



PROJECT FACTSHEET

Western Balkans 2018

DECENTRALISATION FOR THE CITIZENS OF KOSOVO



Two young skaters enjoy the new cycle path in Shtime, built in partnership with the municipality and inaugurated in August 2017. © DEMOS

Since the declaration of independence in 2008, Kosovo has been engaged in the reform and decentralisation of its public authorities with the aim of strengthening autonomy and local democracy in its 38 municipalities. The SDC's "Decentralisation and Municipal Support" project (DEMOS) aims to help municipalities develop basic public services, thereby supporting Kosovo in its transition to a democratic and decentralised state.

From 2014 to 2017, the first phase of DEMOS led to significant progress in decentralisation: the amount of tax revenue collected locally increased, and more than 300,000 citizens in 17 municipalities benefited from improved municipal infrastructure. However, municipal services do not yet meet the expectations of citizens, particularly in the infrastructure sector, and trust in public institutions remains weak. Improving the management of human and financial resources and increasing citizen participation in decision-making are the main challenges.

A VIRTUOUS CIRCLE

The government of Kosovo is co-financing the second phase of the project with CHF 4.5 million (out of a total of CHF 17,650,000). It covers all 38 municipalities in the country and aims to:

1. Improve governance processes at the local level;
2. Provide better basic public services that will satisfy citizens;
3. Increase the incentive to pay taxes and thus contribute to the financial autonomy of the municipalities.

The SDC also supports the Association of Kosovo Municipalities (AKM), which defends the interests of municipalities with regard to central government. Today, the AKM is systematically consulted during the drafting of any new legislation concerning municipalities. The aim of this second phase is to increase the engagement of voters within the AKM so that it actively defends the interests of municipalities and strives to meet the needs of its members.



Staff of the municipality of Gjakova discuss mobility issues. © SDC

AN INNOVATIVE FUNDING SYSTEM

The second phase of this project is expected to reach the entire population of Kosovo. 1.8 million people will benefit directly from this programme with concrete improvements in their daily lives. A performance-based grant system (PBGS) has been developed for municipalities to support them in improving their services. To access funding, municipalities need to improve their financial management and democratic processes, such as citizen participation, and submit to an audit. They can also benefit from specific training and technical support. With these financial means at their disposal, municipalities can invest in security and mobility. For example, investing in pavements, bus stops, street lighting, refuse collection, the creation of public spaces (parks, playgrounds) and early years learning lead to improvements in life quality.

Beyond these tangible results, the programme aims to improve the democratic functioning of society (citizen consultations, municipal assemblies) and the management of human and financial resources (recruitment, internal audits, tenders, project management) in all of the 38 municipalities. The AKM will disseminate good practices and learning among its members.



The SDC's projects in partnership with the Municipality of Gjakova have enabled the construction of pedestrian paths, public spaces and street lighting.

© Municipality of Gjakova

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

NAME

Decentralisation for the citizens of Kosovo (DEMOS)

DEPARTMENT

SDC – Cooperation with Eastern Europe

TOPIC

Democracy
Decentralisation

COUNTRY/REGION

Kosovo

PARTNERS

Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation
Association of Kosovo Municipalities (AKM)

BACKGROUND

Since the declaration of independence in 2008, Kosovo has been engaged in the reform and decentralisation of its public authorities with the aim of strengthening autonomy and local democracy in its 38 municipalities.

AIM OF THE PROJECT

Help municipalities develop basic public services, thereby supporting Kosovo in its transition to a democratic, decentralised state.

TARGET GROUP

The 38 municipalities in Kosovo, i.e. 1.8 million people, and the AKM.

RESULTS SO FAR

More than 300,000 citizens in 17 municipalities have benefited from improved municipal infrastructure and the AKM plays an active role in developing legislation concerning the municipalities.

DURATION

Phase 2: 01.01.2018 – 31.12.2021

BUDGET

Phase 2: CHF 12'800'000

CONTACT

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
Cooperation with Eastern Europe, Western Balkans Division
Freiburgstrasse 130, 3003 Bern
Phone: +41 (0)58 462 22 12
E-Mail: deza-oza@eda.admin.ch
www.sdc.admin.ch

FURTHER INFORMATION

The SDC's activities in Kosovo
<https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/countries/kosovo.html>
Project website
<http://helvetas-ks.org/demos/>
Facilitating relationships between civil society and local governments
<https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/themes-sdc/state-economic-reforms/decentralization.html>