



Joint Initiative to Support
Local Self Government
in
Serbia



An EU-funded project managed by the European Agency for Reconstruction
and implemented by the Council of Europe

**STRENGTHENING LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT
IN SERBIA**

In October 2006, the Council of Europe and European Agency for Reconstruction started a joint 1.8 million Euro, two-year program «Strengthening Local Self-Government in Serbia». The Council of Europe and the Standing Conference of towns and municipalities (SCTM) are leading on the implementation of this program; the main partners are the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry for Public Administration and Local Self Government, as well as other line ministries, government agencies and institutions.

The programme aims at providing support to the Republic of Serbia in the implementation of European standards for effective and democratic local government. These standards are set forth in the European Charter of Local Self-Government, signed by the Republic of Serbia in 2005.

The program comprises two projects:

- Strengthening Institutional Framework for Local Government;
- Building local government capacities.

**STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT**

This project focuses primarily on legislative reform and the establishment of a proper institutional framework approximated with European standards. Therefore, the main project activities focus on extending expert support in the process of drafting legal documents – laws, bylaws as well as recommendations in the following areas:

- Enhancing institutional relations between different local authorities' bodies;
- distribution of competences between various levels of government in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity and establishment of a balanced, transparent, and stable system of allocation of revenues to local authorities;
- establishing effective and objective state grant and equalisation system;
- development of a new legal regime for local government property;
- strengthening the status of local government staff.

BUILDING LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPACITIES

This project is directed at developing local government capacities, administration of public and utility services and enhancing community participation in local authorities.

It comprises three components:

Best Practice Programme – The programme aims at identifying best practice in specific areas of management, service delivery or community participation on the basis of a number of jointly agreed criteria. Municipalities will be encouraged to apply for the “best practice status” award. Their case-studies will be assessed on the basis of jointly agreed criteria. The municipalities which will be awarded “best practice status” will enter into an agreement with the SCTM to share their good practice, service innovation and the lessons they have learnt with the wider local government community. This will be achieved through a national programme of activities that is prepared, co-ordinated and supported by the SCTM with the assistance of the Council of Europe and EAR. Activities will include open day events where Best Practice authorities will present their good practice to interested municipalities, study visits and thematic workshops, publication and dissemination of training materials as well as other learning opportunities.

Leadership benchmark programme – Implementing “Peer Review” methodology is envisaged, which implies establishing of a team of colleagues – mayors, senior local government officials and experts with experience in local government, who would then be trained by the Council of Europe experts. Following the training, this team will visit pilot municipalities and will, through discussions and contacts with their colleagues, review the municipality’s performance on the basis of indicators from the Leadership Benchmark, developed by the Council of Europe and adapted to Serbian local circumstances. The peer-review report will address the good practices and weaknesses in the work of the relevant municipality and suggest recommendations aiming at building upon strength, using opportunities and overcoming weaknesses. Based on these recommendations, the authorities under review will prepare the Improvement Plans.

Performance management programme – Questionnaires will be prepared and used to determine current levels of performance in selected services. The findings will be used to develop a template with performance indicators and standards for each service. A team of performance management specialists from participating local authorities along with national experts will be trained in performance management. This team would then visit selected local authorities to introduce a performance and services management system and will also review the current performance level of particular services in the relevant municipalities. This team will also assist and train the local authorities in establishing performance targets and drawing up and implementing improvement programs. SCTM will collect and centralize performance data with a view to establishing national performance standards in providing particular services.