Belgrade, 15 May 2018

**Info Sessions for Presentation of EU PRO Programme**

* **LSGs SURVEY RESULTS -**

**Present**

executive summary

In the period from 20 March to 12 April 2018, the Programme realised 10 info sessions[[1]](#footnote-1) announcing start of implementation of its activities to the representatives of local self-governments (LSGs) and the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) within the area of responsibility (AoR). The events were well-attended, attracting **total of 209 participants** (108 female and 101 male), and had very good turnout from the target audience, where **87%**[[2]](#footnote-2) **of LSGs and all ten RDAs accredited within the Programme’s AoR took participation**.

The programme used this opportunity to survey LSGs in order to assess their capacities and resources for the participation in forthcoming activities and to gather data relevant for planning. **The survey captured information and opinions in following areas**: institutional capacities, developmental priorities, cooperation with the business sector and communication with the public.

The questionnaire was **filled out by 101 representatives of 78 LSGs**[[3]](#footnote-3). The representatives of the remaining 8 LSGs that were present at the events didn’t fill out the survey, explaining that they don’t have required information.

**The survey results showed** that majority of the LSGs (85%) that participated in the research have established office in charge for local economic development and they possess principal framework for strategic development in the form of Local Development Strategy. Additionally, most of the municipalities have experience in implementation of the projects that are funded by EU or other foreign donors. On the other side, only 50% of them adopted Capital Investment Plan and established Local Council for Economic Development.

Most of the respondents share opinion that economy, infrastructure and agriculture, followed by tourism and social protection, should be treated as priorities when it comes to local development.

Industrial zones, communal, transport and tourism infrastructure are identified as the most important infrastructure issues.

Most of the municipal representatives believe that there is a communication with the business sector through various channels of communication, but only around half of the LSGs possess updated date base of the business sector and reported presence of active business supporting organisations.

Communication with the public is mostly carried out through local TV and radio stations and municipal web pages. On the other side, the LSGs are mostly informed about opportunities for project funding through web sites of the line ministries, the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM), the RDAs and EU portal.

Overall, the results of the survey provided relevant information for further planning of the activities and confirmed relevance of the EU PRO intervention, given the wide range of needs identified in the local communities.

1. instiTutional capacities

The **majority of LSGs (85%) have the Office for Local Economic Development** (LED), while mostly the smaller municipalities stated that they don’t have LED Office, including Ljig, Ub, Koceljeva, Vladimirci,Kosjerić, Bajina Bašta, Golubac, Petrovac na Mlavi, Svrljig and Gadžin Han. Notably, the City of Jagodina doesn’t have separate department dealing with local economic development.

**Averagely, the LSGs have five employees in LED Office**, but when the LSGs are considered separately, this number varies from one in the small municipalities up to 36 employees in Niš. Although, the bigger centres usually have more LED employees, there are also few examples where this figure doesn’t reflect the size of the municipality, for example, Gornji Milanovac, Tutin and Priboj have 10 people working in the LED Office, while the cities of Užice, Požarevac, Vranje and Zaječar have less than 5 employees.

**Only 10% of the LSGs**[[4]](#footnote-4) reported that they **did not realise not one project funded by EU or some other foreign donor in last three years**. Realised projects were mainly funded through Exchange 4, Cross-Border Cooperation programmes, etc.

When it comes to local planning**, most of the LSGs have Local Development Strategy (85%),** while only **half of them adopted Capital Investment Plan.** Almost **half of the LSGs (46%)** stated that they **established Local Council for Economic Development**, while 20% of the surveyed municipalities did not have information.

2. developmental priorities

The LSGs were asked to distinguish **key developmental priorities** in their communities. Following areas are pointed out as the most important:

* Economic development (investment facilitation, employment creation, SMEs growth, etc.)
* Infrastructure development
* Agriculture and rural development
* Tourism
* Social protection

The respondents also emphasized need for energy efficiency improvement, use of renewable energy sources and regional development.

As main **infrastructure priorities** were identified following issues:

* Development of industrial zones
* Communal infrastructure
* Transport infrastructure (highway access, local roads, etc.)
* Tourism infrastructure

The survey participants answered that the additional information on infrastructure priorities can be provided by the LED Offices, Urbanism Departments, Municipal Administration, etc.

3. COoperation WITH business sector

Almost **54% of the LSGs**[[5]](#footnote-5) that participated in the survey stated that they **possess updated date base of the business sector**, 35% of them don’t have, while 11% didn’t have information.

The **most common ways of communication with private sector** are:

* Meetings, consultations through e-mails and phone
* Through different municipal departments: LED Office, Economic Council, Employment Council, Investment Department, business advisors, Mayor’s Cabinet, Department for Economy and Finance, Office for Entrepreneurship
* Through business support organisation: Business or Professional Associations, RDAs, Chamber of Commerce
* Municipal web page, local media, announcements
* Professional practice, trainings, info sessions, fairs

Only 14% of LSGs answered that there is no communication with the business sector at all, or that it was evaluated as poor, ad hoc, etc.

When it comes to business support organisations (BSOs), **almost half of the LSGs (47%) reported presence of active organisations in their community**. Apart from RDAs, the Business Associations or the Associations of Entrepreneurs are listed as the most active or the only active BSO in some LSGs[[6]](#footnote-6). Additionally, following organisations were identified as operative at the local level:

* Regional Chamber of Commerce Valjevo
* Business Women Association "Šapčanke''
* Science and Technology Park Čačak
* Business Club in Gornji Milanovac
* Wine Cluster in Aleksandrovac
* Agricultural Association in Rekovac
* Business Club "Initiative 2012", Businesswomen Association, Chamber of Commerce and Project development centre in Kraljevo
* ASTEX – Textile Cluster and Cobbler Cluster in Novi Pazar
* Business Information Center, Business Development Centre and Association "Sloga" in Kragujevac
* Regional Chamber of Commerce Užice
* Office for Entrepreneurs in Lebane
* NI KAT - Cluster of Advanced Technologies, Start-up Centar in Niš
* Women’s Association "Za Zaplanje'' in Gadžin Han
* Business Incubator Centre in Vranje
* Association of Raspberry Producers and Cold Storages in Trgovište
* Association of Local Businesses in Preševo
* General Association of Entrepreneurs Pirot, Contracting Chamber of Economy of Pirot
* Cluster " Radan" in Kuršumlija

Other half of LSGs said that they don’t have active organisations or they didn’t provide relevant answer.

4. public communication

Expectedly, most of the LSGs stated that **television and radio station are the most popular local media**, while the newspapers and internet portals are present to a somewhat lesser extent.

In terms of official municipal internet presentations, **almost 90%** of LSGs stated that they **communicate with citizens through official municipal web page**, almost half of them use facebook page, as well, while less than 10% operate with twitter or Instagram accounts.

Local media and municipal web page are used to inform citizens on the support they provide to private or civil sector. RTS and Pink televisions are identified as the most popular national media at the local level.

The LSGs use different web portals to get information about possible financial support for the projects, but most often they follow web sites of the line ministries, the SCTM, the RDAs and EU portal.

*Annexes:*

* *Annex 1\_ EPR\_Info Sessions Questionnaire \_190318*
* *Annex 2\_ EPR\_Survey Results Overview\_040518*

1. Info sessions were held in Šabac, Užice, Kraljevo, Kragujevac, Smederevo, Zaječar, Niš, Leskovac, Aranđelovac and Valjevo [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Meaning that 86 out of 99 LSGs participated, while the response from the LSGs that were not covered by the preceding programme was also very satisfying - 57 out of 65 LSGs ( 88 % ) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Following 21 LSGs were not surveyed: Lajkovac, Mali Zvornik, Lučani, Brus, Ćićevac, Sjenica, Bor, Negotin, Ražanj, Bosilgrad, Smederevo, Blace and Žitorađa that did not attend the events; Ćuprija, Batočina, Knić, Prijepolje, Majdanpek, Kladovo, Vlasotince an Knjaževac which participated, but did not fill out questionnaire [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ub, Vladimirci, Despotovac, Aleksandrovac, Kosjerić, Malo Crniće, Petrovac na Mlavi [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Valjevo, Mionica, Osečina, Šabac, Koceljeva, Krupanj, Vladimirci, Loznica, Čačak, Ivanjica, Paraćin, Despotovac, Rekovac, Kruševac, Aleksandrovac, Varvarin, Krlajevo, Raška, Vrnjačka Banja, Novi Pazar, Tutin, Kragujevac,Lapovo, Aranđelovac, Bajina Bašta, Arilje, Čajetica, Priboj, Nova Varoš, Požarevac, Veliko Gradište, Leskovac, Medveđa, Niš, Vranje, Trgovište, Pirot, Dimitrovgrad, Velika Plana, Prokuplje, Boljevac, Sokobanja

   [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Valjevo, Koceljeva, Ljubovija, Bogatić, Loznica, Čačak, Paraćin, Tutin, Rača, Užice, Arilje, Aleksandrovac, Čajetina, Žagubica, Boljevac [↑](#footnote-ref-6)