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Ministarstvo za Regionalni Razvoj
Ministry of Regional Development

**DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC PLANNING AND
ANALYSIS**

**REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF VISITS IN FIVE (5)
DEVELOPMENT REGIONS IN KOSOVO**

- PHASE 1 -

November 2020

This document is a product of the Department for Regional Socio-Economic Planning and Analysis under the Ministry of Regional Development and it is intended to serve the needs of this institution, of line ministries and of municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo in terms of the design and development of policies to support the ideas, collaborations and projects with a regional impact of the municipalities.

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Introduction

The Ministry of Regional Development, based on its legal mandate defined in Annex 16 of Regulation (GRK) No. 06/2020 on Areas of Administrative Responsibility of the Office of the Prime Minister and Ministries, as amended and supplemented by Regulation (GRK) No. 07/2020, and on Regulation (GRK) No. 04/2018 on Internal Organization and Systematization of Jobs in the MRD, aims to promote communication between municipalities within the regions, in order to stimulate balanced regional socio-economic development. The MRD aims to reduce regional development inequalities in economic terms between the five development regions in which the MRD implements socio-economic programs, as follows: Development Center Center (Prishtina with surrounding municipalities), Development Region East (Ferizaj with surrounding municipalities), Development Region West (Peja with surrounding municipalities), Development Region South (Prizren with surrounding municipalities) and Development Region North (South Mitrovica with surrounding municipalities).

Encouragement of cooperation between municipalities aimed to increase the number of projects with a regional character has a great impact on the interconnection of regions and on the municipalities of each region, enabling the identification of common potential from each relevant field with an impact on socio-economic development across the territory of Kosovo. Based on its mandate and acting in accordance with its vision of promoting balanced regional development, as well as knowing that sustainable projects are a special way of development and an important form for achieving the goals defined in the development plans at institutional and national levels, the MRD is committed to implement as many projects of a comprehensive and inter-municipal character to contribute to increased economic development, economic sustainability, and better quality of life for the citizens in general.

By stimulating the communication of municipalities within the regions towards identification of regional socio-economic projects, the MRD aims to improve regional socio-economic indicators and encourage municipalities to engage in long-term and sustainable cooperation in the benefit of all. Based on its legal mandate, the MRD develops, manages and promotes programs to ensure balanced socio-economic development throughout the territory of the Republic of Kosovo. The MRD implements two (2) programs annually:

- Regional Development Program (RDP), to support capital projects in the municipalities of the five development regions.
- Balanced Regional Development Program (BRDP), to support the private sector in the five development regions.

Executive summary

The Department for Regional Socio-Economic Planning and Analysis (DRSEPA), based on Regulation No. 04/2018 on Internal Organization and Systematization of Jobs, is tasked inter alia with the coordination of activities with municipalities within the regions aimed at stimulating balanced regional socio-economic development.

During its work in planning activities and building a system for monitoring balanced regional socio-economic development, the DRSEPA identified the need for implementing a Visit Plan in the five (5) development regions.

Due to the large number of municipalities (38) and considering that the large municipalities act as leaders in terms of topics and cooperation of municipalities within the regions, at this implementation phase of the plan the DRSEPA visited two (2) municipalities in each region (the largest of the respective region in terms of population and geographical coverage), but it plans to visit other municipalities as well in future phases. This activity was preceded by a visit plan with all details (dates of visits, persons responsible for meetings in municipalities), which was approved by the Secretary General of the MRD.

The meeting invitations were distributed to the directorates for economic development and the directorates for culture, youth and sports in the municipalities, which are contact points with the MRD for the exchange of data on regional development. The (5) Regional Development Agencies (RDA Center, RDA East, RDA West, RDA South and RDA North) were also invited to the meetings. Each visit was also announced by the DRSEPA through a notice on the MRD's official website.

The DRSEPA compiled individual summaries for the meetings held with the municipalities. The summary of the meeting was sent to the representatives of the municipalities for comments, where a number of them responded.

Summaries of 10 visits/meetings conducted in municipalities are reflected in this summary report.

Purpose

The purpose of the visit plan was to discuss with municipalities about past cooperation, the climate of communication between them (municipalities within the development region), the existing needs and capacities for cooperation, the role that the MRD can play in this regard, potential activities of regional character which can be considered of interest and which can be supported, etc. In the framework of these visits to municipalities, the MRD held meetings with directorates for economic development and directorates for culture, youth and sports. In the service of the cooperation with the UNICEF, the MRD included in the agenda of the visits UNICEF programs for the establishment of innovation centers in municipalities and the program of engagement of interns in municipalities funded by UNICEF. The MRD also invited representatives of the Regional Development Agencies of the five regions which have a very important role in contacting the municipalities and in the cooperation in and mediation of many development processes for the benefit of the municipalities themselves.

A total of 10 (ten) visits were conducted during October 2020 - November 2020, two (2) visits per region, and each visit was followed by a report and notice on the MRD's official website.

Implemented plan of visits in the five (5) development regions

The plan of visits to municipalities - Phase 1, was approved by the Secretary General of the MRD on 06 October 2020.

After the approval of the plan by the Secretary General, invitations/notifications were sent to the municipalities according to the schedules presented in the table below:

Date of visit	Development Region Center/municipalities	Development Region East/municipalities	Development Region South/municipalities	Development Region West/municipalities	Development Region North/municipalities
13.10.2020	Prishtina				
	Podujeva				
20.10.2020		Ferizaj			
		Gjilan			
23.10.2020			Prizren		
			Suhareka		
27.10.2020				Peja	
				Gjakova	
05.11.2020					Mitrovica
					Skenderaj

Implementation of visits in the Development Region Center - Municipalities of Prishtina and Podujeva

Representatives of the Department for Regional Socio-Economic Planning and Analysis conducted the first visit in accordance with the plan of visits to the RDC, first to the Municipality of Prishtina and then to the Municipality of Podujeva. The meetings were conducted through institutional coordination between the MRD, the Directorate for Economic Development and the Directorate for Culture, Youth and Sports of each municipality.

The visit to the Municipality of Prishtina took place on 13 October 2020, at the premises of the Municipality in Prishtina, with Mrs. Blerta Basholli - Director of Culture, Mr. Fitim Rexha, and Mrs. Magbule Zejnullahu, representative of the Directorate for Economic Development. The meeting focused on the purpose of visits and on the importance of stimulating and developing joint projects of municipalities within the region and with municipalities from other regions. In addition, the MRD presented the capacity-building and incentive programs it implements to stimulate inter-municipal cooperation in the field of regional development aimed at advancing balanced socio-economic development. Representatives from the MRD identified a number of joint projects with socio-economic, cultural, tourist impact, etc. They further presented the cooperation established between the MRD and donors, as well as the activities that will be implemented in the coming period to support micro and small businesses in building their capacity.

Representatives from the Municipality of Prishtina expressed their readiness and great will to cooperate and expand cooperation with other municipalities by implementing joint projects in the field of culture, youth and sports, and in the field of economy. As a municipality/capital city with sufficient financial potential, Prishtina is not known to have a significant history of cooperation with other municipalities, but it was stressed that the willingness and desire to promote communication with municipalities is necessary and important for sustainability of future collaborations.

Identified regional impact projects in the Municipality of Prishtina:

Culture	<p>With the municipalities of Gjakova and Mitrovica – organization of a regional festival focusing on cultural heritage;</p> <p>Support of Art Colony project aimed at implementation of regional cultural activities.</p>
Economy	<p>With the Municipality of Podujeva – Project for functionalization of the holiday park for orphans in Orllan</p> <p>With all municipalities – stimulation of sustainable projects led by women in cooperation with the MRD through the fund established from taxes collected by the Municipality of Prishtina.</p>

On 13 October 2020, the second visit to the DRC was conducted in the premises of the Municipality of Podujeva, attended by Mrs. Donjeta Salihu, Director of Culture and Mr. Bunjamin Hoti, Director of Economic Development. The interlocutors of this meeting also discussed the importance of implementing projects of regional character, as well as the potential and willingness of this municipality to cooperate with municipalities of other regions. The projects identified by the attending representatives mainly focused on tourism.

Identified regional impact projects in the Municipality of Podujeva:

Mountain tourism	With the Municipality of Mitrovica – cooperation for the revival of tourism in the Shala e Bajgores region in the field of agritourism.
Water tourism	With the Municipality of Prishtina – Revitalization of the holiday park for orphans in Orllan.

Photos from the visits in the municipalities of Prishtina and Podujeva



Implementation of visits in the Development Region East - municipalities of Ferizaj and Gjilan

In the course of implementing the plan of visits to municipalities aimed at discussing topics of balanced regional socio-economic development advancement in Kosovo, representatives of the Ministry of Regional Development visited two municipalities of the Development Region East: the municipalities of Ferizaj and Gjilan. The meetings were held in the premises of the respective municipalities on 20 October 2020, with representatives of the Directorate for Economic Development and of the Directorate for Culture.

The MRD representatives presented the activities currently being implemented and the vision for implementing joint activities aimed at advancing balanced regional socio-economic development. Encouragement of communication between municipalities within regions towards identification of joint ideas and projects with a regional economic impact, and the

coordination of activities in the field of regional development were also discussed at the meetings.

At the Municipality of Ferizaj premises the meeting was held with the Director of Economic Development, Mr. Zekir Bytyqi, who voiced the challenges, willingness and great need of the Municipality of Ferizaj to cooperate with the surrounding municipalities, as well as with municipalities of other regions. So far, this municipality has no record of inter-municipal cooperation, but being the biggest municipalities of the DRE, it has great needs and capacity for cooperation.

Identified regional impact projects in the Municipality of Ferizaj:

<p>Mountain tourism</p>	<p>With the Municipality of Suhareka – cooperation with the Budakova region in the field of tourism aimed at revitalization and revival of the Jerzerci mountains.</p> <p>With the Municipality of Gjilan – Revitalization and functionalization of the Pine Park in Mirasala and Rahovica villages.</p>
<p>Livestock market</p>	<p>With the Municipality of Viti – functionalization of the traditional weekly market in Dardani, which has a regional character.</p>

In the Municipality of Gjilan the meeting was held with the representative of the Regional Development Agency East, Mr. Agim Zeka, the Director of Economic Development, Ms. Valbona Tahiri, and the Director of Culture, Ms. Deniza Limani. The meeting focused on the strategic topics being or planned to be implemented by the MRD to stimulate coordination between municipalities and to support regional projects by stimulating inter-municipal cooperation.

The Municipality of Gjilan expressed great willingness for cooperation and identified a number of tourism, cultural and economic projects, briefing on the good cooperation it had with other municipalities previously.

Identified regional impact projects in the Municipality of Gjilan:

Tourism	<p>With the Municipality of Novobrd – Project for cleaning the Stanishorka River connecting two municipalities of the Development Region East.</p> <p>The Livoc dam in the Municipality of Gjilan / aim is to turn it into an attractive modern park).</p> <p>Morava e Binces project, connecting six (6) municipalities of the DRE; a strategic regional project.</p>
Culture	<p>Maintenance of cultural heritage buildings</p>
Regional livestock market	<p>With the Municipality of Kamenica – Functionalization of the traditional/cross-border livestock market in Rogana, which has a regional character.</p>

Photos from the visits in the municipalities of Ferizaj and Gjilan



Implementation of visits in the Development Region South - municipalities of Prizren and Suhareka

Visits were also conducted in the two major municipalities of the Development Region South, namely the municipalities of Prizren and Suhareka, attended by representatives of the Directorate for Economic Development and the Directorate for Culture, Youth and Sport. The meetings were held on 20 October 2020 in the premises of the respective municipalities. The meetings were also attended by representatives of the Regional Development Agency (RDA) South.

Taking into account the strategic planning of the MRD and the municipal development plans of the municipalities concerned, the parties identified a number of socio-economic topics and activities that can be implemented and which can have a regional development impact.

At the Municipality of Prizren the meeting was held with Mrs. Sevil Kazazi - Director of Economic Development and Mr. Nderim Bytyqi - Director of RDA South. The Municipality

of Prizren presented all current and potential projects that have a regional character and discussed the importance of these projects to cooperate with as many municipalities. Also, the Municipality of Prizren presented a good history of cooperation with neighboring municipalities in earlier periods.

Identified regional impact projects in the Municipality of Prizren:

<p><u>Tourism</u></p>	<p>With the municipalities of Dragash and Tetova – cross-border project of functionalizing the tourist information center in Prevala.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bicycle project - Crafts center in Prizren for professional training for women from all regions of Kosovo. - Prizren Bridges/project with cultural and tourist impact/walking trails <p>With the Municipality of Dragash – development of mountain/cultural tourism, specifically ecotourism; development of tourist inns.</p>
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At the Municipality of Suhareka the meeting was held with Mr. Agim Bylykbashi, Director of Economy and Finance, and Mr. Driton Maliqaj. A number of topics with regional relevance were discussed at the meeting, including inter-municipal cooperation between the Municipality of Suhareka and other municipalities, potential for cooperation, etc. The MRD representatives presented the purpose of the visit, the mandate of the Ministry, development programs and opportunities for cooperation with various donors.

Identified regional impact projects in the Municipality of Suhareka:

<p><u>Economy</u></p>	<p>With the Municipality of Rahovec – Development of agricultural zone – inter-municipal projects.</p> <p>With the Municipality of Shtërpcës – Development of road infrastructure.</p> <p>With the municipalities of Rahovec and Shtime –Dragaqina Dam, project for renewable energy, drinking water and tourism development.</p> <p>With the municipalities of Dragash and Mamusha – regional market.</p>
<p><u>Tourism</u></p>	<p>With the Municipality of Prizren – Development of mountain tourism in the regional parts of Kabash mountains.</p>
<p><u>Culture</u></p>	<p>With the Municipality of Rahovec – joint festival with cultural/regional character.</p>

Photos from the visits in the municipalities of Prizren and Suhareka



Implementation of visits in the Development Region West - municipalities of Peja and Gjakova

In the Development Region West, the meetings were held with the Municipality of Peja and the Municipality of Gjakova on 27 October 2020. The meetings were held with representatives of the Directorate for Economic Development and the Directorate for Culture, Youth and Sports.

At the Municipality of Peja, the MRD officials were received by the Director of Economic Development, Mrs. Blerta Begolli and the Director of Culture, Mrs. Xhenet Syka. Representatives of the MRD and of the respective municipalities discussed the activities and inter-municipal cooperation either implemented in the past and or in the process of implementation by municipalities within the Development Region West, as well as the current needs and commitment of municipalities for cooperation related to regional impact project implementation considering the great potential of this region in tourism and other sectors. Finally, the parties identified a number of socio-economic topics/activities which can be implemented in the future with the support of the MRD and which have a regional impact on development.

Identified regional impact projects in the Municipality of Peja:

<p><u>Economy</u></p>	<p>With the Municipality of Deçan – Construction of dam in Vranoc, Peja – Deçan, worth € 150,000. With the Municipality of Gjakova– Construction of Shqiponja – Llugagji road. With the Municipality of Junik - Via Dinareika, tourism and agriculture.</p>
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At the Municipality of Gjakova, the Director of Economic Development, Mr. Ferdinand Kolaj and the Director of Culture, Youth and Sports, Mrs. Saranda Hyseni received the MRD representatives in the municipality's premises. The topics discussed at the meeting included: the history of cooperation between the municipalities of this region, the needs and potentials for cooperation regarding the implementation of activities/projects with regional impact, and the MRD's supporting role. The MRD presented to the present representatives the activities it is implementing or plans to implement with international partners in supporting the private

sector to build their capacity. The Municipality of Gjakova has not engaged in any inter-municipal projects during the last three years.

Identified regional impact projects in the Municipality of Gjakova:

Tourism	Support to tourism projects
Culture	Establishment of regional council for cultural cooperation tourism festival.
Economy	Regulation of riverbeds. Wastewater treatment.

Photos from the visits in the municipalities of Peja and Gjakova



Implementation of visits in the Development Region North - municipalities of South Mitrovica and Skenderaj

The last visit according to the visit plan was realized in the Development Region North, in the two largest municipalities of this region, the Municipality of South Mitrovica and the Municipality of Skenderaj. The meetings in this region were attended representatives of the Directorate for Economic Development, the Director of Culture, Youth and Sports, and the Regional Development Agency (RDA) North. The meetings took place on 5 November 2020.

In the Municipality of Mitrovica, the MRD representatives met with the representative of the Directorate for Culture, Youth and Sports, Mr. Tafil Peci, and the representative of the RDA North, Mrs. Ruli Duli. Topics of discussion were: promotion of communication between municipalities within development regions in order to identify common ideas and projects with regional economic impact and coordination of activities in the field of regional development in order to advance balanced regional socio-economic development.

Identified regional impact projects in the Municipality of South Mitrovica:

<u>Culture</u>	With the Municipality of Zveçan – - Albanian villages of Zvecan, renovation of old cultural facilities –Boletin - Zhazha and Lipa. - Renovation of the church and mosque in Mazic.
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- Support of the "ROCKUT" International Festival in Mitrovica.

At the Municipality of Skenderaj the representatives of the Ministry of Regional Development were received by the Director of Economic Development, Mrs. Sanije Hoxha, the Director of Culture, Youth and Sports, Mr. Abdyl Ymeri, and the RDA North representative Mrs. Ruli Duli. The meetings took place on 5 November 2020 in the offices of the respective municipalities.

Representatives of the municipalities of Mitrovica and Skënderaj appreciated the visit and the support provided by the MRD to municipalities on an ongoing basis, whether through capital investments or subsidies and business grants.

The meeting interlocutors highlighted a number of concrete topics and activities which can be implemented through the cooperation of the municipalities of the Development Region North, both in terms of tourism development, culture and advancement of public infrastructure, which serve to advance balanced regional development.

Identified regional impact projects in the Municipality of Skenderaj:

Economy

The municipalities of Drenas and Vushtri
Qyqavica project – a joint tourist zone.

With the Municipality of Zubin Potok –
Kujica dam project, creation of water reserves and construction of a rehabilitation treatment center - Health Center

Photos from the visits in the municipalities of South Mitrovica and Skenderaj



UNICEF and youth programs

The Ministry of Regional Development, based on the cooperation with and the support by UNICEF, discussed two (2) programs implemented by UNICEF in the meetings with municipal representatives. These programs, involving capacity building and internships of young people in state institutions and private companies, are implemented in some of the

municipalities, with expected roll-out to other municipalities as well. In order to discuss topics related to UNICEF, the MRD invited, in addition to the Director of Economic Development, the Director of the Directorate of Culture, Youth and Sports of the Municipality of Prishtina.

As part of the visits made to the municipalities of the five (5) development regions (Center, East, West, South and North), the Ministry of Regional Development shared with representatives of relevant departments the topics and opportunities for cooperation with UNICEF for the establishment of the Innovation Laboratory and the implementation of the interns program.

Out of ten (10) municipalities visited, two (2) municipalities – Gjakova and Gjilan, have the Innovation Laboratory established by UNICEF in place, while other municipalities have expressed great interest to continue cooperation with UNICEF, both in the functionalizing the Innovation Centers established by MEST and the Municipality of Ferizaj through various activities, and in identifying adequate space to establish new laboratories. The Municipality of Suhareka, in addition to the space it can provide and make available to UNICEF, has also expressed the possibility for the functionalization of the innovative center already established in the Industrial Zone. Finally, all the municipalities expressed their need for internship programs as a great support to human capacity building of municipalities.

The MRD visited the following municipalities: Prishtina, Podujeva, Ferizaj, Gjilan, Gjakova, Peja, South Mitrovica, Skenderaj, Prizren and Suhareka.

Conclusions

The Department for Socio-Economic Planning and Analysis has successfully completed the Visit Plan in the five (5) development regions. As a result of the visits, important topics and issues were identified, to be considered by the MRD in the investment planning phase for the coming years.

Based on the visits to the two largest municipalities of each of the five development regions – Phase 1, aimed at promotion of communication between municipalities within the development regions to stimulate development, we reached the following conclusions:

1. Municipalities have expressed their interest and willingness to initiate inter-municipal regional cooperation and implement regional projects of interest to the respective development regions.
2. The visited municipalities emphasize that they possess all capacities and potentials to develop and implement projects with regional impact.
3. Each of the visited municipalities have each 3 to 5 ideas for potential projects to be implemented in the future through cooperation of the municipalities within a region, including construction of joint tourism centers, provision of infrastructure for the creation of special places for trade development, promotion of cultural heritage, cooperation in the use of existing available assets related to capacity building of young people, etc.
4. The municipalities blame the difficulties and technical obstacles in the implementation of capital projects on the delay of annual budget approval by the Municipal Assembly.
5. The Ministry of Regional Development should, within its mandate and profile, stimulate and support municipalities in the implementation of projects of a wider coverage through cooperation between the regions and the municipalities themselves.
6. Municipalities expect greater support from the central level to genuine regional projects according to the needs of municipalities and citizens.
7. Promotion of communication between municipalities in order to stimulate balanced regional socio-economic development in the five (5) development regions is a driving factor in achieving a sustainable economic and social development.
8. The MRD should continue with the implementation of other phases of visits to smaller municipalities or, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, carry out activities (virtual meetings or conferences) including all municipalities in the discussion.
9. Most of the visited municipalities welcome UNICEF for cooperation regarding the implementation of its two (2) programs: the establishment of innovation centers and the engagement of young people in internship.