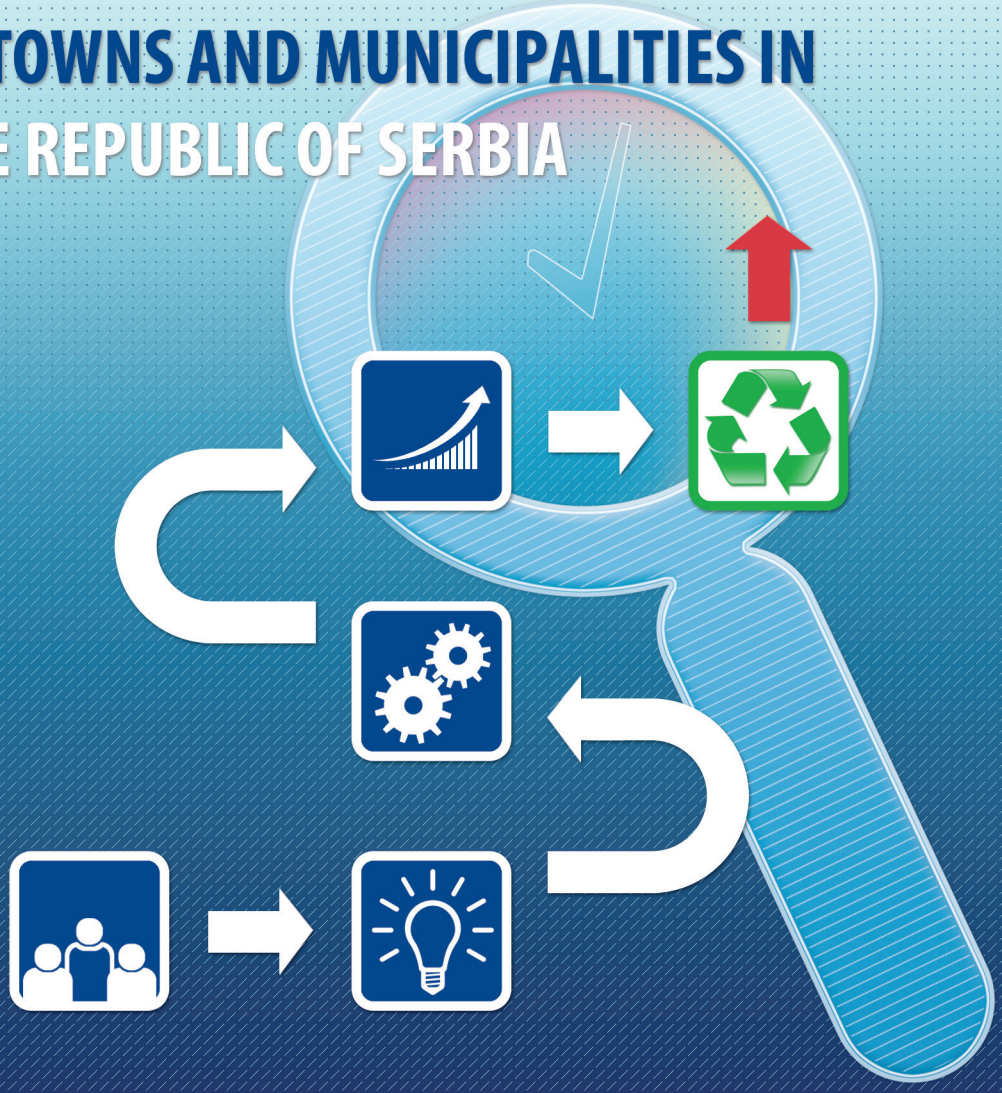
ANALYSIS OF THE PLANNING PROCESSES IN TOWNS AND MUNICIPALITIES IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA



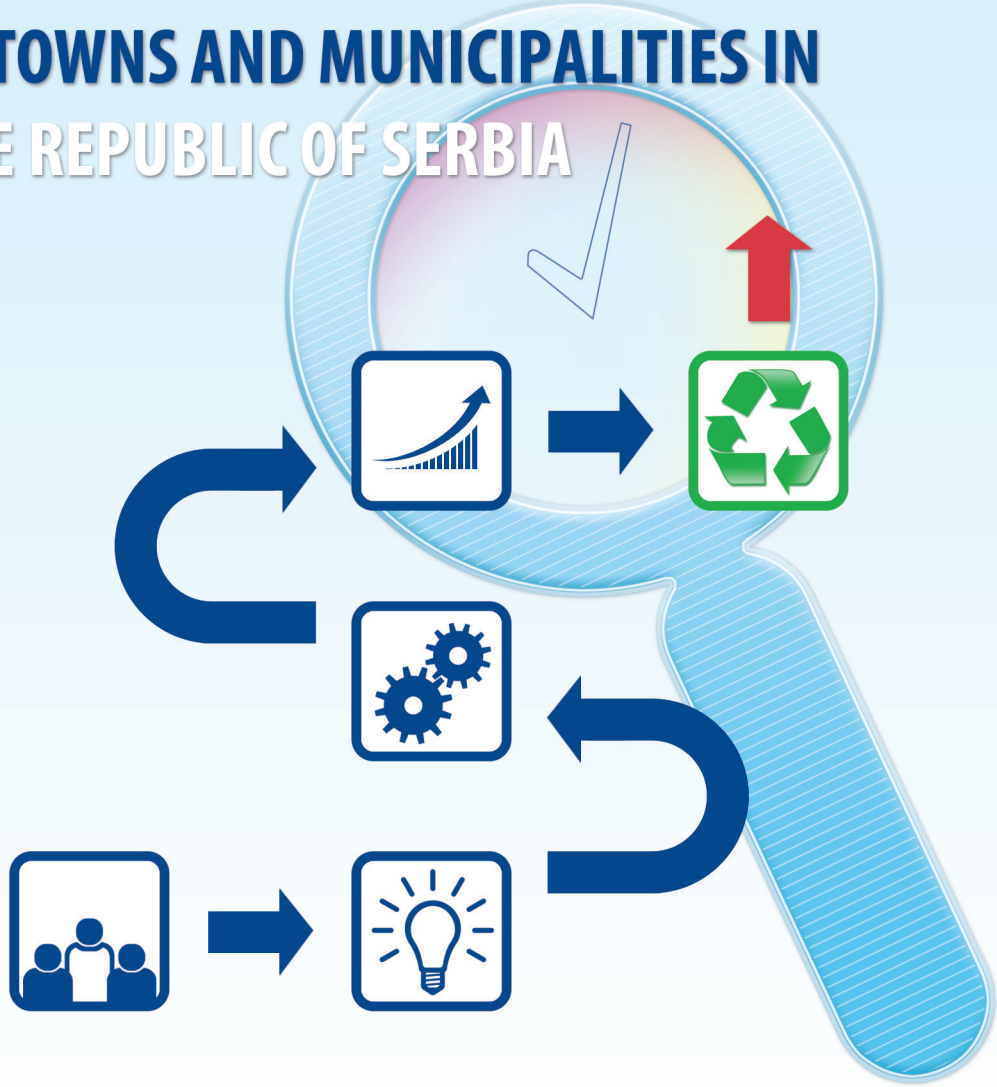
The Delegation
of the European Union
to the Republic of Serbia

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Stalna konferencija
gradova i opština

Savez gradova i opština Srbije

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List of Accronyms

AP	Autonomous Province
DIFD	Department for International Development of the Government of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Department for International Development)
DILS	Project "Provision of Improved Local Services" implemented by the Government of the Republic of Serbia, funded from the World Bank loan
EU	European Union
EXCHANGE 2	European Union Project for support to local self-government (Joint Support to Local Government)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTZ	German Development Agency, now GIZ (Deutcshe Seselschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit Gmbh)
ICLEI	World Association of Local Governments for sustainable development (Local Governments for Sustainability)
LED	Local economic development
LGU	Local self-government unit
LSDS	Local Sustainable Development Strategy
MEGA	USAID funded project for municipal economic development (Municipal Economic Growth Activity)
MICE	Meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions
MIR 2	UNDP programme for development and revival of municipalities in Southern Serbia
MSP NE SERBIA	European Union Programme for support of municipalities in the North-Eastern Serbia
NALED	National Alliance for Local Economic Development
NIP	National Investment Plan
NUTS	EU standard on statistical division of member countries (Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics)
NVO	Non-governmental organisations

PBILD	Peace maintenance and inclusive local development/ UN programme implemented in Southern Serbia
PRO	UNDP programme for municipal revival in South-Western Serbia (Municipal Improvement and Revival)
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SEV	Military political organisation of socialist countries in the Middle and Eastern Europe
SFRJ	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SIRP	Programme of housing and permanent integration of refugees implemented by UNHABITAT
SKGO	Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities – national association of local governments in Serbia
SLAP	Information system – database of municipal infrastructure projects
SMART	S – Specific, M – Measurable, A – Attainable, R – Relevant, T – Timely
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SWOT	Technique to identify strategic choices by linking internal strengths and weaknesses with external opportunities and threats
UNHABITAT	Programme of habitation, implemented by United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
USAID	US Agency for International Development



"Strategic planning is a dynamic process, and any strategic document developed in such a process should be treated as "living" document, meaning that not only that there are no obstacles for changes to be made due to changed needs of local community or external circumstance, but this is strongly recommended and it is a core principle of the strategic management. "



1. Introduction

Strategic planning is an important tool in adjusting to constantly changing environment. It enables clear definition of priorities and identification of the most optimal use of always limited resources so needed for successful and efficient development. As such, strategic planning helps local governments to deal more effectively with development and growth issues, and local self-governments with developed and implemented strategic plans are, as a rule, more successful in management of local development, especially if it is done in a participatory manner enabling participation of all stakeholders relevant for the planning of the future of local community.

As of 2002 competencies and activities of the Serbian local self-government units have been significantly extended; therefore, strengthening long-term planning capacities including improvement of professional skills and development of organizational platforms is necessary for successful coordination of activities, again having in mind that resources for these purposes are still insufficient. Although there is almost no local self-government in the Republic of Serbia that has not yet adopted at least one strategic document[1], either overall or sectoral one, experience in participatory planning is still in its early stage. The first plans of this kind date from 2005 and majority of the strategies was developed within the initiative and with technical assistance of various donor programmes and/or development organizations.

Within the Exchange 2 programme[2] and in consultations with relevant ministries of the Republic of Serbia and other national and international partners, a methodological framework (LSDS) for development of overall strategic plans was developed aiming at contributing to standardization of the local planning processes. During the methodology development process previous local planning experiences were considered, as well as the best practice examples from EU countries. This methodological framework was piloted in 25 cities and municipalities and later on implemented through various programmes/projects, regional development agencies, etc.

The main goal of the *Analysis of the Planning Processes in Towns and Municipalities the Republic of Serbia* is to provide recommendations for improvement of the strategic planning process of local self-governments based on thorough analysis of strategic documents and planning processes on local level. The Analysis is intended to be useful for local self-governments and other interested stakeholders, such as national government, regional development agencies, international development and financial organisations, in order to help them harmonize their activities and provide comprehensive support to implementation of the local strategic documents.

1 Mapping was initiated in 2007 as a joint initiative of the Team for implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy of Vice-President of the Government and SCTM.

2 Programme Exchange 2 was financed by EU, and among others, aimed at modernization and standardization of the planning processes in Serbia.

2. Objective, development methodology and structure of the analysis

Objective, development methodology and its structure are defined by the Contract on the development of the analysis of the planning processes in local self-governments in Serbia, awarded in a competitive procedure and signed by the consulting company "Maxima Consulting".

Overall objective of the Analysis is to identify gaps and improve the overall planning process in local self-governments in Serbia by mapping common problems and priorities. On one hand, the Analysis is to enable key local partners and decision-makers on central level to implement their strategic development priorities by using resources, always insufficient, in more efficient way thus contributing to realization of local and national priorities. On the other hand, the Analysis should contribute to improvements of the methodology of planning. Besides, priorities identified by local self-governments, as well as data, conclusions and recommendations from the Analysis could be utilized during the programming process and planning cycle related to international and national support to local government and wider social development.

Methodology of development of the Analysis included four inter-related phases, each equally and specifically contributing to the quality of the text.

The first phase was conducted in cooperation with the EXCHANGE 3 Project Team and representatives of the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM) and included: development of criteria for identification and selection of twenty local self-government units (LGU) included in data gathering process; selection of sectoral strategies in selected local self-governments; and selection of national strategic documents for the purpose of monitoring the harmonization of local strategic documents with the national ones.

In order to identify a representative sample of 20 LGU, the following criteria were developed to provide:

- Regional balance, i. e. inclusion of local self-governments from the entire territory of the Republic of Serbia,
- Equal participation of big-, mid- and small-size local self-governments, and
- Equal participation of local self-governments from different development groups.

Besides these basic criteria, additional criteria were used, too – existence of sectoral strategies and diversification of methodologies for their development in order to analyse methodologies implemented by different organisations. Based on all these criteria, 20 local self-governments (Annex 1, local self-governments selected for the analysis of the elements of the planning process) and 40 strategic documents from these 20 LGU to be analysed (Annex 2) were identified.

Parallel to this, six national strategies were selected as a role model for monitoring the harmonization of local strategic documents with the national ones. These national strategies are:

- National Sustainable Development Strategy,
- National Environmental Protection Action Plan – NEAP,
- Strategy for Development of Competitive and Innovative Small and Medium-Size Enterprises (SME) for the period of 2008–2013,
- Strategy for Encouraging and Developing of Foreign Investments,
- Strategy of Agricultural Development of the Republic of Serbia, and
- Strategy of Tourism Development.

The second phase included development of a questionnaire on local planning processes. A questionnaire sample for data collection on existing strategic documents with questions related to the planning process phases included was developed. These planning phases included:

- Development and adoption of the strategic document,
- Strategic document implementation,
- Monitoring and evaluation, and
- Revision of the strategic document, i.e. decision-making on the initiation of development of the new strategic document.

Besides, questionnaire developed had special sections tailored to information gathering from different stakeholders for the purpose of better and more comprehensive data collection. These stakeholders included:

- Local decision-makers (Mayors),
- Chiefs of Administration,
- Chiefs of Financing,
- Authorized persons in organizational units with a mandate to implement the strategic document – Chiefs of Local Economic Development Offices (LED),
- Civil society organisations, i. e. non-governmental organisations,
- Business sector, and
- National, regional and international partners.

After questionnaire development, in interviews with 138 participants 40 strategic documents were analysed. In 20 selected local self-government units a total of 120 were interviewed – 76 representatives of local self-governments, 22 representatives of non-governmental sector and 22 representatives of business community. In addition, during the analysis representatives of national and regional institutions were interviewed, too: 12 representatives of regional development agencies, three representatives of ministries and three representatives of donor programmes.

The next phase basically included two processes. The first one was related to the analysis of the structure and content of the strategic documents and their linkage to national strategies. In addition to the analysis of the local strategic documents and six national strategies, the first

process included, also, collection and analysis of the existing academic and expert literature, with an overview of strategic documents, legal framework and by-laws of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, as well as documents of various domestic and international organizations and programmes related to the local planning processes.

The second process included benchmarking of data gathered – interviews of the local self-governments. This process provided information on the local planning processes, role of local self-governments as leaders in the local community planning, local capacities and relations – co-operation between local partners, as well as an evaluation of relations between central and local levels. The first draft of the Analysis resulted from this phase.

After comments and suggestions received from the Team of the EXCHANGE 3 Project implemented by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM), it was agreed that the draft of the Analysis will be subjected to one more consultation phase in order to obtain comments and suggestions from even wider circle of stakeholders in the local planning process.

Therefore, the draft of the document was distributed to the representatives of the LSDS expert group[3] , development offices and units of all local self-governments, regional agencies and development programmes. Also, the draft of the document was discussed in a meeting of the LSDS expert group held on 24 April 2012, as well as in regional round tables on improvements of the local planning processes organized in Nis, Kragujevac, Belgrade and Novi Sad by EXCHANGE 3 and Municipal Support Program IPA 2007 in the period of May – June 2012. More than 100 stakeholders from local self-governments, regional development agencies, development programmes, ministries and other national institutions relevant for local planning participated in these discussions.

The results related to the structure of the Analysis are presented in several different, interrelated chapters. In Chapter 3, the context for local planning is presented through an overview of changes related to the local self-government system and planning processes. In the fourth Chapter, the structure and content of documents, including objectives, priorities, action plans and indicators are analysed, while in the Chapter 5, management and monitoring systems, as well as progress and results implemented are presented. In the sixth Chapter involvement of wider community in the planning process and partnership in development and implementation of plans are discussed, while the Chapter 7 elaborates on the linkage and harmonization of the local and national plans.

In the end, in the eighth and final Chapter, some general recommendations for improvements of the overall local planning process are given.

3 LSDS expert group was established within the programme EXCHANGE 2. The group consists of representatives of relevant ministries and governmental institutions related to local planning, as well as of international partners, development programmes and regional development agencies. The objective was to have meetings of the expert group become mechanisms and forums for exchange of ideas, innovations, best practice examples and initiatives between key partners on national and local levels relevant for improvements of local planning processes.

3. Background

After political changes in 2000 decentralisation and strengthening of the local self-government in Serbia was initiated again. As of 2002 competencies of local self-government have been significantly extended and transferred competencies increased, firstly by adoption of the Law on Local Self-Government (2002) and then by adoption of the new Constitution in 2006 that guaranteed structure and competencies to local self-government. By adopting a set of additional laws[4] at the end of 2007, the role of LSG has been more precisely defined and its competencies extended. Thus, the Article 20 of the Law on Local Self-Government defines that "municipalities (for towns the same is defined in the Article 24[5]) have the right to adopt their development programmes by their bodies and in line with the Constitution and law". The Article, also, defines who is to be responsible for local economic development.

The Law on the Local Self-Government Financing from 2006 significantly contributed to financial decentralisation and enabled relatively transparent, fair, stable and predictable transfer of funds from central to local level. Amendments to the Law on the Local Self-Government Financing from 2011 enabled local self-governments to obtain twice more revenues from the income tax (instead of 40% local self-governments obtained 80% of the funds from the income tax, while the highest amount of the funds from solidarity transfer was allocated to undeveloped municipalities) thus enabling them to use "additional" funds for financing of development projects in their local communities.

Also, the Law on Regional Development identifies local self-governments as some of the most important players in regional development. The Law defines objectives and basic principles of regional development encouragement, development documents, institutional organisation of regional development management, development indicators and local self-government units' ranking, harmonizing development regions with the NUTS methodology. The Law defines, also, measures, incentives and financial resources for regional development policy implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation of regional development policies. The Law defines that there are three basic documents of regional development: National Regional Development Plan, Regional Development Strategy and Programme of Regional Development Financing.

One of the specific characteristics and, at the same time, difference in comparison to the most of the counties from former SFRY, and countries of former SEV nowadays EU members, is that Serbia did not change its territorial organisation[6]. Therefore, Serbian local self-government units are among largest in Europe[7], which in origin enables them **better promotion of local economic development,** above all due to the fact that larger area enables more complex and

4 Four new laws were adopted: Law on Local Self-Government, Law on the Capital, Law on Territorial Organisation and Law on Local Elections.

5 Author's remark

6 Characteristics of the local government system depend vastly on the type of the territorial organisation, including allocation of functions and nature of relations between central and local authorities.

7 Compared to Serbia, only Great Britain of all EU countries has significantly larger basic local self-government units according to the number of inhabitants.

more coherent planning and makes financing of expensive investments in infrastructural projects easier. In addition, in Serbia a mid-level of authority (region) exists only in a part of the territory – AP of Vojvodina (though the City of Belgrade could be regarded as a region as well to some extent), putting thus local self-governments in different positions.

Participatory planning in Serbia, both on national and local levels, in general starts as of 2005[8]. The last (fifth) mapping of strategic/action plans (June 2011) conducted annually by the SCTM, identifies 676 planning processes[9] in municipalities and towns in Serbia, as well as 536 adopted plans. This means that local self-governments in Serbia in average have 3.2 strategic/action plans (some have five to six plans, some only one), while, in average, one document has been under development or has been completed but not adopted by the assembly[10]. When speaking of the sectors included in the adopted strategic/action plans, most often these are general and comprehensive local strategies (27% of all adopted plans), then strategic plans from the sector of social protection and welfare (20%), and only after that strategies of local economic development, local environmental action plans, action plans for improvement of status of refugees and internally displaced people, local action plans for children and local youth action plans. Remaining local plans include solid waste management, capital investments, agriculture, and tourism.

Development of majority of these plans was supported by international partners (donors). Overall strategies, including local sustainable development strategies, were mostly funded by regional development programmes (MIR 2, PRO, MSP NE)[11] and EXCHANGE 2. Also, development of 15 such plans on the territory of Vojvodina was supported by the Provincial Secretariat for Local Self-Government of the AP Vojvodina. Development strategies for social protection services mostly were supported by EU through the Fund for Social Innovations, as well as DFID and the Government of Norway in cooperation with of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Majority of local environmental action plans were supported by the Regional Environmental Protection Centre from Budapest, while development of communal waste management plans was supported by GTZ. UNICEF supported local action plans for children, and Ministry of Youth and Sport supported development of the local youth plans. The Republic of Serbia Commissioner for Refugees, in cooperation with international donors, supported development of the action plans for refugees and internally displaced people. Most of these strategies and action plans are for the five year period[12]. Strategies developed for the period of 10 years are mostly overall strategies (mostly sustainable development strategies). In 2012 a significant number of these strategic plans will expire, while more than 70 plans (some 15% of adopted plans), mostly local environmental action

8 Local planning practice was present to some extent in the period of self-governmental socialism; however, having in mind that these kinds of strategies were developed more than 20 years ago, and different environment in which they were adopted, this kind of planning is a new practice for local level authorities in Serbia.

9 This includes adopted plans, plans under development and plans developed but not yet adopted by local assemblies.

10 In average, towns have four adopted plans, and municipalities 2.8 (municipalities with more than 40.000 inhabitants have in average 2.9, while smaller municipalities have in average 2.6 plans).

11 MSP NE project was funded by EU, meaning that EU was the most important funding organization as in the case of the MIR2 and PRO programmes.

12 The plans resulting as the initiative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and international donors to develop strategies of social policy development in more than 100 LGU, are mostly developed for the period of 2008-2012.

plans and overall strategies, have already expired in 2011.

The world economic crises proved that current model of Serbian economic growth and development has not been sustainable[13]. Effects of such a poor condition of national economy are especially tangible on local level, especially in undeveloped and peripheral communities. Obsolete and inappropriate infrastructure, unsolved land ownership issues, long-lasting procedures for issuance of building permits, insufficiently qualified labour force and generally not attractive business environment are only some of the most important reasons for poor investment attraction so much needed for economic growth and employment rate increase. Besides, lack of clear strategic, often even legal framework, with significant politicisation of economic policy through one-time measures and poor coordination of the key development stakeholders, all represent serious obstacles to better and more efficient management of development.

All this proves that nowadays local authorities face huge challenges in implementation of all their various competencies (urban planning, public utility activities, development and use of construction and agricultural land, social welfare, etc.), and that they, being fundamental units of authority, have to demonstrate sufficient competence and creativity to be able to speed-up local community development, for which they need new knowledge and new management practices, especially if tend to be key holder and promoter of institutional decentralisation. Local self-government capacities are still insufficient for creation and implementation of economic development policy, while Local Economic Development Offices[14] are still with not clearly defined competencies and overburdened staff.

Administrative reforms implemented so far enabled local self-governments to manage more their development, and the trend of extension of local self-government competencies will require further increase of their managerial capacities. Strengthening capacities of local governments, especially in the area of financial management, planning and accountability, should contribute to increased efficiency and quality of the local administration, and local democracy, too. Further professionalization of local administration staff in decision-making and use of resources are the key factors in further development of local communities. Effective and efficient management implies clearly defined local development policies, development planning based on results, harmonization of strategies and budgets and monitoring of implementation of previously set priorities.

13 Besides extremely high public expenditure and debt that in the last years increased to more than 45% of GDP, Serbia is among the counties with the lowest employment rate in Europe, and according to the share of industry in GDP significantly lags behind neighbouring countries.

14 No matter that a large number of local self-governments have already established Local Economic Development Offices and adopted local development strategies, improved service provision by citizen assistance centres, and even started with marketing of investment potentials and cooperation of local business community, it is necessary to further re-define and improve the role of local self-governments in economic development.

4. Structure and content of the local strategic documents (priorities, objectives, action plan and indicators)

- ✓ Most of the analysed strategic documents follow the structure recommended also by the LSDS methodology - they consist of the community profile, long-term vision, priorities and goals/measures; however, only half of the strategic documents have action plans developed. Parts of the strategy related to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation systems are generally insufficiently elaborated.
- ✓ Most of the overall strategies of local self-governments have four priority areas identified: social development, environmental protection, infrastructure development and local economic development.
- ✓ Total number of strategic objectives is huge and covers different areas (they are not identified only for key priority areas); often these are not precisely defined and measurable.
- ✓ Overall development strategies are useful for all local self-governments, while the focus of development of sectoral strategies should be only on the key priority areas of importance for the particular community, with consideration of the community's size, type, etc.
- ✓ Number of projects in the strategies analysed is large and varies from 22 to 550. Significant number of strategies contains action plans in the form of a list of projects divided into thematic areas (priorities), with no further internal prioritization and concept development for key projects (only one third of the analysed plans includes concepts developed for specific projects).
- ✓ Some 30% of projects are related to infrastructure, while some 2% of projects are not under competencies of local governments. In financial aspect, 54% of the budget has been allocated for infrastructural projects, while some 10% is allocated for business infrastructure.
- ✓ In general, there are only a small number of inter-municipal projects, while one third of the analysed documents have no single project of this kind.

Based on the analysis of the strategic plans[15], it could be concluded, in general, that **vast majority of strategic documents include necessary fundamental parts that each strategic document should have** while differences among them – in terminology and composition - are mostly resulting from the methodology of development. Strategic plans mostly have all clearly identified implementation timeframe varying from 5 to 10 years. This results from the fact that development of local strategic documents in Serbia has mostly been initiated by international development or-

15 The Analysis includes 40 strategic documents – 20 overall and 20 sectoral documents of local self-governments. The analysis included local self-governments that previously adopted strategic plans, but revised them recently. There were six of these local self-governments, while in one local self-government the process of strategy revision was in progress.

ganizations which subsequently implements different strategic planning methodologies.

Vast majority of strategic documents include fundamental elements, such as community profile, i.e. baseline assessment, long-term vision, priorities and goals/measures. Yet, hardly more than a half of the strategies include **action plans** with projected financial elements and resources needed for implementation, as well potential funding sources, while some part of documents only lists goals and activities. In most cases **system of implementation,** and **system of monitoring and evaluation,** based on the action plans, are mostly missing or are insufficiently elaborated. Also, a part of the action plans contains only a list of projects/activities with no clear connection of these with identified goals/measures, budget and funding sources, performance indicators and/or parties responsible for implementation – all these contribute to inability of properly and in a quality way implementation monitoring and evaluating.

Two groups of local self-governments could be distinguished according to the elements incorporated in the strategic documents. In the first, significantly larger group of local self-governments, content of the document includes community profile, i.e. baseline assessment, then long-term vision, priorities and goals, and relevant action plan adopted for implementation of the priorities and goals. In the second, significantly smaller group of local self-governments (mostly relevant to the strategic documents developed on the territory of AP Vojvodina and supported by the Provincial Secretariat for Local Self-Government and Inter-Municipal Cooperation) strategic document includes only long-term vision, priorities and goals, while community profile and action plan are considered to be separate documents. A common characteristic of both groups is that both, the implementation process and definition of monitoring and evaluation as a document, are not considered to be integral parts of the strategic documents.

Major number of strategic plans is comprehensive documents (100 to 350 pages). This usually makes them uneasy to read and unclear. The largest number of pages in majority of strategic documents are about community profiling, and thus the analysis of the current situation (more than 50%), which to some extent, on one hand, proves the need to elaborate on the local community situation, while, on the other hand, proves only insufficient knowledge of the strategic planning process. Local youth action plans are example of concise plans.

There are huge differences in the quality of development of the strategic plans, which to some extent could be the result of different capacities of local self-governments. In general, plans of larger local self-governments have better defined goals and more clearly defined implementation tools – probably due to better capacities and increased number of staff involved in development of local governments. On the other hand, the factors of importance for the quality of developed documents are methodological approach, but, also, dedication of local stakeholders to the process of development of the document itself.

Local self-governments have identified its **priority areas** in their strategic documents and the number of these varies from three to twelve even, while individually, the majority of overall strategic documents of local self-governments have identified four priority areas. The list of most frequent priority areas in the documents is given bellow.

- **Social welfare development,** meaning development of social, educational and health services as priority area exists in all strategies of sustainable development. Also, majority of analysed sectoral strategies is related to this sector and development of social protection services and action plans for youth. This priority area is named differently in different strategies.

❖ **Environmental protection,** as priority area, is, also, identified in majority of sustainable development strategies; however, there are examples of three local strategies in which this issue is identified as horizontal theme and is incorporated in all other priorities. Speaking of sectoral strategies, environmental protection is often elaborated in local environmental protection action plans. This priority area has been named differently in different strategies, too.

❖ **Infrastructure development** is placed only third according to its frequency in strategic documents; however, according to the funds needed for the implementation, this priority area always reserves the largest amount of funds.

❖ **Economic development themes** are within priority areas harmonized with the local needs and quite often divided into several priority areas, such as economy development, tourism development, rural development, investment attraction, and support to development of small and medium-size enterprises. These themes are often a subject of individual sectoral strategies, such as local economic development strategy, rural development strategy, tourism development strategy or strategy for development of small and medium-size enterprises.

Having in mind competencies of local self-governments and the fact that for significant number of these strategies the sustainable development strategy (in line with the sustainable development concept it defines the following three priority areas: economic development, social welfare and protection and environmental protection) is a relevant national strategy, the selection of priority areas seems to be logical. Also, human resource development and local self-government service delivery improvement are identified as priority areas in some of the strategic documents.

Total number of strategic goals is large and varies from 10 to 58 in all these strategic documents. Goals are much more precisely defined than the vision statements and should be directly linked to the conclusion of community profiling and important problems to be resolved in local community, which is not always the case. It, also, can be noticed that instead of being focused on the most urgent and important issues, local self-governments cover all kinds of competencies in their goals. The reason to this probably lays in the fact that local governments are responsible for huge number of competencies, and, in order to make as wide as possible consensus between different sectors and institutions and wider community, they identify many goals.

Local self-governments that identified many goals prove that **majority of identified goals are not in direct connection with the real issues identified in local communities,** meaning that these do not influence directly or indirectly life of majority of population. Also, it is not possible to influence majority of goals either by local competencies or resources. The Analysis has clearly shown that goals are not founded on the strengths of local self-governments and/or opportunities available, or do not influence relativisation of the weaknesses or help local self-government to overcome threats.

Goals are often defined without any foundation on the facts, are vague and non-measurable, meaning that they are not identified in a so called SMART methodology, though there are some examples of well identified and set strategic goals. In more than half of the strategic documents, the goals are set on two levels, as strategic and as specific, which in itself does not make a problem, but differences in methodology and approach made it difficult to compare these documents for the purpose of this analysis.

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Within the SIRP project funded by the Government of Italy and with technical assistance of UN-HABITAT and Emilia-Romagna Regional Development Agency ERVET, the City of Nis has developed its strategy of development in 2007. The process of strategy development included the analysis of the territory of the City of Nis. The analysis consisted of an overview of the existing documents, development of thematic materials based on the specific number of indicators and thematic SWOT analysis, with simultaneous detail analysis of cross-cutting issues, especially in the area of financing and management, vision creation and project developments. As a result, the strategic plan with four strategic axes was developed. These axes were related to:

1. Territory, infrastructure and environment,
2. Development of economy and businesses,
3. Social development, and
4. Management.

Within each of these axes several specific objectives were identified, while several actions were identified under each of the specific objectives. These actions aimed at realization of relevant specific objectives. Also, communications plan, budget and funding sources, as well as early implementation steps were identified.

The Strategy was revised in 2009 and an action plan was developed within the EXCHANGE 2 programme.

Majority of local self-governments included in the Analysis adopted both types of strategic documents – overall strategy and sectoral one(s). Majority of people interviewed for the purpose of the Analysis are of the opinion that sectoral strategies are more detailed elaborated, more precise and more operational, while **overall strategies provide framework for development and as such are known to local stakeholders, and local officials, too.** Opinions of the local self-government representatives, as well as of other stakeholders, on which of these two types of strategies are more useful are different and depend on the type and size of the local self-government, but also on the sector stakeholders represent.

For smaller municipalities overall development strategies are more useful especially if they are properly developed to incorporate all strategic areas important for development of these small local communities and if harmonized with local capacities. Also, their ability to provide inter-sectoral relations, the issue majority of interviewed people state as a problem, is given as their advantage, especially as they can be a good foundation for development of sectoral strategies.

Sectoral strategies are, on the other hand, more focused and, in general, representatives of the civil sector engaged in social welfare, and environmental protection, too, think of them as very useful. However, **the opinion of majority of people interviewed is that local self-governments should have overall strategies, while sectoral ones are needed only for the key areas of local development.**

Number of projects/activities/measures in action plans is very large and it rightly raises the issue if and how much these are realistic. Number of projects in the action plans varies from 22 to 550 and it is larger in towns than in smaller municipalities, still with some significant

exceptions within this rule. Action plans should precisely define all activities necessary for achieving the goals, and the question is what, in general, is the optimal number of the activities. When determining this number, several parameters should be considered: availability of funds and their sources, planning timeframe, prioritization methods, level of project preparedness, etc.

Two types and two different methodologies of development of documents are distinguished. The first type includes those in which local self-governments strive to solve all existing issues in their local communities. In this case the list of desired projects is given with no realistic possibilities for implementation. Majority of local self-governments belong to this type. The second type includes local self-governments that equalize strategic planning, especially the action plan, with the operational programmes of local public utility companies, as well as with the activities of national institutions on their territories (for example, National Employment Service) thus striving to secure successful implementation. This approach does not imply development component, but provides clear parameters for progress monitoring in plan implementation.

In addition, the analysis of strategic documents showed that local self-governments **plan and envisage implementation of projects out of their competencies** but within the competencies of national public institutions/companies. One of the reasons for their doing so is huge importance of these projects for future development of local communities and the fact that significant part of local projects is linked to or depend on national projects.

The biggest differences within the sample are noticed in this phase of the strategic planning process. Large number of local self-governments has an action plan **in the form of a list of projects divided in priority areas,** with no further or more detailed elaboration of the same. This method is not necessarily and *a priori* inappropriate if it is founded on project prioritization and development of more detailed concepts of selected projects.

The second group consists of a small number of action plans that do link projects with goals and priority areas, identify project implementation timeframe, as well as institutions responsible for implementation and expected results.

One third of analysed action plans have projects with all relevant information provided: organisations responsible for implementation and partners, timing, estimated costs, funding sources and indicators. All this is a characteristic of the plans developed by LSDS methodology. These action plans more clearly link projects with strategic objectives and priority areas.

In the end, it is important to point out **the structure of the projects proposed** within the action plans. Total number of analysed projects is 4.682. It is found that some 16,7% of all projects are directly related to infrastructure and include: construction, rehabilitation and reconstruction of local roads; improvements in water supply system; construction of sewerage system and landfills.

If projects related or could be related to infrastructure are added to this group (often projects are defined as too general so it is not easy to estimate if they have an investment/infrastructure component or not) their number would be significantly increased to some 30% of all projects. Also, some 2% of all projects are not within the competencies of local self-governments and all they can do is to lobby for their realisation.

When **financial structure of the projects** considered, then the situation is completely different. For implementation of all the projects within the above mentioned 30%, more than 54% of the total budget of local self-governments is to be spent for entire timeframe of the action plan.

Another group (some 10%) consists of the projects meant to improve business infrastructure and these are mostly focused on industrial zones and parks, business incubators and other forms of SME support.

Majority of the projects not in the category of local infrastructure projects are mostly projects related to some kind of social infrastructure: establishment of new institutions and organisations (tourist organisations, education centres, safe houses, agricultural clusters, business associations, vocational associations, etc.); education of specific target groups and promotional activities (from public awareness raising to marketing activities).

Yet, majority of the projects are related to the social welfare, health and education and often they incorporate both investment and programme projects. In the end, it should be emphasized that strategies rarely contain projects related to local policies and establishment of the system of better functioning of all three sectors on local level.

A specific question within the analysis was related to the **number and frequency of inter-municipal projects** in the local strategic documents. Inter-municipal projects are of extreme importance and significance with respect to financial and human resources available in local self-governments. Plus, development and life of citizens are not to be limited by municipal borders. Results of the analysis show that local self-governments recognize the **need for inter-municipal projects and activities,** so most of the analysed documents contain projects involving two or more municipalities, and in a smaller number of documents this number of inter-municipal projects is more than significant.

SUGGESTIONS FROM REGIONAL ROUND TABLES

Discussion emphasized importance of action plans and number of projects they contain in relation to strategic plan implementations. Based on previous experiences, majority of representatives of municipalities and towns are of the opinion that for a municipality of an average size, number of 50 to 60 projects in the action plan for the implementation period of five years is realistic. A conclusion from discussion was that it is of great importance to do project prioritization as not all projects are of the same importance for municipal development.

However, almost one third of analysed documents do not include any inter-municipal project. Both interviewed representatives of local self-governments, and representatives of other parties, too, agree that **in general there are not enough inter-municipal projects,** especially as their benefits are multiple, including maximal use of resources, exchange of knowledge and experiences, establishment of a strategically important cooperation and partnership, and thus improvement of local and regional capacities. They see the issue of identification of common goals and interests as one of the key obstacles in development and implementation of inter-municipal projects, especially when strategies are developed on the local level. In addition, very often neighbouring municipalities are of different development level; therefore their priorities and needs are different which additionally creates difficulties in identification of common goals.

The presentation of the action plan itself is not of vital importance as long as it incorporates all relevant information. Yet, it is necessary to identify the **minimal information on each of the projects listed in the action plan as a standard to be applied by all local self-governments.** It would enable action plans to be more realistic and implementation process more transparent.

One of the important factors often emphasized and of great influence on the quality of documents is **lack and/or inability of obtaining of updated data for qualitative socio-economic analysis** due to**:**

- High costs of data obtaining, for example, data on registered business entities provided by the Business Registers Agency,
- Availability of data in general depends on the institutions providing them,
- Poor cooperation with national public companies,
- Lack of different databases and registers on the local level.

Introduction of indicators is a good approach as it rationalises part of the document related to the community profile and makes it more operational. It is introduction of indicators in the process of community profiling later to be used for monitoring and evaluation system that is one of the key contributions of the LSDS methodology. All local self-governments that applied this methodology agree that introduction of indicators is a good approach as it rationalises part of the document related to the community profile and makes it more operational.

Special kind of added value is the fact that it is significantly **easier to monitor realisation of the results.** However, it is noticed that the system of gathering and registering data on local level has not yet been sufficiently developed and that significant improvements in data collection are needed as it is not possible to calculate many of the selected indicators. Special conclusion could be that it is not always the rule to draw the right conclusion from available data or that local self-governments face problem in data analysis.

It is, also, necessary to underline that except for the so called indicators of sustainability, **performance indicators for specific projects** have been identified in a smaller number of action plans. It is evaluated that the majority of the existing indicators is quantifiable and well proposed; however, discussions with representatives of local self-governments proved that, at least up to now, these were rarely used.

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE

In the process of development of LSDS methodology framework within the EXCHANGE 2 project and in cooperation with the local self-governments, 30 indicators were identified (10 for economic development, 10 for social development and 10 for environmental protection). Availability of data was an issue and was of key importance in selection of indicators.

Also, within the project "Informed Cities" implemented by ICLEI aiming at bridging the gap between theoretical research and practical policies in sustainable development implementation in European cities[16], five Serbian cities - Sremska Mitrovica, Subotica, Uzice, Valjevo and Vranje participated in evaluation and comparison with other European cities with the goal to support cooperation for improvement of methodology and practice of measuring the progress of local sustainability. Results of this evaluation showed that Serbian cities have much less data on the values of their environment in comparison to other European cities.

16 For more information see: *www.iclei-europe.org/informed-cities*.

5. Management, monitoring, progress and results of local strategy implementation

- ✓ Majority of local self-governments have established special bodies to coordinate the process of strategy development and implementation; often development offices or local economic development office were rendered this task.
- ✓ Strategy developed by LSDS methodology include monitoring and evaluation framework with precisely identified indicators, while other strategies developed by other methodologies most often do not include implementation framework.
- ✓ Most of the local self-government representatives are of the opinion that internal capacities for strategy development and implementation should be further increased, as well as that external/expert assistance in strategy development process is still needed.
- ✓ Most of the strategies/projects identified are not in line with local self-government budgets that include the possibility of getting loans.
- ✓ Majority of local self-governments whose plans are analysed do not have databases of developed and/or implemented projects. Even if these databases exist, it does not include information on the projects implemented by other public or civil sector organisations.

Strategic planning is a dynamic process, and any strategic document developed in such a process should be treated as "living" document, meaning that not only that there are no obstacles for changes to be made due to changed needs of local community or external circumstance, but this is strongly recommended and it is a core principle of the strategic management. This is just the reason why it is necessary to develop effective procedures to examine the strategy – monitoring and evaluation – as it is generally concluded that it is not clearly set who in local self-governments is rendered with these tasks. Therefore, the conclusion is that effective monitoring and evaluation techniques would contribute to result quantification, analysis of procedures, design of actions for improvements and harmonisation of the strategy. Major part of analysed strategies was adopted or updated in 2009 and 2010 leaving thus not enough time for the analysis of the implementation process and evaluation of achieved results.

Results of the analysis prove that local self-governments in Serbia **do not have sufficiently defined procedures for development of the implementation and monitoring plan,** while majority of them **has no standardized set of indicators for monitoring and evaluation of success of implemented projects.**

Closely related to this, there is **no precisely defined rule of who should manage the strategic planning process, implementation process and monitoring and evaluation.** In practice experiences in relation to this issue are different – in some, local officials participate actively in these processes, while in others they leave all these processes to the administration staff and they only participate in adoption of the document by the assembly.

In almost all local self-governments the strategic planning process was managed by newly established bodies named differently. In smaller number of local self-governments, the process was directly managed by the existing local self-government bodies, either under the competencies of the municipal/city council or local assembly.

In some local self-governments daily operations related to strategy implementation have been implemented by the same body managing the development process. On the other hand, in most local governments a special body was established for this purpose or this task was rendered to the Local Economic Development Offices. Bodies that managed the strategic planning process consisted of various numbers of members, ranging from 5 to 100. Also, in most of the local self-governments working groups were established for each of the priority areas, and these numbers were more or less similar. In average there were four working groups established in each local self-government and each of these working groups in average consisted of 10 members[17] .

Local Economic Development Offices/Departments were, in almost all cases, key players in the process of strategy development. It has been noted that half of the representatives from local self-governments thinks that Local Economic Development Offices are key actors in the strategy development process. Four local self-governments have, after completion of the process, established Local Economic Development Offices within municipal/city administration. Their role in the process of strategic planning has been seen by local self-governments as:

- Participation in development of the strategic document,
- Action Plan implementation,
- Monitoring of action plan implementation,
- Development of project proposals,
- Harmonisation of activities of all implementation partners,
- Revision of action plans and initiation of strategy revision,
- Advisory role.

The analysis showed that **only small number of strategies includes developed framework for monitoring and evaluation process** and that there is almost no document that clearly structures management or responsibility of any parties responsible for monitoring and evaluation. Often it is not known who should be in charge of operational aspect of this process. This is not the case partially only with strategies developed by LSDS methodology as all strategies have drafted framework for implementation of monitoring and evaluation process with clearly identified indicators.

Implementation phase of strategic documents is for sure the most complex phase in the entire process. Therefore, analysed documents and interviews conducted proved that there are a lot of limitations in this process.

Strategic plans that may appear very impressive in written often are not implemented completely as the process of their development directly affects their implementation. One of the key reasons to this – ownership of local community over the strategic plan – is one of the key

17 Working groups were not established in Zrenjanin, while in Uzice only one working group was established and it managed entire process of strategic planning.

principles of effective strategic planning. **Mistakes in strategic document development often make strategic plan, entire or in its parts or in its projects, unable to implement properly or entirely.** The reason to this is the fact that the strategic planning process itself has not been properly prepared from the beginning that not all stakeholders were involved and their opinions considered and/or heard. Also, one of important reasons is lack of support of the key political and community factors, which is often the case. Opinions of the business sector, which is extremely important for practical implementation of some parts of the strategy, are often missing in the process of development and thus for sure affects consequent implementation. Due to all this, real problems and challenges of the strategic planning are much less present in the process of strategy development than in implementation of plans.

Strategic document is not of a much use if local government has no capacities to implement it. **Capacities for strategy implementation management should be developed early in the phase of strategy development.** Human resources in charge of implementation are not sufficiently competent for that task so they need to be additionally trained in order to upgrade the entire strategic planning process. This would contribute to further awareness raising on the importance of strategic approach to development, establishment of a dialogue between local stakeholders (public, non-governmental and business sectors) and improvement of coordination of activities. Education itself, and even more trainings related to strategic planning and implementation, as well as for establishment and realisation of proper structure and management of the process, would significantly improve the existing situation.

It is necessary to have institutional and political support, in general insufficient, for the process of implementation. Implementation processes were initiated in different periods and not all stakeholders were involved. That was the reason why mostly political and donor projects have been realised no matter of how they were identified in strategic plans. Besides, the analysis of the implementation progress and real effects of implemented local strategic documents is very complex. As these strategies are relatively new (majority of them is adopted in 2009 and 2010) there was no enough time to realise significant results in their implementation. Also, in these documents indicators or measurable goals have not been identified clearly which additionally creates problems in monitoring of the implementation. In addition, there are no trustworthy statistical data on local level.

Strategic documents often include non-adequate assumptions and wrong estimations that result in poor financial plans and unrealistic timeframe; **therefore, there is no concurrence of strategic documents with the budget and possible debt obligations.** There is, also, a fact that implementation of some projects, especially infrastructure ones, is often managed by national level of authority and local self-governments have no/or have small influence.

Also, **annual plans of strategy realisation are developed in only 50% of the local self-government included in the analysis.** It should be underlined that there are no criteria for selection of projects to be included in the annual implementation plan. Besides, local government representatives do not treat equally projects funded from their own resources and projects funded by external resources: projects entirely developed by local resources and funded from the local self-government budget, are almost never consider as a success no matter that there are much more these projects than the ones funded from external funds. One more important conclusion is that the strategy implementation process is strongly influenced by local political priorities, as well as priorities of international donor and development organisations – often none of these is in harmonisation with priorities identified by the strategic document.

In relation to the **database of projects developed and ready to be financed, as well as projects already implemented,** local self-governments, with exception of those that use LEDIS[18] software, mostly have no adequate databases – in most of local self-governments there is no database of these projects. It, also, should be noted that projects are mostly prepared and developed only if and when potential donors appear. Majority of local self-governments has no or does not include in its register projects implemented by non-governmental organisations or even public utilities and other public institutions. Local self-governments listed projects funded from external sources as the most important ones so far implemented, such as:

- Infrastructure projects funded from NIP or Fund for Capital Investments of Vojvodina,
- Projects of improvement of local self-government funded from EXCHANGE 2, EXCHNAGE 3, Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government and Secretariat for Local Self-Government and Inter-Municipal Cooperation,
- Projects funded from DILS,
- Environmental protection projects - EXCHANGE 1, EXCHNAGE 3, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Spatial Planning, PROGRES, PBILD,
- Economic development projects – agricultural production – GIZ, and
- Local Development Projects – EXCHANGE 2, EXCHNAGE 3, PBILD, and GIZ.

The best evidence is given in the inter-municipal projects. Majority of local self-government possess excellent data on specific projects of significant importance:

- Regional waste management plan development,
- Regional landfill project,
- Primary waste selection,
- Tourism development master plan,
- "In the mountains and vineyards",
- Improvement of vegetable production,
- Increased employment in rural areas,
- Improvement of investment attraction environment,
- Introduction of GIS.

A special problem is **minimal involvement of stakeholders outside local government in the process of strategy implementation,** so in great number of cases civil sector is not considered to be responsible for strategic document implementation.

Most of interviewed are not able to estimate **effects achieved locally in the process of implementation.** This was the case even with majority of local self-governments in which some elements of implementation monitoring exist. Due to all above said, it can be concluded that it is difficult for them to evaluate the effect of activities from the strategy, and the effect of other activities on results achieved.

18 Developed by financial assistance of GIZ.

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Indjija is the municipality that among first started development of the strategic document in 2006 within the USAID MEGA project. The strategic plan was developed for the period of five years. Even though participants in the strategy development process said that the strategy was very ambitious, evaluation conducted by municipal administration proved that more than 70% of projects had been implemented. The strategy focused on three priority areas:

1. Direct investment attraction,
2. SME and agricultural support, and
3. Education.

In the meantime, Indjija became the municipality with highest investment attraction inflow in Serbia, recognized as one of the best investment locations, and, also, opened one high education institution; all these were identified in the strategic plan. However, in relation to SME support, especially agricultural support, the results were much more moderate. Focus of the new strategic plan that Indjija developed within the EXCHANGE 3 programme, was still support to agriculture as analysis showed that local communities then had much less opportunities in other sectors and that capacities for investment attraction were limited due to previous high inflow of investments. Also, new strategy put a special attention to the waste management and energy efficiency, the two areas with significant potentials for improvements, not only in local community but in entire region.

Loznica, also, was one of the pioneers in development of the local economic development strategy document supported by the USAID MEGA project. No matter of the fact that it is located at the very border with the Bosnia and Herzegovina and with bankrupted major local company "Viskoza", Loznica managed to improve its local infrastructure, attract some investors and now is recognised as one of the most agile local self-government in Serbia. One of the reasons for such good results of local self-government and successful implementation of the local strategy is for sure well organized, open and professional Local Economic Development Office strongly supported by local officials and acting as an excellent coordinator between all stakeholders in local community.

The Municipality of **Ub** adopted its local sustainable development strategy within the EXCHANGE 2 project at the end of 2009. Ever since then, reports on strategy implementation have been prepared and published. Reports prove that implementation of communal infrastructure projects is progressing excellently, as well as with the projects related to environmental protection, waste management, social policy and education, strengthening capacities for investment attraction, while results in rural development and agricultural production improvements are modest. Success in cross-border cooperation projects is underlined as special success as the municipality received funds for implementation of the project related to improvement of communal services. Even the projects that were not selected as successful were technically well prepared and made the municipality of Ub one of the most successful in cross-border cooperation projects of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

SUGGESTIONS FROM REGIONAL ROUND TABLES

The conclusion from discussions was that for development and implementation of LGU strategies the key role belonged to the development departments/offices. In relation to this, importance of systematisation and job descriptions within development organisational units was emphasised, as well as necessity for them to be composed from professional staff. It is, also, underlined that it is important to have positive and proactive relation of the key local officials towards these offices/departments, including mayor, public utility companies and public institutions managers, but also other relevant stakeholders in the local community.

When developing strategy, it is important to determine who will conduct monitoring and who will be in charge of evaluation and to what extent as all these usually becomes responsibility of the LED office. This is wrong and it then makes an issue of whose role is supreme, especially with the local assembly. Besides, update of the action plan which cannot be possible without regular reporting on action plan implementation, is important especially to see how many projects have been implemented, in what sectors (economy, social, environmental), which kind of projects are implemented and to what extent, capital or the 'soft' ones. Also, importance of retreat defined as leaving LSG one day or two each year to have both staff and officials in one place to discuss about strategic local development, is emphasized. This was especially useful in strategy development, but may, also, be useful for monitoring of the implementation and development of annual operational plans.

6. Involvemet of local community, partnership establishment and transparency of the process

- ✓ In majority of analysed cases all stakeholders were involved – public and civil sectors during development of strategic documents; however, their response and level of participation vary from community to community.
- ✓ It is proved that the stakeholder analysis (recommended by the LSDS methodology) is useful for identification of all stakeholders; it is, also, very useful tool to estimate partnership and development potentials within local community.
- ✓ Business sector in the analysed local self-governments was the least interested to participate in strategy development. One of possible models for increased participation of business sector in future is involvement of business associations (economic councils, chambers, associations, etc.)
- ✓ Strategy development process contributed to improvement of inter-sectoral coordination of offices and departments within the administration, as well as, though not that much, between administration and public companies and institutions under the local self-government auspices.
- ✓ It would be good to improve availability of information on the most important elements, as well as availability of adopted strategic documents – the best for this proved to be web sites, brochures, leaflets (overview of the most important parts of the document).

One of the most important local planning characteristics is the possibility of significant involvement of local stakeholders in the strategic planning process. In theory, it enables harmonisation of political objectives with economic and social objectives of the local community contributing thus to better decision-making about the use of public resources and increased willingness of local community to pay for the local services.

Participation of citizens and other stakeholders in strategic document development processes in Serbia was significant; this for sure contributed to introduction, or at least draw attention to the good governance concept.

Organisation of participation was a huge challenge for local self-governments and had some significant deficiencies. Municipalities and cities had to engage part of their resources for organisation of participatory approach in order to demonstrate good governance model and thus create foundation for future partnerships.

As for citizen participation, it is necessary to involve them as early as in stage of preparation for the strategic planning process. Involvement of non-governmental organisations and business community representatives was, in most cases, realised through work of newly established bodies, such as partnership forums and working groups (in line with LSDS methodology). The exception is the only one local self-government that engaged a consultant for development of

its overall and sectoral strategies, as well as smaller number of strategies not developed through participatory approach (local staff participated in development of the document).

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE

The City of **Vranje** has identified more than 450 stakeholders in the process of strategy development within the EXCHANGE 2 project. More than 300 stakeholders were present at the Partnership Forum in which local stakeholders were invited to take part in strategy development. Also, work of the working groups was very participatory and with stakeholders' response beyond all expectations. Such a response was partially due to previous good experience of the City of Vranje in organisation of these kinds of events earned in other international programmes implemented in the South of Serbia (MIR II, for example), but also owing to well organised and professional Local Economic development Office.

One of the key conclusions is that **participation is hindered by lack of interest of stakeholders.** Involvement of local stakeholders, future partners, is often nothing else but sending invitations and information, with no real efforts to motivate them to be actively involved. Local self-government representatives identify stakeholder analysis as an excellent tool for selection of participants in the strategic planning processes (integral part of the LSDS approach) as a positive example, but, also, as useful tool to analyse partnership and development potentials within local communities. It is a step forward in democratisation of the society that in only a small number of samples stakeholder selections were done solely by decision-makers.

The analysis proved that only sending invitation and information dissemination often is not enough and that if there is apathy it is necessary to use motivation tools. This means that it is necessary to think of development plan, proper organisation and preparation of meetings, trained facilitators, none of which exists in Serbian local self-governments due to insufficient capacities.

Assessment of the level of interest of local stakeholders to take part in the strategic planning process is very interesting for the analysis of the participation of specific sectors in the strategic planning processes. Representatives of local self-governments and civil sector estimated that business sector is the least interested to participate – even business sector representatives confirmed the same. Level of interest for participation of other stakeholders is estimated differently depending on case by case basis. Participation, as a rule, is a result of the ex-ante analysis of the position from the aspect of potential contribution and ability for project implementation.

Local self-governments estimate that national public institutions are mostly not interested in any activities on local level and that they do not want to take any more active role in the strategic planning. However, opinion of national and regional institutions on the level of interest of key stakeholders to participate in the strategic planning processes on local level, significantly differs from the opinion of local self-government representatives about the same issue. It is interesting that they evaluate their own interest in participation in the same way.

It is especially interesting that level of participation of local assembly representatives in the strategic planning is very low no matter of the fact that they are the ones to finally approve plans in the assemblies. Same applies to the assembly councils, advisory bodies and commissions, which are all mostly inactive.

Business sector, if analysed individually, is aware of the necessity to be more involved in the strategic planning process on local level. The model for their involvement should be facilitation of business associations, such as economic council, chambers and other association. Also, they suggested establishment of different commissions based on the sector and profession that would be able then to contribute to strategic planning process more effectively.

Special attention in the interviews has been paid to citizen participation in the strategic planning processes. Related to current citizen participation in the strategic planning processes, all three above mentioned sectors had the same opinion – that **citizen were given the opportunity to be involved in the strategic planning processes.** Major part of them was informed through media, web presentations or public hearings; however, there was no proper evidence on their participation or their suggestions.

However, the issue of their participation is more related to the preparation stage for entire strategic planning process. First of all, there is a problem of education and understanding of the process. Special problem is so called centralisation in the local community: majority of participants comes from the central part of the local community and majority of projects to be implemented are directly related to the central part of the municipality, not to other parts of the municipal territory, such as rural areas. This is the reason why population from these areas often feels neglected and has no sense of ownership of the document. Although public hearings or public discussions on sustainable development strategies (integral part of the LSDS methodology) were organised in majority of local self-governments, citizen response, and thus appropriate and useful comments, were not satisfactory. Therefore, legitimate issue is related to mechanisms that would enable more active participation of citizens in the strategic planning processes. The following mechanisms are proposed as some of the solutions for more active citizen participation:

- Proper preparation of citizens for participation in the processes,
- Better information dissemination on the process, media events, web site,
- Organisation of public hearings,
- Questionnaire distribution,
- Involvement of citizen associations and civic initiatives,
- Involvement of business associations,
- Involvement of local communities and assembly representatives,
- Implementation of planned activities together with citizens,
- Monitoring and reporting.

The strategic planning process in itself **did not significantly improved coordination and cooperation in local community,** as this was stated as one important reason for ineffective participatory approach. This means that very little time have been left for planning of the steps and timeframe of the activities in the process of development and adoption of the strategic document in relation to strengthening and institutionalisation of the relations, and especially in the implementation process.

The process itself, however **did improve inter-sectoral coordination of offices and departments within the administration, as well as, though not that much, between administration and public companies and institutions under the local self-government auspices.** During strategy development process, in joint efforts and work, some common issues and possibilities of future cooperation of various sectors were identified as participants were introduced with priorities of each sector thus achieving mutual understanding.

In some of the local self-governments, the process has regulated relations between different sectors and led to establishment of inter-sectoral mechanism by establishing advisory bodies that were institutionalised as mayor, local council or local assembly working bodies. However, big share of interviewed NGOs was of the opinion that strategic planning process did not improve coordination in local community, but they admitted that some problems were recognised and communication improved.

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE

The City of Valjevo has established Development Council within the project *Increased citizen participation in the life of local community* implemented by SCTM in several Serbian towns and municipalities, and funded by SDC (Swiss Development Agency). The Council consisted of representatives of local community selected by citizens through public announcement. Members of the Council were representative of the local branch of National Employment Service, representative of Roma population, director of local museum, representative of local community council, a doctor, representative of a citizen association, etc. When appointing Coordination Team for local sustainable strategy development process within the EXCHANGE 2 programme, the Mayor suggested this body (established during previous mayor's mandate) plus staff from the City Development department and one city council member. Thus significant participation of local community representatives was enabled in development, but, also in transparency of the process itself.

SUGGESTION FROM THE ROUND TABLES

The issue of non-understanding of importance of planning, as well as lack of interest of political decision-makers, especially assembly representatives not participating in development but only in adoption of the document, was emphasised. Also, importance of proper selection of working group members was underlined not only in the process of development, but in implementation, too. Importance of public participation both in development and implementation was mentioned, especially in municipalities and towns with strong and active civil sector (NGO) where it could significantly contribute to success of strategy implementation.

Special problem is that **some of the strategic documents are not easily available to the public, meaning** that they cannot be found on web sites of local self-governments. There are some cases that strategic documents are posted on web sites, but there are no direct and visible links to open them and/or these links are not functional at all. It is, also, not unusual to find several versions of one document: draft of the strategy, document posted on web site for the purpose of public discussion, final version of adopted document, all without explanation which of these is the right document. However, **usually there are no summaries of strategies for better communications with citizens in the form of brochures, presentations, etc. This would be very useful for better presentation and popularisation of strategic documents.**

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Kikinda paid special attention to communications with citizens in the process of strategy development within the project MSP NE Serbia. Excellent concise brochures were developed in a popular way to present basic priorities of the document. Promotional movie was filmed in order to support the planning process or mobilise citizens to answer to the questionnaire on problems and priorities in development of the municipality. Besides the movie, there was a huge Rubik's cube installed symbolising development of the strategic document, a slogan **"One wish can make you act!",** and draft of the document was constantly available on the local web page.

7. Link with national plans

- ✓ The Republic of Serbia has no overall strategy clearly defining basic directions and objectives of local development.
- ✓ Local overall strategies should be harmonized with the three national strategies: Poverty Reduction Strategy, Sustainable Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia and Regional Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia.
- ✓ National sectoral strategies mostly have no direct recommendations related to local level.

Local politics are closely connected to the politics on national level and overall political and social changes. Uniform national policies with clearly defined objectives and timeframe are huge challenges for optimal local planning. In some EU countries, local self-government is obliged to develop strategic plans in line with national priorities in order to establish an integrated management system. For example, the Law on Local Government of the United Kingdom defines that local authorities must develop overall community strategies with local strategic partnerships aiming at improvement and promotion of economic, social and environmental benefits, that these are to be developed with full participation of local community thus contributing to sustainable development of the United Kingdom. Similar laws exist in Lithuania and Bulgaria[19].

The Republic of Montenegro has in 2011 defined methodology for adoption of local strategies. The Ministry of Economy has, based on the Law on Regional Development, adopted the Rule Book on the Methodology of Strategic Plan Development for local self-government units. Law defines local self-government units as key engines of local development obliged to adopt strategic plans and other documents as defined by the Law in order to establish more efficient coordination and implement regional development policies. Besides, they are obliged, in line with development priorities identified by the Regional Development Strategy, to identify local community needs and incorporate them in the indicative project list, to promote joint development projects in cooperation with other (neighbouring) LGU, to register their projects into the electronic database, to inform on progress and project implementation and to participate in the work of Partnership Council for Regional Development.

As of 2000 up to nowadays, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted more than 100 strategic documents[20], in which objectives, measures and priorities of the Republic of Serbia in various sector are given. Part of these strategies is not relevant (or majority of it) for local self-governments from the aspect of local self-government competencies. However, majority of them are very important as they define future development directions in the areas of high importance for local development.

The Republic of Serbia has no overall strategy to define basic development directions and

19 In 2011 municipalities in Bulgaria were obliged to harmonise their strategic plans with national overall strategy of Bulgaria 2020.

20 There are 101 strategic document posted on the official web site of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. http://www.srbija.gov.rs/vesti/dokumenti_sekcija.php?id=45678

development goals. In December 2010, draft of the strategy "Serbia 2020" was presented and public discussion on the document opened, but has not yet been adopted. Draft of the document "Serbia 2020" is in line with the strategy "Europe 2020" and is founded on EU strategic objectives. The document has no action plan or identified funds for achievement of ambitious goals. Analysis conducted so far finds that majority of adopted Serbian inter-sectoral and sectoral strategies have significant deficiencies and significant overlapping[21] which is especially important for local self-government.

Interviews conducted with all stakeholders prove that **all agree that local documents should be harmonised with national strategies.** Analysis, also, showed that within national strategic framework, **three strategies are mostly recognised: Poverty Reduction Strategy, Sustainable Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia and Regional Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia,** while interviewed stakeholders mostly were not familiar with other national strategies.

Comments related to national documents say that these are **too big and not clear, insufficiently elaborated, overlapping, and most important, have no clear instructions for implementation that would make them useful for local self-governments.** On the other hand, all interviewed local self-government representatives are of the opinion that they are good and even necessary as a framework for local strategic planning. Also, it is important that **local self-governments are identified as strategic partners to national authorities in implementation of national strategic documents.**

Five national documents are considered for the analysis of the links between local and national strategic plans: **Sustainable Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia, National Environmental Protection Programme, Competitive and Innovative SME Development Strategy 2008 – 2013, Strategy of Agriculture Development of the Republic of Serbia and Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia.**

As national strategic documents are very general and mostly do not define direct responsibilities of local self-governments[22] for their implementation, it can be regarded that **majority of local strategic documents is harmonised with them and follows their recommendations.**

HARMONISATION OF LOCAL DOCUMENTS WITH THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

From the aspects of (1) sustainable economy growth, economic and technological development, (2) sustainable social development founded on social balance, and (3) environmental protection with rational management of natural resources, as three pillars of the strategy, it can be concluded that local documents are in line with the Sustainable Development Strategy of

21 The Analysis conducted within the projects "Support to Strengthening Coordination of Active Policy in the Government of Serbia" for the General Secretariat of the Government of the Republic of Serbia as beneficiary, proved that less than 30% of all analyzed documents had clearly elaborated strategy, more than 25% had significant overlapping, some 25% had clear action plan, while less than 10% had no performance evaluation of any kind. Also, it was suggested that less than 50% of analyzed strategies should be updated and used in future.

22 This is not the case with the Sustainable Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia since responsibilities of local slef-government are listed in the action plan.

the Republic of Serbia. This balance is specifically elaborated by the types of the projects implemented as results of local strategies, such as:

1. In the area of ***economic development:*** improvement of infrastructure (transportation, telecommunications, water supply, energy system, communal system, postal services); increase of green field investments; support to programmes of regional and local employment systems; implementation of local and regional development programmes based on SME expansion and encouragement of the use of local knowledge and resources with specific geographic origin.

2. In the area of ***environmental protection:*** local self-government institutional strengthening; integration of principles of energy efficiency, rational construction, preservation of natural resources, and visual identity of a region, respect of tradition in development of spatial and urban plans; application of high environmental standards in development of spatial and urban plans (specific share of parks, forests, picnic areas and recreational areas); development, adoption and implementation of local sustainable strategies; development, adoption and implementation of local environmental protection plans; extension of natural gas and district heating network for both domestic and industrial supply; modernisation of the monitoring network for the environmental quality control; revitalisation of the existing and construction of the new systems for waste water collection and treatment; adoption of the local waste management plans; construction of new recycling yards; construction of regional landfills; constriction of transfer stations; construction of recycling facilities; sanitation of the existing illegal landfills; etc.

3. In the area of ***social development:*** implementation of special projects of rehabilitaion of cultural heritage; development and formation of cultural identity; establishment and development of institutional capacities for implementation of local policies and projects of reproduction and population; creation of preconditions for economic strengthening of families with children; establishment of network of non-governmental and public sector in support to the elderly; improved harmonisation of social programmes and services to specific needs of the beneficiaries; education and public information on social risks and problems aiming at encouragement of voluntary and solidary activities; development of regional and local action plans for social inclusion and sustainable development; programme of support to improved education of Roma population (in line with the national Strategy of for Empowerment of Roma); provision of sufficient number of safe houses available to all victims of the family violence and provision of resources for current expenditures of safe houses on all levels; development and implementation of programmes for prevention of chronic non-infectuous diseases and injuries; development of youth programmes, prevention of stigmatisation and social exclusion, etc.

Most of the local strategic documents have been developed in line with goals identified by the **National Environmental Protection Programme (NEAP)** and recognise measures identified by the plan, such as:

- ✓ Construction of a facility for primary and secondary treatment of communal waste waters in settlements with more than 100.000 equivalent inhabitants.
- ✓ Identify areas sensitive to water pollution by nitrates till 2010 in line with the Directive 91/676/EEC.
- ✓ Improve water quality in rivers (especially the ones affecting water supply) and irrigation channels.
- ✓ Extend sewerage system to settlements with more than 100.000 equivalent inhabitants

so that 90% of the population in these areas is covered by 2014.

- ✓ Reduce emission of nutrients and other hazardous materials from point and diffuse sources.
- ✓ Provide that quality of potable water in settlements with centralised water supply systems satisfies standards of the Directive on Potable Water 98/83/EC and expand centralised water supply system to selected rural areas with unsatisfactory water quality.

Competitive and Innovative SME Development Strategy 2008 – 2013 identifies several pillars, most of which are extremely important for local self-government**.**

Pillar I: Promotion and support to entrepreneurship and establishment of new companies,

Pillar II: Human resources for competitive SME sector

Pillar III: SME financing and taxation,

Pillar IV: SME competitive advantages on export markets**.**

Analysis of local strategic documents proved that local self-governments recognised these objectives and measures, either within goals or programmes in their overall or sectoral strategies.

Similar conclusions could be drawn, also, from local documents in relation to the **Strategy for Encouraging and Developing of Foreign Investments,** especially as national objectives for foreign investment attraction in specific sectors are widely defined and include increase of export – internationally competitive – industrial, service and agro-industrial capacities and capabilities, resolution of current problems of non-usage of the existing capacities for modern production and servicing modern markets due to lack of investments during many last years.

Basic fields of the **Strategy of Agriculture Development of the Republic of Serbia** harmonised with local documents are:

1. Programme of use of state land,
2. Regional, local action plans for rural development, and
3. Programmes for rural development as basics for the absorption of funds from agricultural budget and donations.

The main characteristic of this strategy is that it is very general and comprehensive and it lacks clear action plan. This puts local self-governments in a position of not being sure what to do on local level, though they recognise and include measures from the strategy in their strategic documents.

Priorities identified by local strategies are not entirely in line with the **Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia.** National strategy identifies as priorities the following:

a. City breaks, business tourism, + Mice tourism,
b. Round tours, Special interests,
c. Nautics,
d. Health and spa tourism (*spa/wellness*), mountains and lakes, rural tourism.

Priority mostly emphasised in local strategies is development of rural tourism (development

of rural tourism is identified as priority in more than 70% of the strategies), which reflects popularity of this kind of tourism often without any justified reasons. However, it should be considered that in the sample for this analysis, majority of local self-governments were rural ones, and that there were no local self-governments with significant health and spa tourism capacities in the sample.

Inter-municipal cooperation and regional development are of huge importance for local self-government development. In 2011 the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted Regulation on the structure, development methodology, harmonisation of development documents, public discussion process, as well as procedure and deadlines of public presentation of regional development documents. Though this Regulation defines methodology for development of regional strategic documents, this methodology is mostly appropriate for local strategic planning. Special part of the Regulation defines harmonisation of development documents and public involvement in the strategic planning processes.

8. Recommendations for local strategic planning process improvements

- ✓ Establish uniform planning mechanism on all levels for better coordination and harmonisation of national, regional and local development policies and define coordination system for all institutions engaged in development on all levels, including:
  1. Introduction of an uniform methodology framework,
  2. Identification of a set of appropriate and available indicators, and
  3. Adoption of clear and applicable national strategies.
- ✓ Increase capacities of local self-government for planning and strengthen inter-sectoral communications and coordination, including:
  1. Further strengthening of capacities,
  2. Professionalization of local self-government staff,
  3. Establishment of appropriate organizational and functional structure for improved implementation and monitoring of strategic documents implementation, and
  4. Continuous development of project documentation.
- ✓ Costs of local development should be planned in line with the strengths and capacities of local self-governments. These are most important:
  1. Clear link between strategy, action plan and local budget, and
  2. Reliance on various funding sources – own, national, donor funds, long-term credits, municipal bonds, public private partnerships.
- ✓ It is necessary to improve local community participation in development and implementation, as well as improve monitoring and evaluation of strategy effects.

Administrative reform implemented so far caused that local self-government competencies and functions, both original and transferred, are dispersed in numerous sectors and mainly are in accordance to the developed local self-government concept. These enabled local self-governments to more comprehensively manage own development. Further capacity strengthening and professionalization of the local self-government staff, especially in the areas of planning and financial management, should lead to more effective and efficient development, while citizen involvement should contribute to strengthening of local democracy. This requires a new approach in strategic management as local level could be of significant importance for establishment and support to development model that will lead to realisation of goals such as increased employment and changes in economic structure which are the key challenges for society in Serbia. This requires significant changes and reforms both on central and local levels.

In the last years a significant improvements in local planning and better understanding of the concept and tools to be used for overall and organised resolution of the local needs and issues have been made. Yet, the analysis of local strategic documents proves that the quality of planning still has not been satisfactory and varies significantly between local self-governments. Effective and efficient management understands clear local development strategies result oriented, linked to the budget and monitoring of priority implementation, none of which is now existing. The facts that local self-government invested huge efforts to develop their strategic documents and that knowledge on the strategic planning process and planning in general are good foundation for further improvements.

The following recommendations for improvements of the planning process and system could be provided based on the baseline analysis and identified deficiencies related to planning and local development management:

1. It would be useful to **establish uniform planning mechanisms on all levels,** for better coordination and harmonisation of national, regional and local development policies and define coordination system between institutions engaged in development on all levels. This would mean establishment of clear institutional framework for preparation and implementation of so called **integrated framework for planning in order to establish uniform active and at the same time** horizontally and vertically coordinated **policy with clear objectives and identified timeframe** to achieve better results. This requires the following steps..

- **It is necessary to define uniform methodological framework for development of local strategies, identify integral elements and develop mechanism of continuous monitoring of all activities in this area on local level.** This means that a standardized approach to local development planning should be set, as well as uniform principles in implementation, monitoring and evaluation of entire process. Introduction of such a framework would enable harmonisation of the planning process and ability to simultaneous strategy implementation monitoring, as well as measuring of the effects on national level. This process should be flexible enough for local specific characteristics. For development of such a methodology framework similar regulations as used for development of regional plans[23], instruction for development of local waste management plans, but also regulation from other countries[24] and methodology designed through other development programmes[25] – LSDS methodology, that includes all elements recommended by the analysis, are examples of the methodological framework models that could be used as basis for definition of this uniform framework.
- For proper strategic planning it would be very important to **introduce and identify a set of relevant (for local level, also, available) indicators in the strategic planning process** as their quantification provides necessary basis for measuring development progress on local level, but, also, for **local contribution to national**

23 Regulations on structure, development methodology, harmonisation of development documents, public discussion procedures, as well as procedures and deadlines for public presentation of regional development documents.

24 Rule Book on the methodology for local self-government strategic plan adopted by the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Montenegro in accordance with the Law on Regional Development of Montenegro.

25 Guide for Local development planning and management, EXCHANGE 2 programme.

and regional development. These indicators would, also, enable **comparison of development progress between different local self-governments.** In addition, all relevant national institutions should be responsible to provide data for the set of indicators.

- **Not sufficiently clear and applicable national strategies** are huge challenge for development of local strategies. **National strategic framework should be significantly improved so that national strategies have clear measures to be implemented on local level.** Adoption of the **overall development strategy for Serbia[26] and regional strategies** that would precisely define the most important development directions of the country/regions would be very beneficial for the local planning quality, but, also for local contribution to national objectives.

2. Local self-government capacities for planning and inter-sectoral communications and coordination should be **improved.**

- Institutional support to further capacity increase, above all related to **understanding of the planning process, data collection, development of a set of indicators and socio-economic analysis, methods and implementation tools, monitoring and evaluation, including knowledge on reporting and strategic planning revision processes,** is necessary having in mind that they are dynamic documents. From the technical part of strategy development, it would enable to emphasize precisely and clearly identified objectives and priorities and to escape wide and unnecessary descriptive parts defining current development status.
- **Professionalization of local self-government staff, especially in development departments and/or offices would improve the process of analysis of structure and content of the strategic documents on local level,** their harmonisation and complementarity with national strategies and, thus, local management in general. Related to this, it is very important to recognize that there is a lack of good quality human resources that is capable to develop and implement the best policies and that their leaving could have significant effect on the institutions, especially in smaller local self-governments, which can be an obstacle to more effective implementation of local self-government competencies.
- It is necessary to **establish appropriate organisational and functional structure for improvement of implementation and monitoring of strategic documents implementation that are meant to secure horizontal and vertical coordination of policies, as well as inter-sectoral coordination and information exchange** for effective implementation of local strategies. Organisational structure of this kind should include so called development departments/offices as core units and should be in line with the real functional needs of the local self-governments in order to secure integration of work and operational plans developed by administration departments, local public companies and institutions, but, also, to the local specifics. In order to have this management system established and able to harmonise results with identified strategic objectives through the strategic plan monitoring and evaluation process, it is necessary to implement management

26 Draft of the document "Serbia 2020".

model based on performances and quality, as well as identification of clear procedures and responsibilities.

- ❖ It is necessary to **permanently develop project documentation as strategies cannot be implemented without projects ready for implementation,** meaning that a database on local project from strategy should exist, especially of infrastructural ones, and use of SLAP information system as a tool for evaluation of infrastructure projects preparedness.

3. Local development costs should be planned in line with the strength and capacities of local self-governments, not according to wishes. Focus must be on local strengths and careful use of different sources**.**

- ❖ Document should have a **clear connection between strategy, action plan and local budget.** Strategic documents must be completely in line with the local budgets, while, on the other hand, **development of annual local budgets must follow priorities identified by strategic documents.** Introduction of program budgeting as a pre-condition for multi-annual planning of resources which if well connected to the strategic and action plans is a foundation for efficient monitoring of the implementation of policies focusing on results and evaluation of their effects.
- ❖ Local self-government units must rely on different funding sources – their own, national and EU funds, long-term credits and issuance of municipal bonds, as well as on financing through investment of their capital in public-private partnerships. It is necessary to evaluate realistically all sources and put them in use carefully, both from the aspect of costs and aspect of availability. This is the reason why it will be necessary to pay more attention to cooperation with neighbouring local self-governments aiming at realisation of common objectives, but, also, to use more frequently project financing.

4. It is necessary to **increase local community involvement** so that it is able to voice its preferences. This should oblige decision-makers, thus creating a credible incentive for participation **even in the processes of development and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the strategies.** Thus **partnerships would be strengthened,** especially since so called 'local ownership' is often more important for successful implementation of the strategy than very well structured and written strategy.

- ❖ For proper local community participation in development of the document it is necessary to have a **process stripped of all political influence and transparent,** so that **it represents the local community** and have all key local stakeholders participating.
- ❖ For **local partnership establishment and strengthening** it would be important to **have different partnership bodies established and active, such as partnership forums, economic councils, development councils,** that would involve representatives of public, private and civil sectors. Besides, **introduction of management tools for implementation of strategy measures, such as funding calls** would improve strategic management and local strategy implementation.
- ❖ For further building of trust of local communities into implementation of plans, it is

necessary **to strengthen capacities for active and two-way role of local self-governments and citizens** by improving their skills and knowledge by use of information dissemination tools (open assembly and council sessions related to planning, budget hearings, publication of a bulletin and information paper on strategy implementation) and communications tools (media, internet portals, surveys, focus groups).

Adoption of these recommendations for development of new and/or revision of the existing strategic documents would for sure contribute to development of more operational and more focused strategies of better quality. Thus structure and content of local strategic documents would be improved and their harmonisation with national strategies increased. Also, entire process should include active support measures for implementation of the document and promotion of best practice examples so that positive examples may lead to more functional solutions in strategic management of local communities.

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Local Self-Government Selected for the Strategic Planning Process Analysis

No	Local Self-Government	Statistical Region	Population	Development Level
1.	Alibunar	Vojvodina	19.780	IV
2.	Bac	Vojvodina	14.150	II
3.	Bela Palanka	Southern and Eastern Serbia	12.051	IV
4.	Boljevac	Southern and Eastern Serbia	12 865	III
5.	Coka	Vojvodina	11 388	III
6.	Kladovo	Southern and Eastern Serbia	20 635	II
7.	Nis	Southern and Eastern Serbia	257 867	I
8.	Nova Varos	Sumadija and Western Serbia	16 758	III
9.	Paracin	Southern and Eastern Serbia	54 267	II
10.	Pozarevac	Sumadija and Western Serbia	74 070	I
11.	Raca	Sumadija and Western Serbia	11 475	IV
12.	Ruma	Vojvodina	54 141	II
13.	Sjenica	Sumadija and Western Serbia	25 248	IV
14.	Subotica	Vojvodina	140 358	I
15.	Trstenik	Sumadija and Western Serbia	42 989	III
16.	Ub	Sumadija and Western Serbia	29 022	III
17.	Uzice	Sumadija and Western Serbia	78 018	I
18.	Vladicin Han	Southern and Eastern Serbia	20 938	IV
19.	Vranje	Southern and Eastern Serbia	82 782	II
20.	Zrenjanin	Vojvodina	122 714	I

Source: Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in 2011 in the Republic of Serbia – First results, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia and Regulation on establishing a single list of regional development and local self-government units in 2011.

Local Strategic Documents Selected for the Planning Process Analysis

No	Local Self-Government	Overall Strategic Documents	Sectoral Strategic Documents
1.	Alibunar	Strategy of Development of the Municipality of Alibunar	Rural Development Strategy of the Municipality of Alibunar 2009–2014
2.	Bac	Strategy of Socio-Economic Development of the Municipality of Bac 2009–2014.	Local Youth Action Plan
3.	Bela Palanka	Local Sustainable Development Strategy of the Municipality of Bela Palanka 2010–2020	Strategic Plan for Social Protection
4.	Boljevac	Local Sustainable Development Strategy of the Municipality of Boljevac	Agricultural development Strategy of the Municipality of Boljevac
5.	Coka	Local Sustainable Development Strategy of the Municipality of Coka	Strategy for Social Protection Development of the Municipality of Coka
6.	Kladovo	Local Sustainable Development Strategy of the Municipality of Kladovo 2010–2020	Local Youth Action Plan
7.	Nis	Strategy of Development of the City of Nis	Strategy of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Development of the City of Nis
8.	Nova Varos	Local Sustainable Development Strategy of the Municipality of Nova Varos	Local Youth Action Plan 2010–2013
9.	Paracin	Local Sustainable Development Strategy	Strategy for Social Protection Development of the Municipality of Paracin
10.	Pozarevac	Local Sustainable Development Strategy of the City of Pozarevac	Strategy for Social Protection Development of the City of Pozarevac
11.	Raca	Local Sustainable Development Strategy of the Municipality of Raca	Local Youth Action Plan
12.	Ruma	Local Sustainable Development Strategy of the Municipality of Ruma 2010–2020	The Strategy of Municipal Construction Land is in the process of development
13.	Sjenica	Local Sustainable Development Strategy of the Municipality of Sjenica 2010–2020	Local Action Plan for Children
14.	Subotica	Strategy of Economic Development of the Municipality of Subotica	Strategy for Social Protection Development of the Municipality of Subotica
15.	Trstenik	Local Sustainable Development Strategy of the Municipality of Trstenik – LSDS	Local Environmental Action Plan of the Municipality of Trstenik
16.	Ub	Local Sustainable Development Strategy of the Municipality of Ub 2010–2020	Strategy of Social protection of the Municipality of Ub
17.	Uzice	Development Programme of the City of Uzice 2008–2015	Strategy of Human Resource Development in the Administration of the City of Uzice
18.	Vladicin Han	Strategy of Development of the Municipality of Vladicin Han 2007–2011	Local Action Plan for Children
19.	Vranje	Local Sustainable Development Strategy of the City of Vranje 2010–2019	Local Youth Action Plan
20.	Zrenjanin	Local Sustainable Development Strategy of the Municipality of Zrenjanin 2005–2013	Local Environmental Action Plan



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