

Newsletter

PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

As a result of different processes in the transfer of authority from the central to regional and local level of government (decentralisation, regionalisation and regional development), Serbia became an asymmetrically decentralised country with a complicated political system that requires a strong institutional reform of authorities.

Decentralisation, regionalism and Regional Development in Serbia

Dragiša Mijačić¹

Introduction

Political, institutional and administrative structure of governance is one of the most controversial topics in the Republic of Serbia. Today, after 12 years, there is still no consensus in the society about the way to organise the political system in Serbia. Ever since democratic changes, each Government consisted of coalition partners who had different views of territorial organisation of authority in Serbia. This is why the transfer of authority to lower levels is rather a matter of political trading between coalition partners than a need for more efficient organisation of governance. With that in mind, we can make a clear difference between three different and concurrent trends in the previous period: decentralisation, regionalism and regional development.

Decentralisation

Decentralisation in a broader sense is a transfer of authority and finance from the central level to lower levels of government. However, the concept of decentralisation generally involves the transfer of responsibilities to local self-governments (cities and municipalities).²

A significant part of the political and professional com-

munity in Serbia advocates a greater degree of decentralisation, which is tied to the strengthening of fiscal and development competences of local self-governments. The strongest proponents of decentralisation are the representatives of cities and municipalities, supported by their association, the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities. Many international organisations, including the Council of Europe, OSCE, European Union, USAID, Sida and many others have largely supported the decentralisation process in Serbia. Some civil society organisations are also committed to the promotion of the decentralisation process in Serbia.

After the political changes in 2000, there is a noticeable progress in the field of decentralisation and strengthening of the role of local self-governments in Serbia. The first Law on Local Self-Government was passed in 2002, when the original jurisdiction of local governments considerably enlarged, and it also increased the scope of delegated responsibilities. The role of local self-governments was strengthened by adopting the new Constitution in 2006, with Articles 176 the 193 guaranteeing rights of local self-government and their authority. Adoption of the Constitution was followed by the change of the Law on Local Self-Government and other related laws: Law on the Capital City, Law on Territorial Organisation, Law on Local Elections and the Law on Financing of Local Self-Governments. The last of these laws, the Law on Financing of Local Self-Government from 2006 has significantly contributed to the financial stability of cit-

IN THIS ISSUE:

From a different angle:
Sjaak Boeckhout

Analysis of Business Support
Infrastructure in Serbia

InTER Library

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² Transfer of authorities to middle levels of government is called federalisation (if it includes federal units) or regionalisation (regions).

ies and municipalities and regulated the transfer of funds from central to local level of government. Amendments to this Law from 2011 significantly increased the amount of revenues arising from income taxes (instead of original 40%, local self-governments receive 80% of income tax based on place of residence of the employee). The Law on Public Property has also been recently adopted, which regulates the right of public property and other property rights of local self-governments in Serbia.

Extended jurisdiction of local self-governments mostly favours cities and larger municipalities, while many smaller municipalities are unable to carry out assigned responsibilities in a quality and efficient manner. This problem will be more significantly visible in the coming years due to the depopulation in small municipalities in Serbia (the extreme case of a municipality Crna Trava which lost over 35% of the population between the last two censuses). Also, there were only minor efforts in the decentralisation of responsibilities from cities to city municipalities, which is a particularly significant issue in Belgrade where city municipalities have significantly lower competences in relation to their size.

It should be noted that the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Serbia from March 26, 2009 established the National Council for Decentralisation of the Republic of Serbia as the body that should participate in the preparation of the Strategy for Decentralisation of the Republic of Serbia. The Council has 17 members, including two deputy prime ministers, two ministers, one deputy, the Chairperson of the Assembly and the Prime Minister of the Government of Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, eight representatives of local governments, and representatives of the European Integration Office and the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities. Within the Council, an Expert Working Group was formed by nine members with the task to provide technical assistance in developing the Strategy of Decentralisation of the Republic of Serbia. Serbian Government has also established the Office of the National Council for Decentralisation as a service of the Government to carry out technical and administrative services for the National Council³.

The National Council met only once in the full session, while the second meeting was cancelled due to lack of quorum. No session was organised after that. Accordingly, the draft Strategy of Decentralisation has never been prepared, even though the deadline was the end of 2011. However, despite the fact that the National Council practically ceased to exist, the Office of the National Council has been functioning all these years.

Regionalism

Regionalism is a political ideology that seeks to make regions socio-political centres of government organisation.

³ More information about these bodies can be found on the webpage of the Office of the National Council for Decentralisation, <http://www.decentralizacija.gov.rs/>

In other words, regionalism is a commitment to the establishment of regional units with political, administrative and financial responsibilities that would have the greatest possible control over the social, economic and natural resources within its territory. This process is usually initiated through a “bottom-up” approach, by social and political factors at lower territorial levels.

Although initiated by several regional political parties and movements, and supported by a few civil society organizations, it can be said that regionalism has not become significantly embedded in Serbia. The reason for this can be seen in the negative perception of the population and the major political parties towards regionalism, formed on the basis of secession of the Yugoslav republics during the 1990s, as well as in the events that led to the independence of Kosovo and Metohija in 2008.

The exception is Vojvodina that has a long tradition of self-government organisation at the regional level. Over the past twenty years, especially since the democratic changes, the political parties in Vojvodina have been very active in advocating for an extension of authorities held by the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. Since their potential coalition strengthened with each new election, the authority of Vojvodina was proportionally increased, and they were finally defined by the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia in 2006, the Statute of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and the Law Establishing the Authority of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. The assets of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina are guaranteed by the recently adopted Law on Public Property.

However, although Article 182 Paragraph 3 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia provides for the establishment of new autonomous regions through the process of changing the Constitution, such initiatives at this time are not politically attractive. This is because, unlike in Vojvodina, in other parts of Serbia there is no political mobilisation at the regional level, and there are no clearly defined historical regions with a tradition of political autonomy. The exception is a historic region of Sandzak, whose political actors and parties often come out with increasing demands for autonomy in this region. The representatives of Albanians from the Presevo Valley have also argued for a greater degree of regional autonomy for the municipalities they inhabit. At one point there was a movement for autonomy of Šumadija but it also did not represent a significant power on the political scene in Serbia.

As a direct result of regionalism and demands for autonomy from one part of the country, the Republic of Serbia became asymmetric in terms of distribution of powers at different territorial levels, which is unsustainable in the future.

Regional development

Regional differences in Serbia are among the highest in Europe, which contributed to raising awareness about the

necessity of the policy that encourages balanced regional development. This is also reflected in the Article 94 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, which notes that "The Republic of Serbia takes care [...] of balanced and sustainable regional development, in accordance with the law". In addition, preparations for joining the European Union also called for intervention towards the creation of mechanisms for regional development in Serbia in order to prepare the country for structural and cohesion funds when it becomes a member.

With this in mind, the principle of regional development started to be used, which is an initiative of the Serbian Government to solve accumulated regional problems, which is a "top-down" approach. Specifically, in 2006, the Strategy of Regional Development of the Republic of Serbia 2007-2012 was developed, which established the basis for creating the legal and institutional framework for regional development in Serbia.

Two years after the adoption of this strategy, after a strong debate in the Parliament and in public, the Law on Regional Development of the Republic of Serbia was adopted in 2009. The following year, 2010, the Law has undergone significant changes and additions. Article 2 of the Law lists the following objectives of support to regional development:

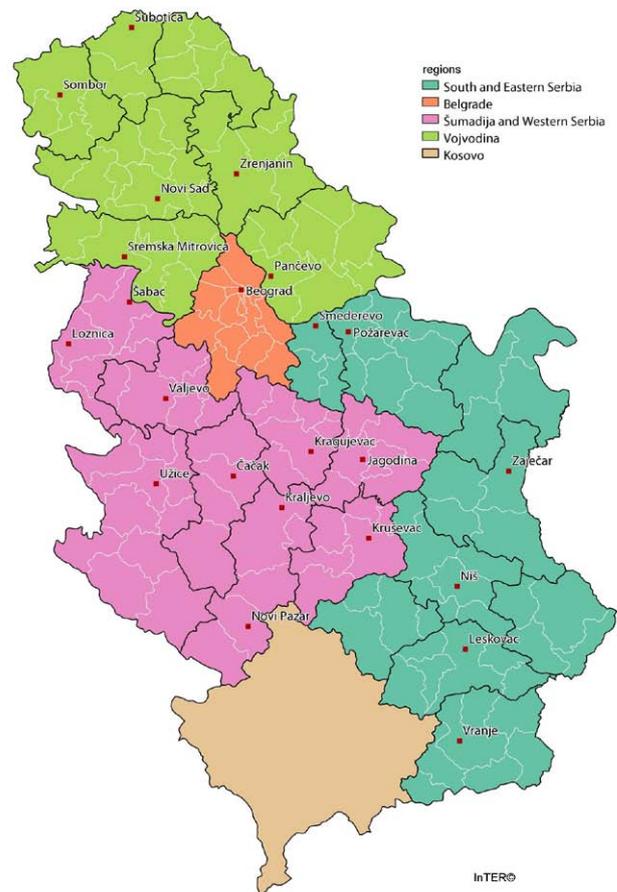
- 1) Overall socio-economic sustainable development;
- 2) Decreasing regional and inter-regional disparities, in the level of socio-economic development and living conditions, with the emphasis on supporting the development of underdeveloped, industrially devastated and rural areas;
- 3) Decreasing negative demographic trends;
- 4) Development of economy based on knowledge, innovation, contemporary science and technology achievements and organisation of management;
- 5) Development of competitiveness on all levels;
- 6) Establishing a legal and institutional framework for planning, organising, coordinating and implementing development activities;
- 7) Promotion of inter-municipal, inter-regional, cross-border and international cooperation in matters of mutual interest;
- 8) More efficient use of national natural resources and goods, as well as foreign resources, on the republic, provincial, regional and local level.

This Act defines the term "region" as a "statistically functional territorial unit consisting of one or more areas, established for the planning and implementation of regional development policy, in accordance with the nomenclature of statistical territorial units⁴ at level 2, not an

⁴ Nomenclature of Statistical Territorial Units (known as NUTS in the EU) IS a single, coherent system for dividing up the European Union and potential candidate countries' territory in order to produce reliable and comparable regional statistics, socio-economic analysis of regions and definition of EU regional policies. NUTS classification includes three levels of territories:

- NUTS 1: main socio-economic regions with population between

administrative territorial unit and no legal entity" (Article 4). For the purpose of promoting regional development the Law defines the following regions (Article 5):



- 1) The Region of Vojvodina;
- 2) The Region of Belgrade;
- 3) The Region of Šumadija and Western Serbia;
- 4) The Region of Southern and Eastern Serbia;
- 5) The Region of Kosovo and Metohija.

Regional boundaries are determined by the Decree on the Nomenclature of Statistical Territorial Units ("Off. Gazette of RS" no. 109/2009 and 46/2010) in a way that regions of Vojvodina, Belgrade and Kosovo and Metohija correspond to administrative boundaries of these entities, while the boundaries of the other two regions are defined by grouping administrative districts of central Serbia⁵.

The mentioned Law and by-laws also created the institutional and policy framework for regional development that is now being implemented in practice. The Law defines the establishment of the following institutions of importance for regional development:

- 3 and 7 million;
- NUTS 2: basic regions for the application of EU regional policies, with population between 800,000 and 3 million;
- NUTS 3: small regions for recognition of specific problems, with population between 150,000 and 800,000

⁵ Map of regions in the Republic of Serbia can be found on InTER's website http://www.lokalnirazvoj.org/upload/Book/Document/2012_03/Regions_and_Cities.jpg

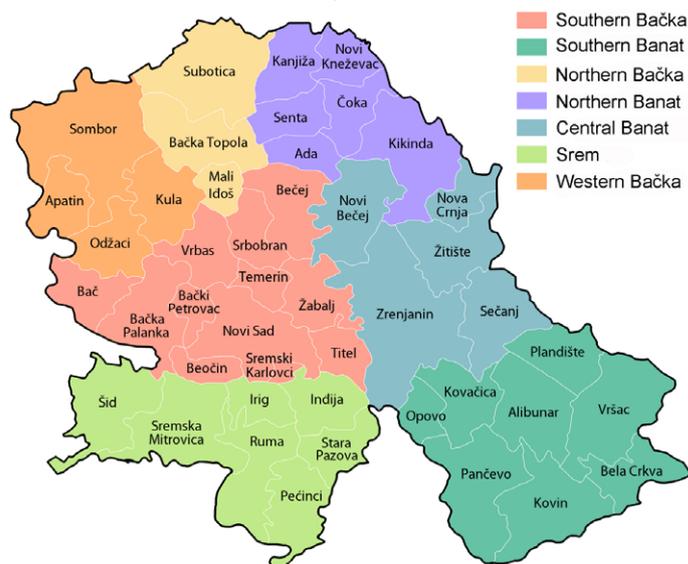
- National Council for Regional Development, formed by the Government, which brings together Ministers with responsibilities in the field of regional development (economy and regional development, finance, national investment plan, the environment and spatial planning, public administration and local self-government, labour and social policy and sustainable development of underdeveloped areas, Kosovo and Metohija), representatives of all regions, national institutions, cities and municipalities. The Law defines that the National Council has a president and 28 members.

- National Agency for Regional Development, which was established to carry out development, technical and regulatory affairs related to regional development. The National Agency also performs administrative and technical activities for the National Council for Regional Development, as well as many other tasks specified by the Law and regulations related to regional development.

- Regional Development Councils, established in each region to ensure and promote their development. Regional Development Councils are established for a period of 5 years and they are made up of representatives of local government units that make up the region, as well as representatives of city municipalities, public and civil sector, other institutions and organisations, and representatives of the Serbian Government. Member of the Regional Development Council for the region of Vojvodina is the representative of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, and the member of the Regional Council for Belgrade Region is the representative of the City. Regional Development Councils perform the following tasks: (1) publicly promote the objectives of regional development and encourage their implementation in the territory of the region, (2) give opinions on the regional strategy to be adopted for the region covered by the regional development council, (3) give opinions on funding program for regional development, for which it was founded, financed from the budget of the Republic of Serbia (4) give opinions and suggestions on other development documents at the regional level, (5) form working groups at the regional level for specific issues relevant to the region and (6) adopt their Rules of Procedure; (7) submit an annual report on their activities to the Government and the National Council, (8) perform other duties in accordance with this Law.

- Regional Development Agencies, established as business entities or associations in order to perform tasks that enhance regional development. The Law on Regional Development defines the minimum number of regional development agencies in each region and by-laws define the criteria for accreditation of agencies by the National Agency for Regional Development. At this point, nine development agencies are accredited⁶, while two agencies

are waiting to complete the accreditation process⁷. Regional Development Agencies are established as public-private partnerships between local governments, private sector and civil society organizations, and in some cases there are also other entities among the founders (universities, chambers of commerce, etc.). The establishment of regional development agencies was supported by the European Union through the award of three-year operating grants, which significantly improved their institutional and operational capacities. Regional Development Agencies were also supported by bilateral donors: Sida, GIZ, ADA, Government of Norway and SDC.



The law foresees the development of the National Plan of Regional Development and Regional Development Strategies for each of the five regions. There is an ongoing development of the National Plan of Regional Development of Serbia 2013 – 2022 in the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, implemented with technical support from EU IPA 2007 project “Assistance to Regional Policy Development at National Level” - RegPol. The planning process began in early 2011 and the first draft document is expected to be completed these days, and it will be exposed to a public debate. The Law provides that the National Plan of Regional Development is adopted by the National Assembly on the proposal of the Serbian Government, which surely will not happen within the mandate of this Parliament and the Government.

In addition to developing the National Plan of Regional Development, the Law foresees the creation of regional strategies that are adopted for a period of five years. Regional strategies are adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia on the recommendation of the line ministry.

Although regions of Vojvodina and Belgrade have created their development strategies, those policy documents must also be revised to comply with the National Plan of Regional Development. However, the adoption of these two

6 (1) Regional Development Agency Eastern Serbia “Raris” - Zaječar, (2) Centre for the Development of Jablanica and Pcinja Districts - Leskovac, (3) Regional Centre for Socio-Economic Development “Banat” - Zrenjanin, (4) Regional Agency for Spatial and Economic Development of Raski and Moravicki Districts - Kraljevo, (5) Regional Development Association “South” - Niš, (6) Regional Development Agency “Zlatibor”

- Užice, (7) Regional Development Agency Bačka - Novi Sad, (8) Regional Development Agency Srem - Ruma, and (9) Regional Development Agency Sandžak - Novi Pazar.

7 (1) Regional Economic Development Agency for Sumadija and Pomoravlje - Kragujevac, and (2) Regional Development Agency Braničevo - Podunavlje - Požarevac.

planning documents by the Serbian Government may be in conflict with the competences of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and the City of Belgrade, which also have the competence to adopt development plans on their territory.

At the moment, regional strategies for the Southern and Eastern Serbia, and Sumadija and Western Serbia regions are being prepared. This process is carried out with technical support from EU IPA 2007 project "Regional Socio-Economic Development Programme 2" - RSEDP2. As in the case of the National Plan for Regional Development, it is difficult to imagine that regional strategies will be adopted within the mandate of this Government, which means that the entire process will wait for the formation of the new Serbian Government.

The greatest advocates of regional development are the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development and the political party that runs the Ministry, while other ministries and political parties (either from the Government or the opposition) are mostly not interested in the subject. The EU also pays considerable attention to issues of regional development in Serbia.

Conclusion

Due to different historical and political circumstances and with the participation of many international factors, the transfer of authority from central to regional and local level in Serbia was organised in three different processes: decentralisation, regionalism and regional development. Unfortunately, these three processes were developed dissonantly, with no common strategy or consensus of what is to be the final result. Interests of various political factors at times also significantly affected the degree to which these processes were carried out at the same time.

Different players support different processes. Higher degree of decentralisation to local governments is advocated by representatives of municipalities and cities, in cooperation with the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, as well as some international organisations (primarily the Council of Europe, OSCE and USAID). Regionalism is mainly advocated by representatives of regional and minority political parties from Vojvodina, Sandzak and Presevo Valley. Regional development as a process is advocated by the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, and the political party running the Ministry. The EU also supports the strengthening of planning, legislative and institutional frameworks and capacities for regional development in Serbia.

Many results have been achieved in the field of decentralisation, because authorities of local governments are much more significant than at the beginning of this millennium. However, due to depopulation and lack of resources (human, financial and institutional), many local governments are not able to adequately and efficiently enforce all authorities assigned to them by Law. Little has also been achieved in the field of inter-municipal cooperation that can be a very important instrument for solving common problems in neighbouring municipalities and cities in Serbia.

Regionalism in Serbia has experienced the greatest success with the Law Establishing the Authority of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, which was adopted on November 30, 2009, more than three years after the Serbian Constitution was adopted, which guarantees Vojvodina the right of autonomy. Requirements for autonomy of other areas have not significantly initiated the public and the political debate in Serbia.

Regional development initiatives have been launched by the formation of the Regional Development Strategy 2007-2012, which gave a basis for further development of legislative and institutional framework. Five regions were formed and many institutions established that are dealing with regional development on different levels. It is important to note that the national plan and regional strategies are also being developed that will provide a basis for creating new regional policies in Serbia. Bearing in mind that the EU supports the process, improving the process of regional development in Serbia will increase over time, but it is necessary to harmonise it with the process of decentralisation and regionalism.

Recommendations

The current asymmetric model of decentralisation with Belgrade as a city-region and Vojvodina as the only province⁸ is unsustainable. In this regard, it is necessary to initiate a broad public debate on the territorial organisation of the political system in Serbia in order to arrive at solutions that would improve the level of democracy that would be in line with European practice and the principles of subsidiarity, efficiency and equity. It is also necessary to synchronise different processes of transfer of authorities from central to lower levels of government as described in the previous section in order to achieve synergy among them and find the optimal solution that would suit all levels of government. Finally, the transfer of authority must be accompanied by the transfer of resources, both financial and human and institutional.

In order to strengthen the middle levels of government it is necessary to decentralize, i.e. regionalize political parties because they are the main instruments of transfer of political ideas in Serbia. The political scene in Serbia shows that most politicians come from Belgrade, while the number of politicians from other cities or municipalities is much smaller. Serbia lacks politicians who will represent regional interests and therefore there is a need for a system to generate such leaders. In this sense, it is necessary to establish regional electronic media (especially television) which would open a space for political competition between different ideas at lower territorial levels and thus enhance the level of democracy in Serbia. It is also necessary to strengthen initiatives for inter-municipal cooperation related to joint development planning, joint problem solving and efficient implementation of assigned responsibilities.

⁸ The territory of Kosovo and Metohija is under international administration and until the final solution is reached this territory is not a part of legislative and political system of the Republic of Serbia

Regional Development Policy in Serbia: focus on efficiency or equity?

In comparison to other countries in the European Union (EU) Serbia lags considerably in terms of socio-economic development as measured by indicators like Gross Domestic Product per capita (in 2010 37% of the EU-27 average in purchasing power parity), unemployment percentage (in 2011 23.7% according to LFS, of which 74% has a long-term character) and inactivity rate (in 2011 over 40% compared to 30% in the EU). Within Serbia one can notice serious disparities between Serbia-North and Serbia-South. For several indicators Belgrade region scores highest followed at some distance by Vojvodina, while the other 2 statistical planning regions show mostly the lowest scores. At a lower geographical level one can even see higher disparities with clear pockets of poverty in Serbia.

Now that Serbia has very recently been awarded the candidate status in relation to EU-accession and increasing funds will come available in the coming years to strengthen the socio-economic structure and situation of the country, the question is whether Regional Development Policy should be focused on improving the conditions for investment in those parts of the country that offer the best opportunities for development ("efficiency") or in those parts in the country where the needs are highest ("equity")? This question is a classical one that lies at the heart of regional development policy in many countries, both inside and outside Europe.

From a European perspective Serbia can be seen as one region, so it is understandable that as long as limited funds are available for development the EU would be in favor of allocating funds to upgrade the overall competitiveness of the economy and invest in creating conditions for growth of employment and wealth, notably in those parts of the country where funds can be absorbed and quick wins can be realized best, i.e. in the most developed parts. From a domestic point of view balanced regional development is an important element in Serbia's Constitution and as a result of widening regional disparities, has attracted increased political attention over the last decade. Despite this increased attention not much progress has been achieved yet in reaching a more balanced regional development in the country.

In the context of drafting the National Plan for Regional Development (NPRD) for the period 2013-2022 a new approach has been put forward by focusing Regional Development Policy on the one hand on stimulating the more developed parts of the country to valorize especially their opportunities for growth and on the other hand supporting less developed parts of the country in notably meeting their development needs. In order to meet these objectives partnerships will be established that will enhance spill-overs from (parts of) development zones to special needs areas, in particular to the urban centers in these areas. Although the severity of the development problem in Serbia is such that regional disparities will not disappear in the coming decade, certainly not because of limited funds available for regional development, the ambition of the new NPRD is such that through deliberate policy actions the development gap with the EU will be narrowed, while at the same time the growth inter- and intraregional disparities can be stopped and even can be slightly decreased.

The answer towards the question whether the new Regional Development Policy in Serbia should focus on efficiency or equity is therefore twofold: both efficiency and equity need to be strived for through a variety of instruments that enables that opportunities will be seized and needs will be overcome!



Sjaak Boeckhout, senior manager Ecorys Nederland BV and Team Leader, RegPol project

Analysis of Business Support Infrastructure in the Republic of Serbia

In September and October 2011, InTER conducted a detailed research on business support infrastructure in Serbia, as a basis for the development of the Analysis of Business Support Infrastructure in the Republic of Serbia. The analysis was carried out with financial support from the National Agency for Regional Development.

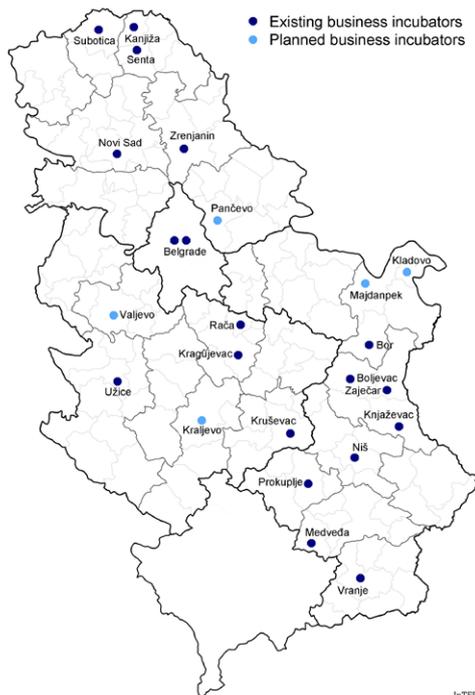
The first business support infrastructure entities were established in 2005, with the registration of the first clusters and business incubators in Serbia. The number of business support infrastructure entities has been constantly growing since then, and their capacities have become more significant. This analysis identified 23 business incubators, 85 cluster initiatives, 92 industrial zones, 2 existing and 4 planned industrial and technology parks, 4 existing and 4 planned free zones and 66 brownfield locations in Serbia.

The analysis discovered that there is an unbalanced geographical distribution of business support infrastructure elements in Serbia. It is more significantly distributed in five large cities in Serbia: Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš, Subotica and Kragujevac. Some of numerous reasons for concentration in these cities include the presence of donor programmes and regional or SME development agencies that jointly contributed to raising awareness and the idea about the need for development of business support infrastructure. On the regional level, there is a significant difference in concentration of business infrastructure between the regions of Belgrade and Vojvodina on the one hand and the regions of Šumadija & Western Serbia and Southern & Eastern Serbia on the other hand.



Business support infrastructure is more significantly distributed in five large cities in Serbia: Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš, Subotica and Kragujevac.

Clusters and business incubators do not have stable sources of finance, and that affects their liquidity, and thus the quality of human resources. Lack of finance directly affects the number of employees, which is insufficient, both in clusters and incubators. Very small number of clusters manages to survive thanks to memberships fees. The same case is with incubators, because funds they get from rent are not sufficient to cover the basic operational costs. Clusters and incubators are looking for support from subsidies provided by the public sector and the donor funds, which are not sustainable solutions. Also, most of them do not have sufficiently developed capacities to successfully apply for available funds.



In order to achieve positive synergy effects in terms of raising competitiveness and economic development on the local and regional level, it is necessary to establish close cooperation between the elements of business support infrastructure, public and private sector, as well as development agencies, chambers of commerce and other relevant institutions, in order to harmonise activities and exchange the necessary information. It is also necessary to harmonise the activities of business support infrastructure with strategic plans on different levels. At the same time, it is necessary to continuously work on building management capacities and human resources in general, in all business support infrastructure elements: business incubators, clusters, zones and parks. Recommendation for national and regional institutions supporting economic development is to design programmes that will have the best effect in supporting this integrated approach to local and regional development in Serbia.

Workshops on “Assessment of Project Proposals Received under EU Cross-Border Cooperation Programs” completed

Four workshops on the “Assessment of Project Proposals Received under EU Cross-Border Cooperation Programs” were carried out by InTER on the invitation of the Serbian European Integration Office. Organisation of workshops was financially supported by the EU project “Technical assistance for the establishment of first level control and support for the implementation of Cross-Border Cooperation Programs EuropeAid/129578/C/SER/RS”, implemented by the East West Consulting (EWC) from Brussels. Target group for the workshops were the assessors selected by the European Integration Office for the assessment of the project proposals received under calls for cross-border cooperation programmes in which Serbia participates. In total, 92 assessors from the roster of experts participated in four seminars organised between December 2011 and February 2012. The quality of seminars and the trainer were estimated as high, and the participants emphasized that the seminar was very useful for the future work.



InTER at the “Balkan Peer Exchange” conference in Belgrade

InTER participated at the Balkan Peer Exchange conference on February 21 – 23, 2012 that gathered representatives of 50 think tanks and advocacy organizations from all Western Balkan countries, as well as donors and government institutions.



InTER selected to participate at the TRAIN programme (Think Tanks providing Research and Advice through Interaction and Networking)

InTER has been successfully awarded to participate at the TRAIN programme (Think Tanks providing Research and Advice through Interaction and Networking) that seeks to foster fruitful policy dialogue between think tanks and political actors in the Western Balkans. The TRAIN programme aims to support think tanks with a clear policy-oriented approach that focus on national, regional and/or international politics. Participation in the TRAIN programme includes taking part in seminars in Belgrade (March 22-25), Berlin (June 11-15) and Brussels (September 16-20) where research findings will be presented.



InTER will participate in the TRAIN programme with two researchers, Mr. Dragisa Mijacic and Ms. Vesela Curkovic, who will jointly conduct a research on the impact assessment of the EU development support to economic development in the Republic of Serbia.

InTER hired by the Olof Palme International Center

InTER has been hired by the Olof Palme International Center to assist in designing and overseeing implementation of the ongoing evaluation of the Palme Centre’s Serbia Programme during the years 2012-2014. The Serbia Programme consists of four development projects with the target group of unionized workers within the vehicle manufacturing, metal and textile industries in Vojvodina and Kragujevac.



During the first year (2012), InTER’s assignment involves quality assurance of the Serbia Programme results matrices, as well as setting up a system for monitoring and evaluation of results. During the second year and the third year, InTER team will follow the success of project implementation through monitoring and at the end of the third year the team will undertake the final evaluation of the results.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Analysis of Business Support Infrastructure



InTER was contracted by the National Agency for Regional Development of the Republic of Serbia to provide an assessment of the business infrastructure in Serbia. The assignment included an assessment of the institutional and operational capacity of business incubators, clusters and industrial zones and their efficiency and impact on local economic development. Conclusions and recommendations from the assessment are being included in the National Strategy for Development of Business Infrastructure in Serbia. Analysis is available for download in Serbian and English on InTER's website.

www.lokalnirazvoj.org

Regional disparities in Serbia



InTER associates Dragiša Mijačić and Blagoje Paunović published an article on Regional disparities in Serbia in a special issue of the Scientific Journal "Ekonomika preduzeca". The article includes a legislative and institutional framework of regional development in Serbia, as well as an analysis of regional disparities on different territorial levels, presented through six selected indicators: population and population density (analysed as one indicator), regional GDP, employment, unemployment, business demography and budget revenues. Indicators were analysed on all three NUTS levels, defined by the Law on Regional Development, and the local level (municipalities and cities) using unweighted Gini Index as a measure. The article can be downloaded from InTER website.

www.lokalnirazvoj.org

Maps by regions



InTER Library contains maps of Serbian regions based on the Nomenclature of Statistical Territorial Units (NUTS) of the European Union.

www.lokalnirazvoj.org

Maps of business support infrastructure



InTER Library contains maps of geographical distribution of business support infrastructure, in Serbia, as well as in different regions. The maps include distribution of regional development agencies, SME development agencies, business incubators, clusters, technology parks, industrial zones, free zones and brownfield locations.

www.lokalnirazvoj.org