

PROJECT-FACTSHEET

Western Balkans May 2018

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SERBIAN MUNICIPALITIES



In Serbia, the central government has launched reforms in the country's local administrations. © Rea Mucovic

Switzerland is supporting the Serbian government's public administration reform, which aims to make it more effective and accessible to both citizens and the private sector. SwissPRO project is being run in 99 municipalities (two-thirds of Serbia) to improve good governance, social inclusion and gender equality.

Serbia's accession process to the EU has spurred a drive for reform in the country in recent years and led to a number of new laws that must be aligned with EU standards. The Serbian electoral system gives more weight to its large urban centres – sometimes to the detriment of local governments which lack the capacities to develop further. Rural depopulation in some areas has resulted in poverty for 65% of the population. In order to stop this negative trend, Serbia is aiming to develop the country's municipal governments to make local administrations more equitable and build public confidence in these institutions.

SwissPRO is active in 99 municipalities to the south of Belgrade. It aims to improve people's living conditions, particularly for marginalised groups:

- by improving local capacities and resource management;
- by applying good governance practices and social inclusion measures.

BENEFITS FOR ALL CITIZENS

During the first two phases of the project jointly implemented with the EU, good governance practices were introduced in 34 municipalities in the south and south-west of Serbia. This was decided by the assemblies and local authorities of these municipalities, where the local governments have improved their transparency and instituted long-term changes. This in turn has raised their potential for attracting investment. 15 local governments increased their capacities in urban planning and project management, improving water supply for example.

With local governments applying good governance practices, their citizens benefit from inclusive services and better quality. This inclusiveness extends to marginalised groups as well as men and women, who benefit from greater gender equality among those municipalities taking part in the project.

FOCUS ON THE VULNERABLE

Switzerland and the EU are continuing to jointly steer the project but in two separate initiatives. SwissPRO is aiming to improve the results of the first two phases by linking governance, infrastructure and economic development together. Local governments applying good governance practices will be rewarded by the Serbian Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government. The third phase is expected to reach 3.5 million people (living in the 99 municipalities), with a particular focus on women, disabled people, Roma and other vulnerable groups.

The project is also in line with four of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations: eliminating poverty, promoting gender equality, reducing inequalities and establishing strong institutions.

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

NAME

Municipal Development in South and South West Serbia (SwissPRO)

DEPARTMENT

SDC – Cooperation with Eastern Europe

TOPIC

Democracy
Decentralisation

COUNTRY/REGION

Serbia

PARTNERS

UNOPS
Ministry for European Integration
Delegation of the European Commission

BACKGROUND

SwissPRO project is being run in 99 municipalities (two-thirds of Serbia) to improve good governance, social inclusion and gender equality

AIM OF THE PROJECT

Improving local capacities and resource management and applying good governance practices and social inclusion measures

TARGET GROUP

99 municipalities to the south of Belgrade

RESULTS SO FAR

Good governance practices were introduced in 34 municipalities in the south and south-west of Serbia. This was decided by the assemblies and local authorities of these municipalities, where the local governments have improved their transparency and instituted long-term changes

DURATION

Phase 3: 01.01.2018 - 31.12.2021

BUDGET

Phase 3: CHF 7'000'000

FURTHER INFORMATION

Bilateral relations Switzerland–Serbia
<https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/representations-and-travel-advice/serbia/switzerland-serbia.html>

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