

SME Policy Index Study
National Report for Serbia



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SME POLICY INDEX UPDATE¹

I ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. POLICY AND DELIVERY

1.1 Policy and Partnership **Level 2.50**

The Government of Serbia adopted a Strategy for professional education² in December 2006. In this Strategy, entrepreneurship is recognized as one of the key competencies for the work force of the future, and a framework was prepared for implementation of different development models, adopting and acquiring entrepreneurial skills and expertise by young people in the course of middle education. The Strategy also includes adequate provision for entrepreneurial education in mandatory education and creates conditions for further upgrading of the competencies which young people acquire during elementary education.

The Government of Serbia adopted a Strategy for adult education³ in December 2006. This strategy also recognizes the significance and role of entrepreneurship, their links with trends in the jobs market, which expects employees to be proactive and willing to learn for the duration of their entire careers.

Life long learning is a part of newly drafted Strategy for Competitive and Innovative of Small and Medium Enterprises 2008 - 2012, which is sent to Government for approval. The Strategy has five pillars and second pillar where focused on entrepreneurship learning. As key priorities in entrepreneurship learning, this Strategy recommends:

- Establishment of a working group for entrepreneurial education that will be part of existing National Council for SME Development;
- Promotion of entrepreneurship learning at national and regional level;
- defining mechanisms for quality control and evaluation of entrepreneurship learning activities;
- integration of entrepreneurship learning at all level of education;
- upgrade and promote extra-curriculum activities in the field of entrepreneurship learning at all level of education;
- connecting directly education institutions with businesses;
- revising existing and providing recommendations for new legislation in the field of students' enterprises;

¹ SME Policy Index was updated by receiving informations from Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, Department for SME Development (in charge for implemenatiton of EU Charter on SME), Serbian Agency for SME and Enterpreneurship Development, Serbian Chamber of Commerce and by doing desk research on available information.

² <http://www.mps.sr.gov.yu/upload/dokumenti/srednje/Strategija%20razvoja%20strucnog%20obrazovanja.pdf>

³ <http://www.mps.sr.gov.yu/upload/dokumenti/srednje/STRATEGIJA%20RAZVOJA%20OBRAZOVANJA%20OD%20RASLIH%20U%20REPUBLICI%20SRBIJI.pdf>

- creating financial support from public and private sources for empowerment of entrepreneurship development projects within education institutions.

1.2 Primary Education **Level 1.50**

There is no promotion of entrepreneurship education in primary education. Relevant Strategies are not covering primary level of education. Some pilot projects within extra-curriculum activities are promoted within primary schools yet there are limited information on their scale and results.

1.3 Secondary Education **Level 2.50**

The curriculum for the subject ENTREPRENEURSHIP is structured in modules and is based on results. In 2007 year it has been expanded into the educational profile business administrator⁴ in the field of economy and studied by about 720 graduates. Total coverage of the students by this subject is larger since it is studied in fields such as: agriculture, mechanical engineering, civil engineering, healthcare, etc. In 2008 this program will be expanded onto other profiles in the area of economy, and other fields in terms of needs for individual qualifications (mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, tourism, hotel management, etc.)

At the national level, the teachers' training curriculum has been accredited – future lecturers of the subject ENTREPRENEURSHIP. More than 100 teachers have attended the program so far – while the seminars are still in progress. Quite an interest was noticed in schools; in so much that the other teachers attend seminars as well, in order to enrich the courses they teach with entrepreneurship content. Seminars are taught by the accredited CEFE coaching staff⁵ from the ranks of professional schools professors.

1.4 Pilot projects and experimentation **Level 3**

With the cooperation of donors⁶ and certain contributions from national resources, pilot programs corresponding to education of entrepreneurs at secondary school level are carried out in Serbia. In the framework of these programs there were several events last year, such as:

- The Second National Youth and Virtual Enterprises Fair was held in May 2007 (GTZ – Culture Contact). Within this Program, for young entrepreneurs, students from the Schools for Economy, participation at the international fairs in Bratislava, Salzburg and Budva was organised.
- At the premises of Belgrade Chamber of Commerce, on 12 July 2007, *a grande finale* in strategic business decision making by secondary school students, with the title 'Management Economics Simulation Exercise – MESE', was held by the Junior Achievement Organisation – Serbia.
- The Sixth Student Entrepreneurship Fair, within the program implemented by Business Innovation Programs from Norway, was held as part of the International Entrepreneurship Fair – Business Base in November 2007.

More information on formal entrepreneurship education might be found at website of Ministry of Education: www.mps.sr.gov.yu.

⁴ http://www.dositej.org.yu/novi_profilu.htm

⁵ <http://www.cefe.org.yu/treneri/treneri.htm>

⁶ <http://www.ja-serbia.org/jas.htm>; <http://www.bips.no.htm>; <http://www.dositej.org.yu/>

2. NON-FORMAL LEARNING

2.1 Non-formal learning **Level 3**

Non-formal education in Serbia was developing faster than a formal one. Above mentioned pilot projects are recognised, well accepted and institutionalised through formal and informal agreements. There are examples of agreements with GTZ, CEFÉ trainers, Business Business Innovation Programs, Junior Achievement Organisation, ‘Dositej’ association of teachers and many others.

There are also programs that support informal entrepreneurship education at the high education level. One of them is *Private Sector Development Project in the Western Balkans*⁷, carried out by Dutch NGO SPARK (previously known as Academic Training Association), and financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Netherlands. The project is focused encouraging long-term cooperation among academic institutions, ministries of economy, chambers of commerce and agencies for development in the Western Balkans (Serbia, AP Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Montenegro). Within the scope of the project the following activities targets high-education institutions:

- Students’ Research projects in the areas of private sector development, regional economic cooperation and implementation of EU standards;
- Programs of internship exchange, with durations of three months, in the region and the Netherlands, designed for senior year students with the goal of improving their employment prospects and strengthening ties between the business and education sectors;
- A business plan competition for young persons in order to encourage entrepreneurship, with the goal of promoting a culture of business thinking, which is supported financially through non- repayable business start-up funds.

The other program to mention is the Balkan Case Challenge⁸ (BCC) case study competition that focuses on strengthening links between high-education and employment in SEE countries. The program provides opportunities to students to learn and compete in business oriented disciplines. The project is run by WUS Austria, financed by Austrian Development cooperation and supported by numerous companies and institutions.

IV AVAILABILITY OF SKILLS

1. TNA AND ENTERPRISE TRAINING

1.1 Training Needs Analysis **Level 1**

There is no policy on training needs analysis. Training assessments are based on ‘ad-hoc’ surveys run by SASME, regional agencies for SME development, Chambers of Commerce and National Bureau for Employment. Training needs analysis policy is a part of drafted Strategy for Competitive and Innovative of Small and Medium Enterprises 2008 – 2012.

1.2 Enterprise training **Level 3**

There is no accurate national statistic on number of trained small enterprises in 2007, yet estimated number is between 10-15%. Number of trained small enterprises has been increased than in 2007 due to a programme that connected training with government incentives for start-up credits.

⁷ <http://www.spark-online.org/content/view/full/30/46/>

⁸ <http://www.bcchallenge.org/general/index.php>

Enterprise trainings run by national institutions

Serbian Agency for SME and entrepreneurship development (SASME)⁹ is in charge for implementing and coordinating the Government programs in enterprise trainings. For the period of January 2007 - January 2008 SASME has realized the following training programs:

1. Training for institutions and organisations

- Training for coaching staff

Ten day training for coaching staff was a requirement of the National Bureau for Employment (NBE) which applied to staff of business centers and sub-offices covering the whole territory of Serbia, total of 23 participants.

- Training for mentors and special consultants

Within the Japanese Project coordinated by JICA, 37 employees were trained in the field of enterprise diagnoses and received certificates from SASME and regional agencies.

Total participants: 37

2. Training for existing enterprises

Fifteen day training for 20 entrepreneurs in the field of quality systems was realized in Athens, with the cooperation of the Greek partner EOMEN.

Within the Japanese Project coordinated by JICA, 513 entrepreneurs from the whole territory of Serbia have participated in the training course: 'Development of new products', 'Marketing' and 'Quality systems'

With the cooperation of the British American Tobacco Company, a five day seminar for entrepreneurs was held in Pčinj County, with 16 participants. The entrepreneurs are in the process of making a business plans, due for completion by Feb 15th, which will compete for an award.

Total participants: 549

3. Training for the users of start-up credits

SASME coordinated seminars held by regional agencies and centers for the duration of an open competition for credit approvals to participants. Seventy seminars were held in total throughout the whole territory of Serbia.

Total participants: 1292

4. Training for women and young potential entrepreneurs

Through a project financed by the Spanish Government, a competition was held for the best business plan for the target group – women and potential young entrepreneurs. Four workshops on the preparation of business plans took place, with a total of 58 participants.

With the cooperation of the Association of Business women, the Commission for Gender Equality and financial support from the Tenants Association of Sweden two two-day seminars were held on 'How to start a business' with 50 women from the territory of the Municipality of Voždovac and Rakovica.

Total of participants: 108

National Bureau for Employment (NBE) also contributes to informal learning for entrepreneurship through the realisation of two levels of training¹⁰:

I Level – one day information – motivation seminar for unemployed people interested in entrepreneurship, including requirements for obtaining subventions for self-employment from NBE. This program covers all of Serbia, within all employment subsidiaries – in business centers, where the activities of encouraging and developing entrepreneurship for NBE are undertaken. Seminars are organised by trained teams from subsidiaries – well over 100 coaching personnel. In

⁹ www.sme.sr.gov.yu/

¹⁰ <http://www.rztr.co.yu/preduzetnistvo.htm/>

the year 2007, based on NBE records, a total of 632 seminars were held for 17,685 persons (which was three times more than in the previous year).

II Level – three day instructional training, aimed primarily at those unemployed who have shown an interest in availing of financial assistance in the form of self-employment subventions from NBE. Training sessions were introduced as a higher level of informal study for entrepreneurship in the first half of 2007, and 441 training courses were provided for 12,278 persons, drawn from the registered unemployed.

In the year 2007, the Center for education of the Chamber of Commerce of Serbia¹¹ carried out:

- Six seminars with the cooperation of IFC and USA/CRDA program for CE product identification and six seminars covering NASSR food safety system control.
- Eight seminars with the cooperation of SRB PRO Committee covering the CEFTA 2006 agreement.

In addition to these programs, 69 seminars took place and 31 different topics were covered for 2,294 participants.

The Ministry of Economy and Regional Development (MERR)¹² and Institute for Territorial Development (InTER) organized *workshops with various topics for participants in the cluster development process* during 2007. The goal of the workshops was to offer assistance to participants in broadening their horizons in terms of new options for the direction of growth; understanding the concept, content and tools of strategic planning; grasping the importance of the cluster development project management concept, becoming familiar with modes of professional project writing and follow-up through the project cycle; identifying potential risks and developing skills for overcoming them and adopting marketing techniques. Twenty-six workshops were held and the average number of participants per workshop was thirteen.

The topics were: clusters as instruments for regional economic development, identification of clusters and evaluation of business opportunities, strategic planning of cluster development, professional writing of project proposals and project cycle management in organizations for cluster development support, risk management, Marketing of clusters and communication skills, Facilitation and mediation, Conflict management and negotiating skills for cluster associations.

The seminar was designed for regional SME agencies, municipalities' managers, regional employment offices/ entrepreneurship departments, regional chambers, those interested in cluster development initiatives, cluster managers, members of operational professional teams for working in the main areas of cluster operations and for managers of cluster member companies.

In the first quarter of 2007, a project with the title "Development of consulting services for quality management systems by the Chamber of Commerce of Republic of Serbia ", which started in October 2005, was completed. The Project was conducted by the German Organization for technical assistance and cooperation - GTZ¹³. The partners included in this project were the Serbian Chamber of Commerce and German Organization for consulting and certification in the field of standardized management systems - TÜV Thüringen. The Project had two goals:

1. Providing qualifications for employees of companies interested in appointing quality managers, with the goal of establishing and advancing standardized management systems designed to improve the competitive edge of companies, as well as increasing opportunities for further professional advancement or employment.
2. Implementation and certification of quality management system in several interested small and medium enterprises, though corresponding pilot-projects.

¹¹ <http://pks.komora.net/>

¹² <http://www.merr.sr.gov.yu/>

¹³ gtz.de/en/aktuell/661.htm

The first goal was achieved through the cycle of training for new knowledge and skills based on standards for management systems and gaining relevant experience in companies working on the implementation of such ISO 9001, with the addition of NASSR access to food management safety, i.e. TS 16949 quality management in the manufacturing of car parts. In this way, they obtained qualifications for "quality representative"- 81 training participants, "quality manager"- 34 participants and "quality management system verifier"- 22 participants. The second goal was achieved through launching implementation of quality management systems with access to NASSR and TS 16949 in interested companies, via pilot-projects financed by GTZ, consulting services provided by third parties, the above mentioned partner TÜV Thüringen. Two out of five companies, where the pilot projects were initiated, achieved successful certification for their implemented systems of management, prior to the completion of this project at the end of March 2007.

The Fund for Insurance and Financing Foreign Trade¹⁴ organised workshops on the insurance of export based accounts receivable and financing through factoring, mostly for small and medium enterprises, at the regional chambers of commerce: Belgrade (June, September, and October 2007), Kruševac (September 2007) and Leskovac (June 2007).

Enterprise trainings run by international and bilateral organisations

The Government of Netherlands finances the BAS (Business Advisory Services)¹⁵ Project through EBRD. This project has the goal of creating domestic consulting potential capable of providing support for improving the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises (10 - 150 employees) in Serbia, for all areas of business (improving management structures, management, manufacture, financial planning and strategy, promoting exports, developing human resources, etc). In 2007, more than 40 Serbian companies were covered by this program.

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)¹⁶ is implementing a volunteer advisory program for 2004-2009. The goal of the program is to provide support for Serbia in developing a market economy and democratic practices. The Canadian volunteer counsellors convey their know-how and professional, technical and business knowledge to clients and partners through activities such as: building capacities, institutional development, enterprise growth support, services provision, quality assurance, development of capabilities and management in companies and business networking.

Center for promotion of export in the developing countries – CBI¹⁷ is a Dutch agency which is currently carrying out three activities in Serbia with the aim of strengthening the position of the country in the European (EU & EFTA) market:

- Training programs for exporters (Export Coaching Programs) designed for enterprises planning to export to the European market;
- BSO development – the development of capabilities of institutions offering direct support to exporters.
- Training programs – seminars and workshops for exporters, economic representatives and employees of organisations offering direct support to exporters.

PUM¹⁸ (Netherlands senior-experts) – A Dutch expert organisation which is active in more than 80 countries including Serbia. PUM consultants are hired on request by enterprises and business

¹⁴ <http://www.smeca.co.yu/>

¹⁵ www.bas-serbia.org/

¹⁶ <http://www.ceso-saco.com/>

¹⁷ <http://www.cbi.eu/>

¹⁸ <http://www.pum.nl/>

organisations, for intense short term projects usually lasting up to three weeks. In 2007, PUM implemented 29 projects within the scope of three programs in Serbia:

- Program for small and medium enterprises – provides support to enterprises that can not afford to pay for foreign consultants
- Training program and business networking
- Selected training in Netherlands.

2. QUALITY ASSURANCE

2.1 Quality Assurance Level 2

Quality assurance assessments are based on ‘ad-hoc’ surveys run by SASME, regional agencies for SME development, Chambers of Commerce and National Bureau for Employment. Quality assurance is a part of drafted Strategy for Competitive and Innovative of Small and Medium Enterprises 2008 – 2012.

3. ACCESSIBILITY

3.1 Access to training (Start-up, Management and Administration only) Level 3

SME training provided market is growing yet still concentrated in cities. Training capacity in rural and remote areas is limited. The government agencies provide a lot of training opportunities that are connected with financial support. Donor agencies are also active in trainings in various fields and various regions in Serbia. There is no a data base on training provides, available training programs and costs of trainings.

4. AFFORDABILITY

4.1 Affordability Level 2

The government support in training is still limited to business start-up, management and administration. There is a limited opportunity for in house trainings. Majority of trainings are delivered as state- or donor-supported incentives. Small enterprises rarely shown interest in funding their training needs yet their willingness to pay for training services increases every year.

POTENTIAL FOR REGIONAL CENTRE FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP LEARNING

FINDINGS IN SERBIA

This report is based on the results of individual interviews convened to discuss the proposed Regional Centre for Entrepreneurship. The report is a quick summary of the key points and potential for the centre as seen by the consultant following the interviews

GENERAL REACTION TO THE REGIONAL CENTRE PROPOSAL

Stakeholders in Serbia have divided opinion on creation of the Regional Centre for Entrepreneurship Learning. While stakeholders from Belgrade have opposing the idea and needs of having the Regional Centre (BCoC, SASME, SCoC), stakeholders from regional agencies in Kragujevac (REDASP) and Novi Sad (Alma Mons) were much more flexible and supportive about the idea.

The general objections of having the Regional Centre were that each of the South-Eastern European (SEE) countries has specific conditions and specially designed programme(s) for entrepreneurship learning so there is no need for overall regional approach (SASME, SCoC, BCoC). Besides, technical support received from international and bilateral development organisations is sufficient enough to satisfy all needs they have (same as above).

On contrary, stakeholders from Regional Agencies (REDASP, Alma Mons) would support the idea of having the Regional Centre if the Centre would develop good quality services that will serve mutual needs for entrepreneurship learning in all SEE countries. They emphasised the quality of services as a first criteria for establishing cooperation with the Centre.

However, all stakeholders mentioned variety of services that might be developed by the Centre such as joint entrepreneurship learning programmes, training of trainers for formal and informal entrepreneurship educators, development of curriculum for formal education, literature, collection of case studies and best practices and many others. Although it was not a question, all stakeholders mention they will use online services and resources of the Centre, if they would be available for public.

Interviewees from SASME and SCoC said that prospective cooperation and usage of services with the Centre depends of political willingness and formal agreements between their institutions and the Centre.

None of the interviewed stakeholder showed willingness to pay for the services of the Centre and their participation to the Centre's activities will depend from possibilities of external financial support.

There is no institutional cooperation between Serbia and Croatia on issues related with SME and entrepreneurship development. Therefore, Serbian stakeholders have limited knowledge on Croatian experience in entrepreneurship learning. Everything they knew about Croatian experience was indirect knowledge on licensing trainers in informal education (SASME, REDASP, Alma Mons). Interviewee from REDASP claims that entrepreneurship learning in Croatia, as all other ex-YU countries, has a foundation in old Yugoslav education system on which were build European experience and policies in this field. From all interviewed, only Alma Mons representative claimed (in coming) cooperation with a Croatian organisation.

Majority of interviewees did not support the idea of having the Centre in Zagreb and proposed Belgrade as much more central and accessible location in the Region (BCoC, Dositej, SASME, SCoC). Regional agencies (REDASP and Alma Mons) did not comment much about Zagreb as a prospective location. For location of the centre one interviewee (MERR) proposed other cities in Croatia such as Split, Rijeka or Dubrovnik. She claimed it will help Croatia to decentralise its entrepreneurship services and create conditions for its equally-shared regional development.

CURRENT POLICY RESEARCH THAT THE CENTRE CAN DRAW ON

- Development of a curriculum for entrepreneurship learning in formal education (MERR, SASME, Dositej);
- Development of policies for licensing trainers in informal education (SASME, REDASP);
- Development of an integrated strategic approach in entrepreneurship learning (SASME);

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH THAT WOULD SUPPORT NATIONAL POLICY MAKING IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP LEARNING

- Study on regional experience in Entrepreneurship learning in SEE (all stakeholders)
- Best practices, examples and case studies in formal entrepreneurship learning (SASME, MERR, REDASP, Dositej);
- Development of relevant literature in the field of formal education of entrepreneurship learning (SASME, Dositej);
- Empirical research on best EU and regional practices in including entrepreneurs in formal education (SASME, Dositej, MERR);
- Empirical research on relevance of entrepreneurship learning in primary and secondary education;

KEY CURRENT POLICY ISSUES IN SERBIA

At the moment key policy issue in Serbia is the Strategy for Competitive and Innovative of Small and Medium Enterprises 2008 - 2012, which is drafted and sent to Government for approval¹⁹. The main goal of the draft Strategy is the development of an entrepreneurial economy based on knowledge and innovation which will result in a strong competitive and export oriented SME sector, bringing Serbia's standard of living closer to the average for the EU.

The draft Strategy is based on five pillars:

- 1: Promotion and Support for Entrepreneurship and new business start-ups
- 2: Human resources for a competitive SME sector – Management and skills development and support services
- 3: Finance and financial management for SMEs and taxation
- 4: SME competitive advantage in export markets
- 5: Serbia's laws and institutions at the service of SMEs

¹⁹ <http://www.merr.sr.gov.yu/aktivnosti/vesti.php?vestid=114>

Second major policy issue is introducing entrepreneurship learning in primary and secondary education and development of school curriculum for entrepreneurship learning. Although Serbia has adopted a strategy for formal education in 2006, so far limited results have been achieved.

NEED FOR TECHNICAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Primary: There is no policy that target entrepreneurship learning at the primary school level. At this level needs are not identified neither addressed to the policy makers.

Secondary: Although some of the pilot projects (i.e. virtual enterprises) could provide mechanisms for practicing business models, there is a need for institutional cooperation between schools and business sector especially in the field of transferring practical knowledge and experience to students. Besides, due to the fact entrepreneurship learning has been introduced only to pilot schools, there is a need for large scale teachers' training and skills development at the secondary school level.

Tertiary: Entrepreneurship learning is becoming very fashionable at the university level, especially at private universities which were eager to introduce entrepreneurship learning courses in various disciplines. Some of the faculties went step further so Faculty of technical sciences of University of Novi Sad created a Centre for Cluster Development and technical faculties of University of Belgrade has established a Business & Technology incubator. However, all these activities are ad-hoc and mostly based on entrepreneurial who want (in some cases succeeded) to introduce innovations in teaching entrepreneurship at high-education institutions. That's why there is still a need for integrated and strategic approach in introducing entrepreneurship learning at universities in Serbia.

Teacher Training: As mentioned before, there is a great need for teacher trainings in Serbia. Only limited number of teachers has been trained so far, mostly ones which are employed with schools that accepted pilot projects in entrepreneurship learning. Vast majority of teachers are still pending to be trained in this field. Besides training on entrepreneurship learning, there is a need for training in teaching skills, methodologies that are appropriate in this field. Methodologies for quality assurance and evaluations are also needed to be developed.

Life Long Learning: Long life learning has been identified since 2001 and has been part of all relevant strategies (Strategy for SME development 2005-2008, Strategy of informal education (2006) and newly drafted Strategy for Competitive and Innovative of Small and Medium Enterprises 2008 – 2012). Serbian Agency for SME development is established to provide support in life-long entrepreneurship learning, which is one of its key competencies. Many other national and regional/local institutions and private agencies (including NGOs) are involved in life long learning education. However, there is a need for integrated strategic approach that will regulate this filed. Besides, there is a serious lack of trainers at the local level, especially in rural and remote areas. There is no data base of institutions and individuals that provide training services in these fields. Quality control is also an issue. There might be a solution to introduce a license for providing training services in entrepreneurship education, yet it is not proved that licensing might provide positive results per se (SASME).

Curriculum development: As said earlier, curriculum development is a big and open issue in Serbia. So far, Serbia did not move much from pilot projects and curriculum in entrepreneurship learning is still waiting to be developed. There is a curriculum of the courses on entrepreneurship in non-economic secondary schools (technical, medical, agriculture and civil engineering fields) and GTZ CEFEE has developed curriculum and methodology for entrepreneurship courses for two secondary school profiles: business administrator and financial administrator. For all other profiles and courses curriculum are still pending to be developed. In that regard, best practices, case studies and proved methodologies that can be tailored to a local context would be of a great support.

Other: there is a constant and growing need for a tailor-made in house training in various fields of entrepreneurship learning. Besides, there is always a need for good training of trainers in new methodologies that could be easily applicable to a local context.

INFORMATION NEEDS A REGIONAL CENTRE COULD HELP MEET

The regional centre could provide trainings (including ToT) in fields that are recognised as a need for all countries of SEE. Besides, there is a great need for sharing best practices and lessons learnt on well implemented policies and programs, developing adequate teaching methodologies, quality assurance and evaluation methods, sharing and development of literature, etc. The centre also might help in sharing database of specialised regional trainers in various fields of entrepreneurship learning.

KEY NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS THAT WOULD PARTICIPATE

During the research, only Regional Economic Development Agency for Sumadija and Pomoravlje (REDASP) -Kragujevac and Regional Agency for SME development 'Alma Mons' – Novi Sad have expressed (reserved) willingness to cooperate with the Centre. They would cooperate if the Centre provides good quality services that are relevant to their needs. All other stakeholders were concerned about cooperation with the Centre.

It should be understood that the research in Serbia was conducted during the election campaign which divided country on pro- and against-EU supporters and in a situation when Croatia recognised self-declared act of Kosovo independence, which was not welcomed by Serbian government. In those circumstances, majority of stakeholders have not supported the idea of establishing the Regional Centre for Entrepreneurship in Croatia neither expressed their willingness to cooperate with the Centre. Some of the stakeholders would need official approval from government authorities for possible cooperation with the Centre.²⁰ It should be also mentioned that National Bureau for Employment, a state institution with high competencies in informal entrepreneurial education, has officially reject speaking about the idea of the Regional Centre in Croatia.

It is also worth of saying that all stakeholder institutions expressed willingness to use resources and publications that would be available on a prospective Internet page of the Centre.

HOW WOULD A REGIONAL CENTRE BE RUN?

As said above, stakeholders from Serbia proposes Belgrade as a potential location for the Centre. They believe Serbia has a knowledge and experience for successful establishment of the centre, as well as a central location which is easily accessible to all countries of SEE.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES AND CONTRIBUTION THE COUNTRY CAN MAKE

None of the stakeholders from Serbia has expressed willingness to financially contribute to the services of the Centre. As potential funding sources they have mentioned various EU programmes and other donor funds.

OTHER ISSUES

Due to the fact there are a lot of trainings offered by various public and private entities at national and local level, the Regional Centre should rather be policy and research development entrepreneurial learning centre that would provide good solutions and specialized education for policy makers and high professionals (including high level trainers) than a to be a training centre that will compete with numerous similar institutions already well established in the Region.

²⁰ In this regard it should be mentioned that Serbia has lower the cooperation with all countries and organizations that recognized Kosovo independence so 'official approval from the government should be understood in that context.

ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL IN 2008

In Serbia there is a need for further assessment on the following issues:

- strategy analysis and integrated policy approach in entrepreneurship learning;
- assessments on introducing entrepreneurship learning in primary schools;
- evaluation of pilot projects in secondary schools and identification of policy recommendations;
- curriculum development at the secondary school level;
- collecting regional literature, case studies and best practices in the field of formal entrepreneurship learning;
- enhancing communication between businesses and education institutions at secondary and high-education level;
- mapping all training providing institutions and to make a methodology for quality assurance and assessment of their performance;
- creating internet portal with information on all available entrepreneurial education opportunities;
- creating a mechanism for training assessments and cooperation with the business sector;
- assessment for tailor-made and in house training programs;
- assessment for introducing voucher system of consulting services in entrepreneurship learning;

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