The municipalities will be chosen through a competitive process, following an open Call for Proposals (CfP). The criteria for the eligibility will include the level of socio-economic development of the applying subject, the demographic status, the migration data and other as seemed relevant.

The grant will provide for operational and programmatic costs of such a unit. If the project envisages a support for citizens in a near-by municipality, it would be considered as an advantage in the application process.

The project proposal must contain a substantial part on designing and conducting an outreach campaign to the local excluded groups, which will inform the target group of the newly available opportunities to meet their needs for accessing their rights and/or entitlements.

It is expected that at least 5,000 excluded people will be addressed through this activity.

Outcome 3:

Enhanced gender equality in the Programme participating municipalities

Output 3.1:

Institutional framework for gender equality at the local level strengthened and implementation of local gender equality policies enhanced

Implemented by the UNOPS

Activities:

3.1.1. Support LGs to establish and/or strengthen local Gender Equality Mechanisms (GEMs)

⁵² The adoption of the FLA, although drafted years ago and the draft being updated as recently as January 2017, is apparently not imminent, mostly because the fierce resistance from the private lawyers' association, but also because of concerns about the staffing and costs, in the environment when the Government is trying to reduce both.

The Programme will support establishment and/or institutional and capacity strengthening of local Gender Equality Mechanisms (GEMs) in at least 30 municipalities/cities within the AoR.

The Programme will perform a snapshot assessment of the institutional status and existing capacities of the LGs and GEMs in the AoR, as well as the availability of local GE action plans (GELAPs). Based on the findings from this assessment, the support will be given for:

- Establishment and capacity building of the GEMs, through custom-made projects, with recommendations from the assessment
- Updating or developing local GE action plans, including alignments with the Government gender budgeting requirements and processes, which are to be addressed in synchronisation with the SCTM aspects of this Programme.
- Improvement of lobbying skills of the GEMs' members, with a focus on lobbying for adoption of the European Charter on Equality of Men and Women in Local Life (European Charter), as well as on securing sustainable funding of GEM activities through local budgets
- Capacity of GEMs and other pertinent LGs entities to collect GE-relevant data, perform their analysis and formulation of GE-recommendations to local policy makers (e.g. local parliaments) and to local decision makers (e.g. mayors and municipal/city councils)
- Small grants to address/advance gender equality agenda locally. Besides increasing GEM operational capacities to actively address gender issues in a community, this will also support increase of visibility of GEMs at the local level and especially with local decision makers. All established and functional GEMs will have an opportunity to pilot projects identified as a priority in their local GE action plans. The funds for this will be earmarked within the budget of the grant provided by the Programme to local GEMs

At the end of the process, all 30 participating municipalities will have established or institutionally strengthened GEMs and have developed or updated their GE action plans; at least 20 of them will adopt the European Charter, and local GE action plans that were not available previously; and at least 30 projects tackling GE locally will be funded through grants, with the Programme's participation at the 25% of the value of the project proposed.

Institutional sustainability of GEMs will be guaranteed by adoption of relevant municipal decisions, while provision of funding for GEM activities will contribute to effectiveness of their operation.

All these activities will contribute to the implementation of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality and will be coordinated with the Coordination Body for Gender Equality and National Women Parliamentarian Network.

3.1.2. Support Establishment of Local Women Parliamentarian Networks for promotion of and advocacy for Gender Equality

The Programme will support in at least 30 participating municipalities the establishment of Local Women's Parliamentarian Networks and subsequent capacity development of local women councillors for Gender Equality promotion and advocacy, local GE policy planning, development and implementation, especially on topics such as promotion of women's rights, raising awareness on women solidarity, fight against gender based violence, gender sensitive public budgeting, women economic empowerment, women political empowerment (including skills-acquiring trainings and how-to, in public representation, public policy formulation, peer-networking, addressing and employing media, enhancing self-confidence, etc.), women's health and other issues deemed relevant at local level.

The selection of the municipalities which will be eligible to participate in this activity will be done on a competitive basis. A specific set of eligibility criteria (e.g. status of GEM, availability of GELEAP, availability and number of local GE policies/regulation tackling GE, the number of women LMPs, etc.) will be taken into account during the selection process.

The Programme will within the process also provide local GEMs with an opportunity to collect data, analyse and formulate recommendations to local legislative bodies at least on the following: the status and possible improvements related to the frequency and level of participation of local women councillors in the work of local parliaments; the number and the relevance of GE-related local policies/decisions/regulations that have been considered or adopted by the local parliament; and on the availability and implementation of the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of GE-related policies and activities.

The Programme will support at least 15 municipalities that have participated in this activity to develop appropriate decisions/regulations based on the findings and recommendations from the above process to advance the said aspects of local GE practices.

To increase synergies and avoid overlapping, this activity will be carried out in a close coordination with another programme funded by the SDC that also provides support to Women Parliamentarian Network at the National level, but is also working with selected local assemblies, providing specific, at-the-request assistance.

4 Implementing Strategy

A contract is expected to be signed with SCO/SDC in December 2017 with a commencement date of 1 January 2018. A Grant Support Agreement will be signed with the SCTM after the Project Agreement is signed between the SCO/SDC and UNOPS.

4.1 Methodology

The Programme activities will be undertaken in partnership with the SCTM and in cooperation with the national and local institutions, while observing the line national

strategies, laws and relevant development documents. This will ensure national ownership over the Programme processes and help develop the national capacities. The UNOPS will hold the overall responsibility for the Programme results, maintain monitoring and supervising role, and ensure good visibility of the Swiss assistance.

The projects will be awarded through open calls for proposals, as described in the activities, which is a transparent solicitation method that respects fairness and integrity. The Programme team will prepare the criteria for the specific calls, in consultations with the national stakeholders. The Calls will be advertised once approved by the Swiss PRO sub-Steering Committee (PSSC).

Efforts will be put to reach out to potential beneficiaries, while specificities of each target group will be considered.

When publishing public calls and including LGs in programme intervention, priority will be given to undeveloped municipalities, especially when it comes to activities for the improvement and implementation of social inclusion policies at local level.

The proposals will be evaluated and ranked according to the score reflecting their relevance and quality, with recommendations for funding made at the end of the evaluation process to the Swiss PRO PSSC. The Swiss PRO PSSC reviews the recommendations and provides final decisions on funding of the proposals.

UNOPS grant methodology, which is one of the proven approaches to ensure ownership, encompasses:

1. Local and national partners will lead in implementation, with UNOPS maintaining advisory and monitoring role. When the grantees are public entities, the Programme will require strict observance of the public procurement procedures, and in other cases, it will insist that procurements are conducted through fair, transparent, and competitive process
2. Respect for agreements on project monitoring, roles and responsibilities.
3. Payments are made against proven accomplishments of milestones, upon monitoring performed by the UNOPS team. The monitoring visits allow for the assessment of progress, reflection on implementation, noting challenges, lessons learned and agreement on the next steps, through on-the-job mentoring.
4. Protection of financial assets and recording of co-funding, as the municipalities are required to open sub-accounts for projects approved by the Swiss PRO PSSC and contracted by UNOPS, after which they cannot block the allocated funding.⁵³

In some cases, when higher efficiency is needed, direct implementation of projects, by UNOPS, may be required.

⁵³ One of the key risks when cooperating with LGs in Serbia

4.2 Cooperation and coordination with partners

The Programme will, based on earlier experience, contribute to the sustainability of intervention through active participation of partners at the national level, and through regular consultations so as to reflect adequately the processes of vertical cooperation and communication with the local level. Additionally, the Programme will put the ownership over the process both on partners at the national level, who are supposed to run the reforms, but also on LGs which fulfil the needs and interests of citizens. The consultative process will be of particular importance in the inception period of the Programme, when baselines will be more clearly defined, as well as compliance between the national and local plans, determination of criteria and range of intervention in certain areas.

The UNOPS RSOC has developed the **stakeholder engagement strategy**, so lessons learned will be applied during the project implementation, as well as the steps defined for closer collaboration with the key partners in implementing the Programme's activities and for achieving the planned objectives .

Collaboration with the relevant **national stakeholders** will be established primarily through the work of the PCC, but also through the involvement of national institutions in consultations and implementation of activities.

When it comes to the approach of **collaboration with LGs**, the Programme will enable direct work with municipalities through presence in the field. Based on the so far experience in work with 34 municipalities and SCTM's provision of direct support to LGs, the advantage which had enabled better insight into the needs of municipalities and also timely identified certain barriers in project implementation, was field presence and thus close cooperation with municipalities. Taking into account that the Programme will cover a wide geographical area, including municipalities of various developmental degrees, specific attention will be focussed on municipalities which already had implemented projects through grant-scheme, poorly developed municipalities, and municipalities which had expressed willingness to implement certain activities and reforms at local level. The Programme will extend its expertise and technical assistance to inter-municipal projects as well, that may have been developed and applied for by interested LGs, especially for good governance aspects of such an initiative. Institutionalisation of cooperation through signing of MoUs with LGs and MPALSG will be the key element for **"dual approach"** in the reform programme.

The partnership with the SCTM will be regulated through signing of a Grant Support Agreement which will clearly define roles of both parties and contribution of the SCTM to the achievement of the Programme results. Additionally, while preparing the concept for implementation of activities, the SCTM will consult the UNOPS, and vice-versa, about all interventions, and will make joint plans for the successful implementation thereof.

The Programme will establish **vertical cooperation** between the national and local governments in implementing the Programme activities, their networking and establishing communication. The SCTM will contribute through their Networks, Committees, Presidency

and Annual Assemblies, for introducing LGs into on-going processes at the national level and will advocate for the LGs' interests. All findings and recommendations obtained in the field work will be presented to national institutions through different forms of communication – consultative meetings, workshops, PCC meetings etc.

4.3 Factors Ensuring Sustainability

UNOPS approach to sustainability is rooted in the organisation's vision of "a world where people can live full lives supported by appropriate, sustainable and resilient infrastructure and by the efficient, transparent use of public resources in procurement and project management". Furthermore, UNOPS mission "is to help people build better lives and countries achieve sustainable development". In line with UNOPS Strategic Plan 2014-2017, all implementation approaches are based on three dimensions of sustainability: equitable economic growth, social justice and inclusion, and environmental impact.

Finally, one of the key criteria in the selection of any projects for funding will be sustainability of their actions.

4.3.1 Social

UNOPS contributes to social sustainability by respecting international human rights principles and by engaging local communities. This Programme will be implemented in diverse areas, and is conceived to encourage accountable and non-discriminatory municipal administrations, fostering participation of citizens through open communication and exchanges of experiences among different ethnic groups living in the same territory. It will promote tolerance, dialogue and good cooperation, not only at the local level, but at the regional and national levels as well.

As a part of the Second Programme's Outcome and in collaboration with LGs and CSOs, the support will be provided to activities related to the improvement of social inclusion of excluded groups. Call for Proposals (CfP) will at the same time strengthen capacities of organisations and institutions at local level.

Having in mind that current social services are underdeveloped and are not equally accessible with relatively small range of services on offer, development of innovative social services through the Programme should have direct, strong positive impact on excluded groups, including Roma, PWDs, women and elderly people, since these measures will be product of previously conducted needs assessment at the local level. The beneficiaries from excluded groups, along with their improved motivation and self-esteem in comparison to the time when they lived without appropriate services, should also benefit from socially fulfilled life.

In addition, assessments of the needs of the excluded groups and formulation of adequate local policies, priorities, services and measures can help the more cost-effective use of LGs' local budget funding.

The Programme will advocate for gender mainstreaming with relevant stakeholders, including the local community leaders, encouraging them to move beyond policy rhetoric and to adopt pro-active commitment to gender mainstreaming, thus preventing fading away of what was achieved in this field so far. The Programme will continually measure contacts with potential beneficiaries in a systematic and documented way disaggregated by gender in order to monitor representation of gender equality in the Programme activities.

4.3.2 Economic

The objective of the Programme is to enhance good governance at local level by introducing principles into everyday practice and work, which will have positive influence on the development of municipalities.

In addition, introduction of good governance principles through all projects will ensure sustainability of both projects and the Programme's intervention.

At the macro level, capacities of municipal administrations as well as CSOs and other local institutions to prepare and implement projects, adhering to the GG principles, will contribute to sustainability of the interventions. In addition, improved LGs service delivery through GG interventions will directly contribute to better design and implementation of local employment action plans. This will further lead to raised employability of citizens at the local level and their improved life standard and sustainable livelihoods in terms of enabling regular payment of utility costs, educational cost of their children, health services for disabled family members and repayment of debts due to raised income in comparison to the time when they lived on social allowance or without any regular income.

The economic sustainability is also achievable due to the fact that implemented social protection services will enable better social inclusion including access to labour market not only for excluded groups but also for family members of beneficiaries since it will provide them better organisation of time for income generation activities.

4.3.3 Environmental

Environmental sustainability pertains to making decisions and taking actions that are in the interest of protecting the natural world, with emphasis on preserving the capability of the environment to support life. UNOPS developed its Environmental Management Policy for Infrastructure in 2013 and it continually strives to improve monitoring and control of the environmental impacts of all projects, from planning to execution phase.

When it comes to environmental sustainability, the Programme intervention will have certain, but still minimal environmental impacts. By applying UNOPS RSOC Green Policy, the Programme will use modern technology, the most environment friendly materials, sourced locally, as well as efficient use of logistic resources, in order to reduce the negative impact on environment.

Finally, GG interventions within LGs will also have impact on environmental area i.e. waste management system which is in mandate of LGs.

4.3.4 National Capacity

The sustainability of the Programme intervention is primarily guaranteed through the fact that all Programme activities stream out of the existing policies and legislation and are defined in a way to support implementation at the local level. Also, the Programme was developed with close cooperation with key national-level partners. In this way, the Programme is ensuring sustainability on both mid- and long-term perspectives.

The national ownership of the Programme will be secured on several levels: the PCC will include relevant national institutions and the key stakeholders, who will thus ensure continued input and involvement in all activities; the activities will be implemented in consultation and, in some cases through formalised cooperation, with the line ministries and other national institutions; the Programme will be predominantly implemented through the grant methodology that gives ownership over (sub)projects to the grantees. Involvement of the SCTM as a programme partner is seen as one of important strong-points for Programme's successful implementation and a guarantee for the sustainability of its results.

Also, institution-building under this action will respect effective lines of accountability among institutions, therefore avoiding any possible fragmentation of administration. Addressing the quality of administrative services, by improvement of procedures and standards, will contribute to sustainability of the achieved outcomes, after the Programme is finished.

Part of the activities will be implemented with co-funding from the beneficiaries, as this enhances their ownership and commitment and hence additionally contributes to sustainability.

The role of the relevant Ministries and SCTM will be of key importance for conducting system reforms and improvement of local governance, but also for ensuring the sustainability in the Programme interventions in work with local governments. In partnership with LGs, sustainability of further activities will be ensured at local level with transferred competences, strengthened capacities and established systems for their acting. Such synergy and cooperation should create a sense of ownership over further reform processes in these areas.

Additionally, strong vertical dimension of the Programme activities, will set a basis for strengthening capacities of the State institutions, the line ministries and bodies that will manage similar activities in the future. The line ministries, will be fully involved into the planning and approving the activities of the Programme, thus providing guidance for achieving compliance with strategies and action plans of the State.

5 Organisation, Management and Administration

5.1 Organisation and Implementation Procedures

The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), as an implementing agency, will take the overall responsibility for the implementation of the Programme in compliance with the Programme Document and the Project Agreement to be signed with the SCO/SDC. The UNOPS is responsible for achieving the Programme's objectives through the delivery of Programme's results.

Grantees will be selected following the methodology outlined in UNOPS' procurement manual, including the applicable framework on exceptions to competitive processes.

While the SCTM will be working with LGs on, among other, improving internal procedures and regulatory framework, the Programme will be working with the municipalities on development or improvement and implementation of relevant governance processes among different local entities, thus adding specific value to the overall endeavour on improving local governance.

Relevant ministries and institutions, presented in the Section 3.4.1, will participate in the implementation of the Programme activities, through direct participation, consultation and monitoring of the Programme implementation and achievement of results in relevant fields. The MPALSG shall actively be consulted for implementation of the activities from Outcome 1, while the MLEVSA will support activities within the Outcome 2.

This programme contributes to and is complementary to the government's efforts and reforms. In the PCC meetings the Ministries will inform about their advancements in the corresponding fields.

Participating municipalities, from Šumadija, West, South and East Serbia, are the key stakeholders and financial contributors to the Programme, with the responsibility of taking the ownership of the activities implemented in their territories.

5.2 Programme Steering Committee

The Swiss PRO-EU PRO Programme's Coordination Committee (PCC)

As a part of complementarity with the EU PRO, the joint Programme's Coordination Committee (PCC) will be established.

The PCC will be comprised out of the representatives of the donors of the both Programmes – the Swiss PRO and EU PRO and the representatives of the line Ministries: the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, the Republic's Development Agency, the Public Investment Management Office, the Ministry of Public

Administration and Local Self-Governments, and the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs. Representatives of the national institutions listed in the Section 3.4.1 may participate at the PCC meetings as observers, upon request. UNOPS and the SCTM will be members of the PCC in support and observing capacities.

The chairing of the PCC will be with the Ministry of European Integration (MEI), while the preparation of and technical/logistic support to the joint sessions will be on a rotational basis, shared between EU PRO and Swiss PRO.

The PCC will be organised and held once a year, in agreement from the both parties. Extraordinary PCC meeting(s) may be held also *ad hoc*, as per expressed interest and upon agreement reached from the both parties. Decisions, if agreed by the both parties, may also be taken in online sessions, and communicated electronically.

The PCC's domain will be primarily to discuss and deliberate on projects with agreed complementarity (as described in this Programme Document), to provide guidance for achieving synergies and enhancements of the expecting results, and to secure coordination of activities in regard to stakeholders/beneficiaries involved. However, the PCC's meetings may be organised and used for the separate purposes of the both Programmes.

The PCC will consider the complementarity and synergy-building activities between the two Programmes, such as EU's PRO activities (2.1.3; 2.2; 3.1 and 3.2, as described in the EU PRO Programme Document) and the matching activities from the Outcome 1 and 2 of the Swiss PRO, as described in this Programme Document.

The meetings of the key stakeholders, specific for each of the interventions, may be held separately and independently, on the topics specific to each intervention only.

In the Swiss PRO, the Programme sub-Steering Committee (PSSC) will be established in order to govern the implementation of the Programme. It will establish decision-making mechanism that will provide relevant and effective support to the Programme, and enable efficient delivery within the agreed boundaries of time, scope and budget. The sub Steering-Committee's works will contribute to enhanced transparency of the Programme implementation and affective communication of all stakeholders. In the Swiss PRO, the PSSC meetings may be organised and held, if need be and in full capacity, as online consultations and decision taking as well. The sub-Steering Committee structure has been presented in *Annex VIII*.

5.3 Timetable

The Project Agreement with the SCO/SDC will be signed in December 2017 while the implementation of the Programme will start on 1 January 2018 and will last for 48 months.

This period will include three-month Inception Phase at the beginning of the Programme, during which the baselines for further Programme implementation will be defined. The

Inception Phase will also be used for establishing the Programme Team, administration, reporting process, monitoring and evaluation, preparation of tools, establishing of the PCC and PSSC, and contacts with partners and beneficiaries, organising the inception workshop to promote the Programme among stakeholders. In the inception phase, the work plan will be prepared, which will be regularly updated at quarterly level, and the inception report will be prepared, as well as potential modifications of the Programme document. In addition, during the inception phase Assessment on LG performance and capacities for implementation of GG principles will be conducted as a preparation for further Programme intervention in this field.

The Programme will tend to implement the activities continuing from the implemented activities of the EU PRO, and to achieve a harmonised work plan.

5.4 Administrative arrangements

The donor's funding will cover all Programme costs, including:

- Programme activities
- Human resources
- Office and IT equipment
- Logistics (travel and transport)
- Communication and Visibility actions.

For the benefit of economies, all office related costs including rent will be shared with the complementary EU PRO, EU funded Programme at percentages as defined in the budget.

The financial and administrative records will be kept according to the UNOPS rules and procedures, using double entry bookkeeping system. The Programme will keep:

- Accounting records (computerised or manual) from the UNOPS accounting system, such as general ledger, sub ledgers and payroll accounts, fixed assets registers, etc.
- Proof of procurement procedures, such as tendering documents (bids and evaluation reports)
- Proof of commitments, such as contracts and order forms
- Proof of delivery of services, such as approved reports, time sheets, transport tickets, proof of attending seminars, conferences and training courses (including relevant documentation and material obtained, certificates)
- Proof of receipt of goods such as delivery slips from suppliers
- Proof of purchase such as invoices and receipts
- Proof of payment such as bank statements, debit notices, proof of settlement by the subcontractor
- For fuel and oil expenses, a summary list of the distance covered, fuel and maintenance costs
- Personnel and payroll records, such as contracts, salary statements, time sheets. For local personnel recruited on fixed-term contracts, details of remuneration paid, duly substantiated by the person in charge locally, broken down into gross salary, social security charges, insurance and net salary.

In full consultation with and approval from the SCO/SDC, vehicles, furniture and equipment from existing EU-funded programmes may be transferred to SWISS-PRO or disposed of in accordance with standard procedures.

6 Resources

6.1 Overall budget

The Programme budget is CHF 6.9 million (USD 6.9 million).

Detailed Programme budget is presented in *Annex V*.

7 Assumptions and Risks

7.1 Assumptions at Different Levels

Item	Assumption	Assessment
1.	Serbia remains politically stable, and continues to pursue European integrations	The number of Serbian citizens in favour of European integrations has increased from 41% in June 2016 to 47% in December 2016, ⁵⁴ while the Government's pledged, through the expose of the Prime Minister, to conduct reforms relevant for the European integration process.
2.	The Government of Serbia is committed and strongly supports public administration reforms	The Programme is aligned and contributes to the realisation of national strategic priorities for reforms of public administration, especially at local level. The Programme results reflect good practices that are unlikely to be out of favour in the event of government change.
3.	The Programme areas remain stable, without inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic/political tensions	UNOPS experience to date, in implementation of the projects funded by the EU and the Swiss Government, in cooperation with the Government of Serbia and local governments, shows that initiatives such as this Programme have been successful in reducing tensions, by focussing on the developmental issues and processes of common interest to all stakeholders. Being a United Nations agency, UNOPS can guarantee impartiality in approach to all Programme stakeholders.
4.	The key Programme stakeholders actively cooperate in implementation of the activities	During the inception period, the Programme's team will present the activities to and advocate for the responsibilities of other stakeholders, with emphasis on the benefits for the direct beneficiaries, and thus contribute to the sense of ownership, as well as inspire active cooperation for implementation of the activities.
5.	Severe weather and other natural disasters may delay, but will not endanger the Programme objective and purpose	Much of the territory covered by the Programme is subject to severe weather conditions: snowfall, droughts and floods. By timely planning of activities, the Programme will ensure ending of the activities within agreed schedule, regardless of the weather conditions.

⁵⁴ <http://www.seio.gov.rs/eng/news/357/189/335/details/47-of-citizens-support-serbian-membership-to-the-eu/>

6.	Changes in legislation will not negatively affect the implementation of the Programme	Serbia complies with the EU legislation and hence any new policies will be respecting the framework of the accession negotiations.
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7.2 Risks

The Contextual Risks

	Risk	Probability	Likely Impact	Mitigation Measures
1.	Extraordinary general elections, or local elections, or re-composition of political power in municipality(ies) and changes in the municipal management structures may jeopardise Programme implementation in terms of lost capacities	High	High	<p>Since the parliamentary and/or local elections will be announced/held during the Programme lifespan, the team will plan/re-plan the activities so as to avoid impact on delivery, scope and budget, while the interventions will be focussed on the priorities identified by diverse stakeholders, regardless of their political affiliation. Depending on the stage of Programme implementation, this time could also be used for assessment, planning, or monitoring/evaluation activities.</p> <p>Furthermore, the communication will be directed to widely publicise Programme to the public, in an effort to build pressure of citizens for its implementation.</p> <p>After the elections/or following regrouping of the local political forces, additional communication efforts will be undertaken to quickly establish relations with the newly selected leadership. The Programme will work with all legally elected political parties in every municipality.</p>
2.	Increased donor activity and the lack of cooperation with other interventions in the field may lead to confusion within municipal structures and create overlaps, which may lead to delays in implementation	Med	Med	<p>The Programme team will hold extensive consultations prior to the start and during implementation with relevant donors/projects to prevent anticipated difficulties. The SCTM as a recognised partner of donor community and in daily coordination with national bodies and LGs will contribute to the coordination process.</p> <p>The PCC meetings can facilitate this discussion and coordination.</p>

The Programmatic Risks

	Risk	Probability	Likely Impact	Mitigation Measures
1.	Some stakeholders or local beneficiaries may push for implementation of	High	Med/High	The selection of the projects for funding will be conducted in fair, transparent and competitive process, in line with the Programme Document and UNOPS regulations. The details of the Calls will be clearly

	certain projects, without adequate selection and abuse the Programme activities and results for political promotion			communicated to all stakeholders and beneficiaries.
2.	The outreach and communication/visibility of the Programme's objectives, results and activities may be impaired due to the large geographical area covered.	High	Med	The Programme team will prepare detailed plan for outreach, which will be intense in the first six months of the implementation and will continue vigorously when the calls for proposals are advertised. Furthermore, with the good field presence of relevant personnel, and provision of technical assistance/advisory capacity to beneficiaries, this risk will be mitigated.
3.	Outsourced expertise and/or consultancy for providing technical assistance to LGs may not be readily available, which may interfere with the planned implementation dynamics	Med	Med/High	The Programme will endeavour to identify the profiles/descriptions and specifics of the outsourced expertise, consultancy and/or other resources, during the Inception Phase, thus reducing the time needed for their engagement during fully fledged implementation.

The Institutional Risks

	Risk	Probability	Likely Impact	Mitigation Measures
1.	Low capacities of benefiting municipalities, institutions, civil society and other organisations, may lead to lesser sustainability of the Programme activities, decrease efficiency and effectiveness of the Programme, and impede fulfilment of the Programme's objectives	High	High	<p>The majority of the Programme will be implemented in 99 municipalities, out of which 44 are devastated or underdeveloped. Intensive communications and raising awareness about the Programme, its objectives and methodology will be conducted during the first six months of the implementation, to ensure wide understanding among the key parties and beneficiaries. Furthermore, the Programme will continuously monitor and provide on-the-job support to the grantees to ensure understanding of contractual obligations and implementation of projects with the available budget, in the agreed timeframe and to the scope.</p> <p>The evaluation of the project proposals will be conducted in line with the UNOPS regulations,⁵⁵ and will include validation of projects through field visits to applicants, which will minimise the space for contracting those entities with poor capacity.</p> <p>The field presence, will also provide opportunity for close contact and awareness rising among the beneficiaries.</p>

⁵⁵ And UNOPS Serbia Standard Operating Procedure on the Calls for Proposals

				Finally, by setting the clear tolerances and showing readiness to cancel projects that do not comply with the contract, activation of reserve lists of projects, and the use of local languages in communication with the beneficiaries, will also contribute to mitigation of this risk.
2.	The LGs that have more resources and qualified personnel may win more funds in open Calls than the smaller LGs, and lead to discouragement of some municipalities to compete in other calls of the kind or failure to secure any funding	High	Med	The Programme will ensure that the criteria of the calls for proposals give equal opportunities to applicants. For example, this can be achieved through technical assistance/on-the job training or awarding additional points to those that are devastated or underdeveloped.
3.	Overburdening municipalities during implementation, and/or launching several time-consuming activities at the same time, may be a problem due to low capacities and result in smaller number and poorer quality of project applications, as well as lack of interest for the Programme	Med/ high	Med	Include appropriate planning of different calls, ensuring stronger technical assistance for some LGs (e.g. those that are devastated or underdeveloped); introducing favourable criteria in calls for 'weaker' LGs; or designing activities that benefit only weaker LGs, sequencing the calls. Furthermore, Programme plans should be realistic and coordinated among sectors. The Programme activities should be avoided during the inception period, when the management products and consultations with the stakeholders should be in focus.
4.	The Mayors and municipal leadership are not supportive of teams tasked with development of project proposals (such as the Local Economic Development Offices – LED, or IT/), which can lead to lessened effectiveness in implementation of the Programme and impede achievement of results	Med/ high	Med	The Programme will communicate directly with the mayors and municipal leadership to explain the Programme's rationale and the methodology for implementation. In addition, a vigorous promotion of the Programme to all relevant stakeholders and parties involved will be organised in the first six months, for the same reason.
5.	LG decision makers have shown lack of understanding of good governance concept, and do not recognise the importance of its implementation and integration	Med	Med	The Programme will prepare outreach plan to present all planned activities to LGs. Particular attention will be focussed on GG activities by presenting examples of good practice, identifying GG contact persons and signing the MoU with the LGs. Complementary to the planned activities within this Programme, the EU PRO will implement infrastructure projects that will be in conjunction with the GG principles. This will provide an

				opportunity for decision makers to focus their interests on the important issues of project management, improving regulation and sustainability projects.
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8 Monitoring and Evaluation

8.1 Reporting Requirements

The Programme reports will be prepared with the intention to inform a wide variety of stakeholders about progress in implementation of activities. Specifically:

INCEPTION REPORT

The Inception Report will provide details about activities conducted during the inception period. The conclusions of all consultations with the stakeholders, including those from the inception workshops, about the objectives and relevancy of the Programme, the Programme's Logical Framework Matrix (LFM) and the indicators, methodology for implementation, cross cutting themes as well as integration of lessons learned from previous similar initiatives, will be outlined in this report. Any deviations from the original Programme Document will be clearly highlighted and proposal for alterations made. The Swiss PRO PSSC must approve any changes proposed in the Inception Report through formal correspondence.⁵⁶

The Inception Report, which will also include the work plan for the first quarter of implementation, will be submitted in the fourth month after the formal beginning of the Programme.

MONTHLY REPORT

The main purpose of the monthly reports⁵⁷ will be to facilitate efficient sharing of information with the internal stakeholders and to monitor compliance with the internal procedures for project management. Upon request, this report can be submitted to the donors.

BI-ANNUAL, ANNUAL AND FINAL REPORTS

Bi-annual⁵⁸, Annual and the Final Reports, will provide complete insight into all relevant aspects of Programme implementation for the respective period: progress of activities; degree of achievement of results (measure by quantifiable indicators); contribution towards the objectives; difficulties encountered, mitigations measures as well as lessons learned; information on communications/visibility; overview of resources utilised and costs incurred; if applicable, a request for payment, work plan and budget for the next reporting period.

⁵⁶ Either through the minutes of the meeting, letters or email correspondence.

⁵⁷ Monthly reports to be produced on no more than ten A4 pages.

⁵⁸ Bi-annual reports to be produced on no more than ten A4 pages, font Arial 11, original margins.

The Bi-annual Report will be prepared at the middle while Annual Report will be prepared by the end of each year of implementation. It will be prepared within 15 working days after the end of the reporting period and submitted to all Swiss PRO PSSC members in English language. This reports will accentuate the outcomes of the Programme. Reports will be based on the model of SCO/SDC template and requirements.

The Final Report will be submitted as stipulated in the contract with the donor, and will aim to assess the Programme's impact, measured against the LFM indicators, with a focus on the key problems occurring during implementation as well as lessons learned.

When requested, the Programme can provide *ad hoc* reports to the donor.

UNOPS Serbia will contribute to these corporate reports, to show economic, environmental and social sustainability of its activities through this Programme.

8.2 Monitoring

The progress will be monitored by internal and/or external experts with the aim to track progress over time against the planned targets within the LFM.

While the LFM will define what will be measured, the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, which will be prepared during Inception Period, will provide information on where, how, by whom and how often will the data be collected.

Internally, the Programme Manager will lead/or appoint a member of the personnel to monitor the Programme progress, in order to ascertain whether:

- The identified activities and results are produced as planned
- The risks and issues have been mitigated according to the foreseen measures
- Any changes are needed to already planned work in the subsequent stages
- Any lessons have been learnt during implementation.

The findings will be presented in Programme's reports (bi-annual and annual). If tolerances for a stage are exceeded, the Programme Manager will seek guidance from the Swiss PRO PSSC.

The quality of the Programme implementation and products will be monitored during internal quarterly assurance meetings, which rate the Programme in relation to the UNOPS standards of project management and procurement.

The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the Programme's implementing agency, will provide strong capacity building in project management, infrastructure (during EU PRO) and procurement, which are UNOPS' mandated expertise. The incumbent European Progress Programme Manager will continue to lead this Action. Any proposed changes in Programme senior international or core national senior management will be discussed and

agreed with SCO/SDC, DEU and PCC Chairperson prior to any action as per the requirements of all major Donor-funded programmes in Serbia.

Externally:

- The Ministry for European Integration, which will chair PCC meetings, as well as Swiss PRO line ministries will monitor implementation and sustainability and effects of the Programme, thus increasing the national ownership in achieving the objectives, outputs, outcomes and impact.
- The PCC will meet once a year and have an opportunity to discuss the Programme's progress, agree complementarity, provide guidance for achieving synergies and enhancements of the expecting results, and to secure coordination of activities in regard to stakeholders/beneficiaries involved.
- The Swiss Cooperation Office in Serbia (SCO)/ Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) may also decide to monitor the Programme, which may include field visits to the projects of interest, as per need.

8.3 Evaluation

The Programme team will evaluate the results of the Calls for Proposals (CfP) or grants given within the Programme activities, in line with the internal guidance. The Programme Manager will identify the team that will be responsible for the evaluation of sub-projects. Lessons learned during implementation of the Programme's predecessors, related to improvement of the evaluation questionnaires and gathering of feedback from the beneficiaries of activities shall be applied during development of the criteria for the CfPs/grants. The evaluation of the communication activities shall be outlined in the Programme's Communications Strategy.

The SCO/SDC has budgeted at least for one external review from their resources independent from the program budget. The external review will be carried out in accordance with the SCO/SDC guidelines and procedures.

Baseline studies

The Local Governance Assessment (LGA) will be conducted in the representative sample of the municipalities on the entire territory of the Republic of Serbia at the beginning of the programme implementation, based on parameters from the Good Governance Index (GGI). The LGA will enable insight into the current status of good governance at local level and defining of further Programme interventions for capacity development in municipalities for good governance, implementation of activities related to municipal support, as well as needs of municipalities in different areas. Also, in order to measure the achieved results of the Programme and intervention effects, the final evaluation of LG performances and capacities for implementation of good governance will be conducted. The evaluation of good governance level in LGs will be conducted by the SCTM in close collaboration with the MPALSG and UNOPS.

In the first year of the Programme implementation, the assessment of current status of local governance will also be conducted, as well as of capacities and resources of e-government in the municipalities. This assessment will enable development of guidelines for further specific support to the municipalities in improving e-government, developing infrastructure, defining the needs of a municipality, as well as developing e-services. The evaluation of e-government at local level will be conducted by the UNOPS in close collaboration and in consultations with the Office for IT and e-Government and the SCTM.

In addition to the planned baseline studies and evaluations, the Programme will, in regular consultations with the national partners and the LGs, assess the status and needs in certain areas so as to bring the Programme activities to the results, to establish ownership over the process by the national institutions and LGs, and to ensure sustainability of the intervention.

9 Communications and Visibility

The primary goal of the Programme's communications segment will be to promote the objectives of the Programme, especially its key objective – the behavioural change of the involved governmental structures.

Secondary goal of the Communication interventions is to position the Government of Switzerland as a key partner in the areas of good governance and social inclusion.

This is to be achieved:

- by raising the beneficiaries' awareness on the importance of the process and its outcomes;
- by contributing to the beneficiaries increased demand for better local governance;
- by improving capacities of (primarily) the LGs – but of other key stakeholders if perceived pertinent, as well – for communicating and promoting key messages and outcomes achieved;
- by underlining the importance of improving relevant knowledge/skills for doing so,
- by contributing to changing attitudes and practices,
- and by promoting the developmental opportunities for the beneficiaries.

The Programme will thus contribute to the overall visibility of the Swiss Cooperation Office in Serbia and its support to Serbia's development and societal change, but also to better understanding of the GG principles and social inclusion policies at the local level.

The Programme's Communications and Visibility Strategy will be prepared during the Inception Period, and in consultation with the SCO/SDC, MPALSG, MLEVSA, SCTM and other key stakeholders. The Strategy will provide details about the communications objectives and principles, target audiences and tools and techniques to be used for outreach, key messages, approach to monitoring and evaluation, as well as the available resources. One section will be dedicated to risks as well as to approach to crisis communication.

All communications activities will be presented in the overall Communications Action Plan, which will serve as the basis for the detailed quarterly communication plans. Still, the first year of the Programme's implementation will be crucial to disseminate information in innovative and intensive plan for outreach to participating municipalities. Such an approach will require a good communications team, but also the field presence.

The Programme's logo will prominently feature the logo of the SCO/SDC, while the name of the Programme will be developed in consultation with the SCO/SDC. The visibility elements will be harmonised with those generated for the EU PRO Programme to ensure complimentary visibility in joint activities.

Where applicable this 'synergetic' communication approach will be used to accentuate DEU and SCO/SDC joint efforts through all communication channels.

The organisation of selected key events and visits of high officials of the SCO/SDC and the Government of Serbia to project sites, handover ceremonies and work with media through meetings, trips and provision of different multimedia inputs, will be among the main activities to communicate Programme's achievements to a wider audience.⁵⁹ Information about the Programme outputs and outcomes will also be disseminated through social media channels, website and newsletters. Opportunities to establish partnership with a broadcaster with a national licence, or the public information service, e.g. the Radio Television of Serbia, will be explored. This will result in wider awareness of the SCO's / SDC's support to Serbia.

The Communications team will prepare bi-annual, annual and final reports, which will be integrated into the Programme reports. Other reports, such as briefing notes for the high-level meetings/visits, analysis and speaking notes, may be drafted, upon the request of the donor or other key stakeholders.

Monitoring and evaluation of the communications activities may include,⁶⁰ but not be limited to: measuring of volume and tone of the media coverage and the number of website hits, number of followers on the social media (e.g. Facebook and Twitter), list of participants in the events and surveys of their satisfaction, and continuous feedback from the stakeholders (through formal and informal meetings, focus groups).

The Communications Strategy will undergo internal mid-term evaluation, when relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the communication activities will be analysed, and the lessons learned documented and addressed. If recommended, the alternations in the approach to communication in the remainder of the Programme will be introduced to the Strategy. The success of the communications efforts outlined in this Strategy will be evaluated at the end of the Programme.

⁵⁹ Details will be presented in the Communications Strategy

⁶⁰ *ibid*