

Helping local government to **help local population** with EU funding

Local governments have a major role to play in promoting social and economic development, particularly in the enlargement countries. But they are not always familiar with how they can make the best use of EU funds in carrying out their tasks. That is why the EU has been helping municipalities in Montenegro to switch to new operating methods in tune with EU approaches.

EU grants for the development of local infrastructure have been used as a learning by doing tool for the local authorities to acquire hands-on experience with the management of EU-funded assistance. This project focused on local government units in less developed areas in the country to remedy regional imbalances and to improve the capacity of local administrations in working with the EU.

NEW MANAGEMENT SKILLS FOR LOCAL OFFICIALS

The development grants were supported by a team of experts that gave advice and training to officials on how EU funding works, how to apply for it, and how to manage it. Municipal staff learnt how to identify the best investment prospects and how to develop proposals. The advice included project management and procurement skills. And because ensuring that EU money is well spent is important too, training also covered monitoring and financial management.

The hands-on approach of the advisors included providing tools and templates for project management and administration, on-the-job coaching, and strict monitoring of the accuracy of activities carried out. The assistance strengthened project management units in local governments across the country. In addition,

the advice supported a national framework that provided inter-municipal cooperation and strategic planning in local development.

In the first two calls for proposals, 14 out of the 15 eligible municipalities received grants and were equipped to successfully manage EU grant-funded small-infrastructure projects. The projects approved range from a €1.1 million selective waste management system in Danilovgrad to a €513,000 tourism strengthening project in Kolasin, and a €240,000 beach maintenance project in Ulcinj.

Others include new local roads or city-street infrastructure (in Pluzine, Andrijevica and Rozaje), fire stations (in Berane, Savnik and Plav), car parks (in Pljevlja and Bijelo Polje) and a refurbished sports hall (in Mojkovac). Cetinje and Niksic also received equipment for improvements to waste-water and water-supply systems. And since there are no regions in Montenegro and local governments tend to be small, additional funds were awarded to five inter-municipal projects across the country, which are currently being implemented.



Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)

Montenegro

IPA – AN INVESTMENT IN EUROPE. AN INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM.

IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE

Immediate improvements resulted in the quality of life for local citizens, in a country where infrastructure is run down after decades of poor maintenance and low investments. But there are other longer-lasting results from the project. A pool of local trainers has been created, and training provided to more than 100 staff from the selected municipalities. The external evaluation of the

projects said the group of project managers who have been trained “are a network of peers and they are beginning to behave as such. Instead of always contacting the technical assistance team, they have begun to look to each other for advice, to problem solve, to share ideas and for support in challenging times. Individually, and collectively they are aware that they must continue to invest in their own learning and to update and stay ahead in a very fast changing environment.”

PROJECT DETAILS –

EU Municipal Development Grant Scheme, Inter-municipal grant scheme and Technical Assistance

Partners:

Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration
Union of Municipalities of Montenegro (UOM)
Human Resource Management Authority
Ministry of Finance

Total cost in €:

12 million

EU Contribution in €:

8.8 million (73.33%)

(Municipal Development grant scheme: 5.5 million;
Inter-municipal grant scheme: 1.7 million;
Technical assistance: 1.6 million)

Start date:

March 2010

End date:

October 2015

Results:

New infrastructure; local government staff better equipped to plan projects, apply for funding, and manage and monitor work

Techniques:

Training and grants

Project website:

www.lsgpr.me

