



Judicial Reform and Government Accountability Project

August 2013



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Project funded by:

U.S. Agency for International Development; USAID Serbia

Project implemented by:

National Center for State Courts; Management Systems International; and Development Professionals, Inc.

Key counterparts:

Ministry of Justice and State Administration; High Court Council; Higher Misdemeanor Court; Administrative Court; Misdemeanor Courts; Independent Agencies; and others.

Where we work:

Throughout Serbia

Project duration:

May 2011 to May 2016

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BACKGROUND

USAID strengthens Serbia's rule of law by improving the transparency and efficiency of the judiciary, in particular the Misdemeanor and Administrative Courts. It improves the integrity and openness of government operations by supporting independent agencies' and civil society's efforts to make government open and accountable.

ACTIVITIES

- Enhancing the efficiency and transparency of Misdemeanor and Administrative Courts;
- Strengthening independent agencies and their coordination with the judiciary and the National Assembly to improve government accountability; and
- Encouraging judicial reform and improvements in governance by assisting local organizations with grants to support advocacy for improvements in the rule of law, reducing corruption, monitoring political party financing, and increasing the culture of personal responsibility/respect for the law.

RESULTS

- Provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration for drafting the new Law on Misdemeanors, adopted by the National Assembly in July 2013, which will improve the courts' procedural efficiency and enforcement and collection mechanisms;
- Upgraded facilities in the Valjevo, Arandjelovac, Zrenjanin, Zajecar, Loznica, Ruma, Kragujevac, Novi Sad, Prokuplje and Kikinda Misdemeanor Courts to provide the public with efficient court services and easy access to information about court procedures;
- Computerized Misdemeanor Courts and contributed to better case processing by providing over 3,000 pieces of computer hardware;
- Trained misdemeanor and administrative court judges and staff on topics covering substantive law, ethics and court administration, anti-corruption regulations, and computer literacy;
- Helped independent agencies and the Misdemeanor Courts establish a coordination mechanism to address procedural challenges regarding the processing of cases related to audit, corruption, personal data protection and freedom-of-information violations;
- Provided substantial technical assistance to the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration for finalizing the Anti-Corruption Strategy and the accompanying Action Plan, assisting the Government of Serbia in fulfilling pre-conditions for joining the Open Government Partnership;
- Helped the Anti-Corruption Agency build and train a network of political finance monitors to examine the use of campaign funds by political parties during the 2012 elections;
- Organized a U.S. study tour for representatives of the State Audit Institution to study Transparency and Accountability in Public Financial Management; and
- Twenty-six grants totaling \$739,000 awarded to civil society groups to support efforts to promote judicial reform and good governance.