



Bosnia and Herzegovina

Local Action Groups

Framework and setting

Geographic scale Twenty-three Local Action Groups (LAGs) are established in disadvantaged areas covering twenty-four municipalities of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Derвента, City of Mostar, Lukavac, Tuzla, Doboј, Travnik, Bosanski Brod, Samac, Maglaj, Bosanski Novi, Jajce, Vares, Drvar, Velika Kladusa, Bosanska Krupa, Kljuc, Brcko District, Sipovo, Bosansko Grahovo, Gorazde, Vlasenica, Srebrenica and Zvornik) geographically spread over two entities (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republic of Srpska) and one Brcko district. Currently thirteen LAGs are based in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, nine are in the Republic of Srpska, and one is located in Brcko District. The population covered by LAGs is approximately 800,000.

Policy framework Eighteen Local Action Groups (LAGs) were initiated in the framework of the United Nations Development Programme SUTRA II Project (Sustainable Transfer to Return Related Authorities) in April 2005. Remaining six (Sipovo, Bosansko Grahovo, Gorazde, Vlasenica, Srebrenica and Zvornik) were established in 2006 as a part of new phase of SUTRA Project called SUTRA PLOD (SUpport To Rights-based Approach – Partnership for Local Development). LAGs are considered as new local partnerships bringing together local authorities, civil society organisations and the private business sector.

Partnerships at work

Rationale Importance of the return of refugees and displaced persons in BiH to their pre-war places of residence is of the highest importance for the development of sustainable peace in BiH and exercising of basic human rights. Return is considered as pre-condition for creating the necessary conditions to enable the design of future interventions that ensure the long-term social and economic sustainability of return and reintegration of refugees and DPs in BiH and contribute to human development of BiH communities. In this light, the Local Action Groups (LAGs) aim to build and strengthen the capacity of community members of both the governmental and the civil sector to identify and manage community development needs in a sustainable way.

Objectives The main objectives of LAGs are to enhance the public and private partnerships in BiH, to involve local partners in the decision making process at the municipal level and to enhance the capacity of NGOs and business sector by enabling them to become potential partners in the area of local development. This is in line with the overall objective of SUTRA project, which is to support BiH in the Stabilisation and Association Process with the European Union.

Functions The functions of the Local Action Groups are:

- _ creating and maintaining co-operation of all stakeholders at the local level related to employment and social inclusion;
- _ improving the integration and co-ordination of activities leading to social inclusion and increasing the rate of employment;
- _ defining strategies of economic and social development for the respective territories;
- _ developing and implementing programmes/projects and securing their sustainability;
- _ establishing mechanisms of the project assessment and recommendation;
- _ evaluating the results of the projects and their impact on the strategy;
- _ assistance in project monitoring;
- _ providing information and publicity on small-scale projects in territories; and
- _ dissemination of best practices within the country and abroad.

Policy areas Local government reform policies and local economic development policy

Policy tools/ Instruments The main activities include counselling services provided to target groups, the preparation of local development action plans and the conduction of capacity building activities to

increase performance and efficiency of LAGs' functions. The LAGs operate as the operational body for implementation of projects at the local/municipal level. The LAGs develop sub-projects proposals for their respective municipalities (including reconstruction of houses and technical infrastructure, local capacity building initiatives and definition of sustainability measures components), as well as co-ordinate all activities during implementation of the project.

Timeframe The first LAGs started to operate in April 2005 and together with others, which were established in the period 2005-2006, will be financed for a period of approximately 32 months. The LAGs are the continuation of "local consortia", which have been operative since 2003.

Partners The LAGs include municipal authorities, civil society organisations (NGOs) and the local business sector.

Contracts The LAGs are based on a partnership statement which is signed between the partners to ensure clear division of responsibilities. An institutionalisation process is on-going.

Legal status None

Sources of Financing The LAGs are currently being financed by the United Nations Development Programme - SUTRA Project, which is co-financed by the European Commission and BiH.

Results The LAGs have gained recognition from the local authorities who have accepted the notion of working with and consulting civil society organisations and the local business sector in their rendering of services to citizens. All partners of the LAGs have developed their capacities in identifying needs in the community, defining development priorities, drafting project proposals, improving partnership between the public sector, private sector, and making sure that municipalities take necessary steps in order to measure the impact of service delivery partnerships, including obtaining feedback from citizens.

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