



STANDING CONFERENCE OF TOWNS AND MUNICIPALITIES

**STRATEGIC PLAN
STANDING CONFERENCE OF CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES –
THE ASSOCIATION OF TOWNS AND MUNICIPALITIES SERBIAN
(2011– 2013)**

Belgrade, December 2010

INTRODUCTION

Valid SCTM Strategic Plan, which covers a three year period from 2008 to 2010, was adopted on the 36th Assembly of the SCTM, held on 3 December 2007 in Belgrade. Defined in accordance with recognized interests and expectations of its membership, the Strategic Plan for 2008-2010 laid the foundations for SCTM actions in the complex and dynamic socio-political context in Serbia, country that has only passed its first steps on the road to decentralization and creation of a favorable environment for the functioning of local self-government.

Rapid development and growing influence of the SCTM in the past three years are the result of strong support and active participation of its membership in its work. This is the reason that, when it comes to reform and strengthening of local self-government, SCTM has been accepted as indispensable partner to national and international institutions and has become an important actor in the process of decentralization and reform of local self-government system.

Bearing in mind that, upon expiry hereof, it is required to pass a new strategic document, which will set the guidelines and goals of development and operation of the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities in the following 3 years, relying on a basic set of four strategic areas in the current Strategic Plan as the starting point of lasting importance – this draft Strategic Plan has been made for the period 2011-2013.

Therefore, SCTM Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2013 is based upon the strategic commitments of its membership and on the way of reaching these commitments that has been already drawn. This approach has been validated through intensive and open communication with the membership that lasted throughout 2010 within the campaign “SCTM – Our Address”. On this basis, Framework for the SCTM Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2013 has been devised and adopted on the 8th meeting of the SCTM Presidency, held on 14 September 2010 in Beočin. Upon its consideration on the meeting of the Presidency, this document went through public debate during September and October this year. On this basis, full text of the Draft SCTM Strategic Plan for 2011-2013 has been developed, which is offered for consideration by the Presidency, and then, in the form of a proposal – for consideration and adoption by the SCTM Assembly on the 38th Assembly in December 2010.

SCTM – ASSOCIATION OF TOWNS AND MUNICIPALITIES OF SERBIA

Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM) is an association of towns and municipalities in Serbia. Founded in 1953 and modeled in the tradition of national and international associations of local authorities around the world, SCTM is an organization dedicated to developing local self-government, advocating the interests of local authorities, strengthening their capacity to provide services to citizens and their mutual cooperation.

SCTM is a place of gathering, consultation and action of towns and municipalities in Serbia. SCTM has a role to advocate common interests of local authorities, to support the efforts of towns and municipalities aimed at building up their capacities and to help them cope with the problems they currently face. SCTM is dedicated to promoting cooperation and dialogue between local and central government. Likewise, SCTM supports international cooperation of municipalities and towns and serves as a key point in the flow of information on issues of importance to local self-government.

The highest SCTM body is the *Assembly*, comprising representatives of all towns and municipalities in Serbia. The Assembly sits at least once a year and makes major decisions relevant to the SCTM. The Assembly elects SCTM bodies and defines strategic objectives and priority tasks of the organization. The *Presidency* is the executive body that manages the SCTM between two sessions of

the Assembly. It consists of 23 members – representatives of towns and municipalities elected at the Assembly and the SCTM Secretary General, who is ex officio a member of the Presidency. SCTM has 10 *respective committees* covering different areas of importance for the local self-government – system of local self-government, finance, environmental protection, urban planning, public utilities, energy efficiency, social activities, local economic development, regional development, international cooperation and EU integration. The committees discuss problems in the areas under their competence, give opinions and suggest proposals aimed at improving the legal framework and conditions in respective areas they are in charge of.

[Insert Figure 1]

Figure 1: The political structure of the SCTM

The current strategic plan defines four priority areas of operation for the SCTM as an association that brings together all the towns and municipalities in Serbia: (1) advocating the interests of its members, (2) providing services to its members so as to improve their capacity, (3) information, communications, international cooperation and European integration and (4) further institutional strengthening of the SCTM. This set of defined strategic areas is the basis on which internal organizational structure of the SCTM Expert Service has been set up and functions.

Expert Service is divided into:

- Advocacy Department (with four sections), which acts to achieve the objectives of the Priority Area 1
- Services Department (which includes: Counseling Center, Training Center, Center for Planning and Projects), which acts on achieving the objectives of Priority Area 2
- Office of the Secretary General, Department of Information and International Relations Office, acting on achieving the objectives of Priority Area 3
- General Department and the Department of Finance, which act on achieving the objectives of the Priority Area 4

[Insert Figure 2]

Figure 2: Organizational Structure of the SCTM Expert Service

In the period 2008-2010, SCTM has significantly improved quality and increased the scope of its work, and greatly enhanced its influence in the overall social and political environment in Serbia, as well as internationally. Some of the key results in this respect are:

- Increased influence on the process of adoption of laws and other regulations relevant to local authorities, participation of representatives of local authorities in many governmental and parliamentary bodies in which decisions are made which affect towns and municipalities, development of model laws and other regulations and their acceptance by the central government, a vast number of legislative and other initiatives by the membership referred to central authorities and acceptance of a significant number of such initiatives;
- Increased volume and improved quality of services provided by SCTM to its membership, based on thoroughgoing analyses of the needs of members in the capacity development – through advisory services, a number of models for local regulations offered, through organized provision of technical assistance in accordance with specific needs of individual members, by organizing and maintaining a wide spectrum of training programs, various manuals and other “tools” and, in particular, through intensive support to making strategic plans for local sustainable development and through implementation of programs which provide support – in the manner and pursuant to EU regulations – to the projects of towns and

municipalities;

- Significantly improved communications with the membership, both through the work of SCTM bodies and organs and in numerous working groups and various forums – consultations, roundtables, conferences, as well as through the Network of Local Commissioners; expanded scope and range of the media through which SCTM transmits all relevant information to its members and the general public; improved communication with the public and increased visibility of the SCTM and its members' attitudes on the political scene in Serbia; intensified international cooperation of the SCTM and its membership and defined courses of action of the SCTM in support of the membership on Serbia's road towards the EU;
- Strengthened SCTM Expert Service in organizational and technical sense, especially in terms of total personnel potential, as one of the pillars of institutional stability and future viability of the SCTM.

This work of the SCTM, based on the commitments from the Strategic Plan 2008-2010, has been and is supported by a number of partners and the donor community, with whose help and support SCTM implements numerous projects and programs aimed at strengthening local self-government.

Working on the basis of the Strategic Plan for the next three-year period should, in the opinion of all relevant actors, additionally strengthen the organization, expand its influence and significantly contribute to strengthening the capacity of its membership and overall better life of citizens in local communities.

STRATEGIC PLAN AS A FRAMEWORK FOR SCTM OPERATIONS IN THE PERIOD 2011-2013.

SCTM Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2013 is the general framework for the operations of the SCTM as an institution that brings together, represents and supports towns and municipalities in Serbia in achieving their common goal – to improve their functioning and thereby contribute to a higher quality of life of citizens in local communities.

In preparing the document, relevant elements of social, economic and political realities were taken into account, along with defined interests and expectations of the SCTM membership, as well as the activities aimed at improving conditions for the development of local self-government that are ongoing or have already been devised in the adopted strategy, programming and planning documents.

SCTM Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2013 reflects the continuity in the work and activities of the association based on SCTM strategic plans starting from 2002, and particularly the Strategic Plan for the period 2008-2010. Strategic framework for the advocacy area, which was adopted in 2009 by the SCTM Assembly, has been integrated into the Strategic Plan for 2011-2013, which, by adoption, becomes a unique strategic planning document of the SCTM.

SCTM Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2013 is based on four key objectives of the organization, already recognized under the previous strategy document:

- Advocating common interests of its membership
- Providing services to its members so as to develop their capacities
- Support the exchange, communication and mutual cooperation of local authorities
- Developing the capacity of the SCTM as an organization.

Within the priority areas, the Strategic Plan contains an overview of the main goals, key activities that are supposed to contribute to achieving these goals and indicators of success in their achievement.

Upon adoption of the Strategic Plan, in accordance with established SCTM practice, at the beginning of each year, annual action plan will be prepared, which will be considered and adopted by the Presidency, and which will be implemented through the work of SCTM bodies and organs and its Expert Service.

At the end of each year, SCTM will appraise the implementation of the Action Plan, while the Expert Service will prepare, for the requirement of the SCTM Presidency and the Assembly, appropriate report on the implementation, as well as proposals for amendments to be entered into the strategic framework and other programmatic documents, in order to adjust the plans to current needs of members, events at the central government and the overall socio-political environment. Special attention will be paid to developing new activities, projects and programs based on the Strategic Plan and their adequate integration into the work of the SCTM.

SCTM VISION AND MISSION

VISION

SCTM is institutionally strong and viable association of towns and municipalities that contribute to a responsible and effective local self-government, in the democratic and European Serbia.

MISSION

Support for strengthening local self-government in Serbia through mutual cooperation and joint action of towns and municipalities, advocating their common interests and improving their capacity.

PRINCIPLES AND VALUES OF THE SCTM AND ITS MEMBERSHIP

In its activities, the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities is guided by the following principles:

- **Voluntariness**
- **Equality of members**
- **Non-partisan character**
- **Independence**
- **Transparency**
- **Solidarity and respect for diversity**

SCTM membership respects and cherishes:

- **Ethical code of conduct of representatives of local authorities**
- **Gender equality principles**
- **Principles and practices of good governance**
- **Principles and practices of sustainable development**

PRIORITY AREAS OF SCTM STRATEGIC ACTION IN THE PERIOD 2011-2013

I – **ADVOCATING COMMON INTERESTS OF THE MEMBERSHIP:** support for development and functioning of towns and municipalities by advocating their interests before national and provincial authorities

II – **PROVIDING SERVICES TO MEMBERS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR CAPACITY:** continued support for improving the capacity of local self-governments in Serbia in accordance with best practices and standards

III – **COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION:** support for trade, communication and mutual cooperation of local authorities at national and international level and support to local authorities in the process of Serbia's accession to the EU

IV – **DEVELOPING CAPACITY OF SCTM AS AN ORGANIZATION:** institutional strengthening and financial viability of the SCTM

I – ADVOCATING COMMON INTEREST OF THE MEMBERSHIP:

SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND FUNCTIONING OF TOWNS AND MUNICIPALITIES BY ADVOCATING THEIR INTERESTS BEFORE NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL BODIES

1. IMPROVING CONDITIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECENTRALISATION

1.1. Key actors in the socio-political environment are continuously informed about relevant aspects, priorities and problems in the functioning of local self-government system in Serbia

In promoting the program objectives and priorities in the field of advocacy, in the following period, SCTM will pay special attention to strengthening communication and cooperation with the public, relevant social actors and partners on the social scene advocating for the same or similar issues. Through its information and publicity activities, SCTM will seek to reach out to as many people with potential impact and to provide support from specialized public. Likewise, efforts will be made to further outline the SCTM as an advocate of the interests of local self-governments and to raise awareness in key decision-makers about the importance of the role of the SCTM and the activities it conducts.

Main activities

- Regular exchange of information with relevant national and local media and actors on the social scene in order to increase their interest in the priorities and objectives of the SCTM in the field of advocacy
- Continuous maintenance of a special advocacy section on the SCTM website and publishing specialized SCTM periodical “Legal Bulletin”
- Continued promotion of the SCTM basic priorities and individual actions in the field of advocacy through press releases, public appearances of SCTM representatives etc.
- Organizing public campaigns aimed to promote specific goals and implementation of priorities

- Introduction of new forms of communication both with general and specialized public in the field of advocacy

Indicator of success:

Higher level of recognition of problems and priorities of local authorities by the actors in the social environment and SCTM partners

1.2. Institutional, administrative, financial and other capacities and location of towns and municipalities have improved

SCTM will continually strive to improve the institutional and legal framework and to strengthen the administrative, organizational and functional capacity of local self-governments in order to provide high quality implementation of the existing responsibilities and to take on new ones. Particularly important issue and a prerequisite for any further transfer of responsibilities to lower levels of government is further fiscal decentralization that will ensure their financing. Likewise, special attention will be focused on improving the work of all local authorities, especially the questions of reorganization, capacity building, effectiveness and quality of local administration, whose effective work is indispensable for the work of local self-governments to be adequately implemented.

Main activities

- Continuous monitoring and analyzing of local self-government system and enforcement of regulations that partially or fully concern local self-government and assessment of the needs of towns and municipalities in this area
- Proposing, formulating and advocating initiatives and proposals for the adoption of new regulations and policies or changes to the existing ones, in order to continuously improve the overall system of local self-governance and capacity building of local authorities
- Developing model legislation and specialized databases and knowledge (base regulations etc.) in order to improve the system of local self-governance and institutional and administrative capacities of local authorities

Indicator of success:

Local authorities have a significant volume/area of responsibility, as well as financial and administrative capacities sufficient for their implementation.

1.3. Enhanced cooperation with national and provincial authorities and participation of SCTM and local authorities in the preparation, monitoring and implementation of policies and regulations

In an effort to enhance cooperation with the National Assembly of the Republic Serbia and its line committees, the Government of the Republic of Serbia and line ministries and the Government of AP Vojvodina and provincial secretariats, SCTM will in future continue its active work in advocating initiatives and proposals before national and provincial authorities and in strengthening dialogue under different forms of cooperation, such as meetings with key representatives of the higher levels of government, cooperation within the Commission for Funding of Local Self-Government and participation in working groups for drafting of regulations, line committees of the National Assembly and other line advisory bodies and working groups.

Main activities

- Arrange meetings with top officials of central and provincial authorities in order to advocate the interests of towns and municipalities
- Continued participation of SCTM representatives in the work of expert, consultancy, business and other bodies formed by national and provincial authorities, especially the work of the Commission for Funding of Local Self-Government, working groups for drafting of regulations and line committees of the National Assembly
- Organising cooperation and periodic meetings, information sessions and presentations for employees in national and provincial authorities

Indicator of success:

SCTM is recognized as an important and essential partner for national and provincial governments in policy-making process and the drafting of regulations. Initiatives and proposals of the SCTM are integrated into policies and laws and regulations.

2. IMPROVEMENT OF SCTM INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY FOR ADVOCACY IMPLEMENTATION

2.1. Improved formal position of SCTM as an advocate of the interests of towns and municipalities in social and political environment

While the legal system provides no clear obligation for the higher authorities to carry out consultations with the national association of towns and municipalities, in defining its policies and passing regulations that have impact on local self-government, SCTM will continue to strive to build a better legal and institutional framework for these consultations. Special attention will be devoted to the improvement of the Commission for Funding of Local Self-Government as the most significant existing body of institutional coordination and communication of state and local authorities. This Commission should get a more prominent role, that is, become a mechanism for coordination and consultation on all matters directly or indirectly related to the funding of local self-government. However, consultation and coordination in the development of local self-government system is needed in other areas too, and it is necessary also to improve the formal position of the SCTM as an association of towns and municipalities in the process of preparation of all regulations that partially or fully concern local level of government.

Main activities:

- Activities on improvement of formal relevance and capacity of the Commission for Funding of Local Self-Government
- Active promotion of the need to improve formal position of the SCTM as an association of towns and municipalities in the process of decision-making that affect local self-government and advocacy of their interests
- Developing and advocating concrete proposals for better regulation of SCTM position in the process of decision-making concerning local self-government.

Indicator of success:

The importance and capacity of the Commission for Funding have been improved. The position of SCTM as an association of towns and municipalities in Serbia has been formally improved.

2.2. Active participation of SCTM members in discussing and defining common interests and specific advocacy activities and a raised level of their knowledge about the priorities and objectives of the SCTM

The priority of the SCTM in the field of advocacy is to involve its members, in a more significant way, into specific activities, by gathering their initiatives, organizing work of committees and other bodies, consulting the membership, regular communication with experts from local self-government, organization of thematic meetings and other activities. Support for membership and interaction with representatives of towns and municipalities is of crucial importance for successful advocacy of common interests and therefore special attention will be given to the active involvement of members in the definition and realization of common interests.

Overview of main activities:

- Continued organizing of the work of SCTM committees, specialized working groups and other bodies
- Organizing small networks of experts/consultants from local self-governments in support to every section at the Advocacy Department and cooperation between SCTM Expert Services and experts from local self-government units
- Organizing surveys on the needs of towns and municipalities and regular consulting of SCTM members on most important issues in the field of advocacy
- Organizing periodic thematic meetings, mini conferences, workshops, round tables and panels in order to gather experts from local authorities and to consider key issues of local self-government
- Continuous gathering and processing of individual initiatives by SCTM members
- Organizing petitions and other forms of manifestation of members' support for advocacy activities
- Promotion of SCTM program goals among its members in order to raise their level of interest and readiness for joint action

Indicator of success:

Enhanced interaction between SCTM and its members in advocacy activities. SCTM members are actively involved in specific activities.

2.3. Continuous setting of priorities, planning and programming of activities and application of analytical and programmatic approach to advocacy

Carrying out program and analytical operations and establishing priorities is a continuous process in the field of advocacy, within basic assumptions from the program documents or on the basis of identified problems and priorities within the system of local self-government. By the end of each work/program year, SCTM will appraise the achievement of priorities and implementation of the program documents and, based on that, possibly make their revisions. At the beginning of each year, annual action plans will be defined, which will regulate in more detail the activities of advocacy, lobbying and promotion of key priorities and program objectives.

Overview of main activities:

- Continued defining of key common problems and priorities of local authorities and development of specific analyses and program documents (policy documents, white paper etc.) for the identification of conditions and solutions to problems in the system of local self-government
- Preparation and implementation of the annual action plan for achieving priorities and objectives in the field of advocacy
- Regular annual evaluation and possible revision of the program framework for advocacy

Indicator of success:

Using analytical and program planning, SCTM continuously determines and realizes priorities in the field of advocacy.

2.4. Enhanced expert, administrative and technical capacities of SCTM organs and bodies and its Expert Service for organizing and implementing the function of advocating the interests of towns and municipalities

Taking into account the work dynamics of the organization, as well as its financial and other capacities, quality and quantitative analysis of work of 10 line committees will be performed in the forthcoming period. The issues to be considered will be their restructuring, possible reduction or increase in their numbers and introduction of new relevant topics in their work. Likewise, special attention will be paid to the improvement of specialized working groups and networks of experts from local self-governments and the coordination and internal linking and grouping of members or their representatives who are interested in specific issues or group of issues.

The process of strengthening the capacity of the Expert Service will continue along with further professionalization and training of employees in the Advocacy Department, in order to improve the quality of the monitoring and analysis of legislation or draft legislation, and formulate proposals for their modification. Special attention will be given to strengthening the capacity and procedures for the preparation and distribution of information and initiatives and for monitoring of the achievement of initiatives and proposals submitted.

Overview of basic activities:

- Analysis of SCTM line committees
- Improvement of the existing and continuous introduction of new mechanisms for formulating and representing the interests of members (working groups, expert networks, grouping of members in certain areas etc.)
- Strengthening the capacity of the SCTM to review regulations, monitoring their application and preparation of proposals for their improvement
- Further profiling of expert sections in the Advocacy Department in the SCTM Expert Service and raising the professional capacities of employees (training, placements and study visits, support for academic training of staff, development of manuals and databases etc.)

Indicator of success:

Increased capacity of SCTM organs and bodies and its Expert Services for implementation of advocacy activities. SCTM has knowledge and experience in the field of advocacy that it uses to further improve the system of local self-government in Serbia.

II – PROVIDING SERVICES TO MEMBERS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR CAPACITY:

CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR IMPROVING THE CAPACITY OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN SERBIA IN ACCORDANCE WITH BEST PRACTICES AND STANDARDS

1. SCTM KNOWLEDGE CENTER (COUNSELLING CENTER AND TRAINING CENTER) CONTINUOUS CONTRIBUTION TO THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW KNOWLEDGE AND BEST PRACTICES IN THE WORK OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENTS

1.1. Continuous providing of legal and other support to the issues of towns and municipalities

Since the establishment of the Counselling Center, legal support has become one of the most important services provided by the SCTM to the employees in all local self-governments. This type of support includes professional and timely response to inquiries of employees in local self-government. Usually, these are issues concerning the legal framework, but the Counselling Center is also equipped with other know-how and tools from various fields, which can contribute to the improvement in functioning of towns and municipalities.

Main activities

- Continuous providing of answers to legal inquiries and other issues from the local authorities
- Developing a network of legal experts from local self-governments as a future instrument for the SCTM to provide answers to legal inquiries from the local authorities

Indicator of success:

The Counseling Center is recognized as a relevant address to which legal and other inquiries can be addressed in relation to the work of local self-governments. An increase in the number of inquiries from towns and municipalities and in the number of responses provided by the Counselling Center.

1.2. Continuous gathering and improvement of best practice models (international and local) and their distribution to interested local self-governments

SCTM Counselling Center coordinates the “SCTM Knowledge Base” which combines materials prepared through operations of the committees, programs and projects of the SCTM, partner organizations and institutions, and many donor projects that have been implemented in the period from 2001 until present day. In the previous period, electronic base has been developed for the “Knowledge Base”, which in future should be put into full operation, primarily for use by SCTM members and partners.

Main activities

- Continuous gathering of national and international examples of good practice that strengthen the “SCTM Knowledge Base”
- Initiating exchange of international and local experience and study visits
- Regularly inform members about examples of best practice (through a network of SCTM commissioners) gathered in the “SCTM Knowledge Base”
- Distribution of best practice models to interested SCTM members
- Expert analysis of particular examples of national/international best practices in order to determine its possible application in a given town/municipality that is a SCTM member (on request).

Indicators of success

” SCTM Knowledge Base” is improved through examples of national and international best practices. The Counselling Center is recognized as a relevant address from which you can request examples of

best practices of local self-governments.

1.3. Organizing expert consultations for groups of employees in local self-government

This is a new service that SCTM plans to offer to its members and it is based on the results of annual surveys on the needs of the membership. SCTM is planning to organize expert consultations for particular structures of employees and experts from local self-governments. In order to achieve complete financial independence, efforts will be made that registration fees cover the costs of providing this service to SCTM membership.

Main activities

- Organizing regular annual/semi-annual expert counselling/seminars for certain categories of employees in towns and municipalities
- Analysis of needs and opportunities for developing sustainable models for organizing expert consultations (with registration fees)

Indicator of success

In 2011 a symposium/seminar is to be held for employees in towns and municipalities, and two professional conferences in 2012 and 2013 respectively

1.4. Further Support for the Network of SCTM Commissioners

The network currently consists of representatives of all the towns and municipalities in Serbia and it is the most important resource of SCTM in its regular communication and information of membership. SCTM plans to continue to work on building the capacity of the Network, i.e. its commissioners.

Main activities

- Organizing regular quarterly meetings of SCTM commissioners
- Organizing yearly two-day trainings for SCTM commissioners
- Organizing study tours for the most active SCTM commissioners

Indicators of success

Strengthened capacity of the SCTM Network of Commissioners, as the most important instrument for the exchange of information between the SCTM and its members.

Three one-day meetings and 1 two-day training held yearly

1.5. Organizing trainings in compliance with identified priorities of SCTM members

Based on regular analyses of needs of the membership, SCTM Training Center develops and implements training on numerous topics of importance for improvement of the capacity and functioning of local self-governments. At the same time, the activities of the Training Center are focused on strengthening cooperation with line ministries, relevant institutions and donor programs/projects, in order to improve the coordination of activities in this area and limited resources for capacity building of local governments through training, planned and to allocate limited funds for building the capacity of local self-governments according to identified plans and priorities of its membership. In all these activities, the Training Centre is continuously working, in collaboration with partners, on the construction of new standards and improvement of those existing in this area.

Main activities

- Regular monitoring and analyses of needs for training among representatives of local self-government
- Development and implementation of trainings in accordance with identified needs
- Support for identification, development and implementation of partner institutions and training programs/projects in order to implement trainings in accordance with membership's identified priorities
- Establishing mechanisms for continuous cooperation and exchange of information with key actors (line ministries, donor programs/projects and institutions), on building capacities of local self-governments through trainings and related activities
- Continuous collection and dissemination of information about trainings available to local self-governments
- Support the establishment of national standards in the areas of planning, development and implementation of training aimed at local self-governments

Indicators of success

Development and implementation of minimum 10 regional trainings per year, in accordance with identified needs in different areas within the jurisdiction of local self-governments.

Achieved continuous and active cooperation and support to partner institutions and programs/projects that contribute to the development and implementation of trainings in accordance with identified needs.

Active participation in developing trainings for the employees in local self-governments.

Standardized documents and procedures of the SCTM Training Center available to all interested parties.

1.6. Providing expert assistance at the request of cities and municipalities (the so-called support packages)

Support packages are a combination of different forms of expert support and have been developed in accordance with specific (project) specific request of local government. SCTM had previously been piloted this type of support the two projects and it turned out that the effects and long-term sustainability of such support in terms of types of support (training, consultation, etc..) That are also organized for a number of representatives from different municipalities.

Main activities

- Development of support packages for municipalities in accordance with identified needs and demands of towns/municipalities
- Building capacities for towns and municipalities through the implementation of support packages for towns and municipalities selected through open calls for proposals

Indicator of success

Implemented at least 3 support packages in accordance with the requirements of towns and municipalities

2. PLANNING PROCESS IN LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENTS BASED ON STANDARDIZED METHODOLOGY AND PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Continuous promotion and development of a methodological framework for planning at the local level in cooperation with the central government authorities and other partners

Methodological framework for local sustainable development strategies developed under the *Exchange 2* program, supported by an expert working group of representatives of relevant line ministries and institutions of the Serbian Government and international partners and programs, and tested in 25 local self-governments, constitutes a significant step in standardizing and improving the planning process at the local level. Through the Centre for Support of Local Capacity-Building (Center for Planning and Projects), SCTM will continue its activities in promotion of the SLSD framework, through a campaign that will include organization of a large number of roundtable discussions on this topic.

Main activities:

- Regular organization of expert SLSD working groups
- Conducting promotion campaign for the SLSD methodological box

Indicator of success

Methodological framework for planning at the local level accepted by municipalities and towns and supported by the central government and other partners.

2.2. Support towns and municipalities in developing strategies and implementing sustainable development, related action plans and sectoral strategies

In the previous period, SCTM directly supported towns and municipalities in making SLSD. So far, 25 towns and municipalities are supported in developing strategies, and plans are to continue working with towns and municipalities that don't have their SLSD.

Main activities:

- Direct support to towns and municipalities in developing and implementing strategies for sustainable development
- Support for programs and projects of importance for the planning and implementation of plans in the towns and municipalities in Serbia

Indicator of success

Number of towns and municipalities that have developed and implemented strategies for sustainable development, related action plans and sectoral strategies.

2.3. Continuous monitoring and analysis of the planning process in local self-governments (mapping strategy)

Through continuous work of the expert SLSD working group, efforts will be made to further improve the SLSD framework and other aspects of planning at the local level, implementation of the analysis of planning quality in towns and municipalities and regular mapping of plans at the local level.

Main activities:

- Regular mapping of municipal strategic documents and updating the Database

- Analysis of the quality of strategic planning in towns/municipalities in Serbia

Indicator of success

Towns and municipalities, the central government and SCTM partners are familiar with the processes and types of planning at the local level, as well as opportunities/recommendations for improvement of planning at the local level.

3. PRIORITIES OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENTS INCLUDED INTO PLANS INCLUDED OF THE SERBIAN GOVERNMENT FOR USE OF DONOR ASSISTANCE AND PREPARED ENOUGH PROJECTS READY FOR FUNDING

3.1. Annual identification of needs of local self-governments and participation in the planning of donor support, especially IPA funds

In 2009, in cooperation with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, SCTM initiated the process of identifying the needs of local self-governments for donor assistance. Several regional and national workshops were organized, and a report on the problems and needs presented to national and international actors involved in the process of assistance planning.

Main activities:

- Annual collection of information about the needs of towns and municipalities as integral part of the questionnaire on the needs of membership
- Organization of regional and/or national workshops (problem analysis and definition of priorities)
- Preparing reports on the needs of local self-governments for donor assistance

Indicator of success

Line ministries involved in the planning processes and representatives of donor organizations familiar with the needs and priorities of local self-governments for donor assistance.

3.2. Continued support in developing infrastructure projects and finding funds for financing through the use of SLAP information system

SLAP information system is a unique database of infrastructure projects, which is currently the only transparent tool in the process of selecting infrastructure projects that are to be financed from donor funds, primarily from the IPA funds.

Main activities:

- Support to local self-governments in gathering information and entering data into the SLAP information system
- Improving the knowledge of the design and implementation of infrastructure projects at the local level by working with a network of municipal SLAP coordinators

Indicator of success

Number of infrastructure projects that are in the SLAP information system and the number of funded projects.

3.3. Support in the identification of potential funding, preparing and implementing projects of local self-governments

In the previous period, SCTM was involved as an implementing partner in the implementation of several grant schemes – this is a specific type of services that the association carries out for specific donor organizations, and for the benefit of all members, which are thus provided easier access to project funding from donor funds. At this time, pursuant to the agreement with the Delegation of the European Union in Serbia, the *Exchange 3* grant scheme is being implemented, while SCTM will try to provide, in cooperation with partners, similar type of support upon expiration of the existing agreement.

Main activities:

- Support the implementation of projects financed under the two calls of *Exchange 3* programs

Indicator of success

All funded projects are completed successfully and the final reports are accepted by the donors.

4. IMPROVING RESOURCES FOR PROVISION OF SERVICES TO TOWNS AND MUNICIPALITIES IN SERBIA

4.1. Enhanced expert and administrative capacities of SCTM Expert Services for the organization and continuous provision of services to towns and municipalities

SCTM will continue to strengthen the capacity of the Expert Service and further professionalization and training of all employees in the Services Department. Special attention will be paid to improving knowledge and skills to provide expert assistance, introduction of alternative services, as well as expanding the number of potential users of the SCTM.

Main activities:

- Improving professional and expert capacities of the employees in the Services Department through training, placements and study visits, preparation of manuals and databases etc.

Indicator of success

SCTM has the knowledge and skills required to provide high-quality services to towns and municipalities.

4.2. Further development of the existing and introduction of new services (training, expert support models, best practices) for all and/or groups of local self-governments in cooperation with donor organizations

In the previous period, SCTM cooperated intensively with representatives of donor organizations, as well as programs and projects to develop existing services, as well as on elaborating new services, in accordance with the needs of towns and municipalities.

Main activities:

- Continued work on the implementation and elaboration of existing models of services in cooperation with existing and new programs and projects
- Collaboration with donor organizations in the introduction of new services for local self-governments, in accordance with the analyses of membership's requirements regularly conducted by the SCTM

Indicator of success

Regular application of models of best practices between developed services, and development of at least three new services.

4.3. Developed services based on specific requests with partial or full payment of their implementation

An increasing number of local self-governments are expressing their need for services that will be fully adapted to the situation in their environments and their specific needs. These requirements are almost impossible to respond within major donor programs that include parallel support for a number of towns and municipalities. In regard to this, in the forthcoming period, SCTM plans to offer a service of expert assistance in various areas, on the principle of partial or full payment for realization.

Main activities

- Continued development and implementation of various types of expert assistance based on specific requests of local self-governments and other partners – organizations that deal with capacity building of towns and municipalities in Serbia

Indicator of success

Developed services and at least 3 contracts with external partners implemented.

4.4. Developed networks of experts in various fields of relevance to the work of local self-governments

Noting the need for exchange of expert knowledge, experience and good practice between towns and municipalities, and taught that we have positive experiences with the Network of Local Commissioners, the plan is that in the forthcoming period we develop a network of experts in various fields relevant to the local self-governments.

Main activities

- Developing a network of experts in accordance with identified needs and requirements of SCTM members
- Strengthening the capacity of expert networks as instruments for the exchange of expert knowledge

Indicator of success

Two expert networks developed and their capacities strengthened.

III – COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION :

SUPPORT FOR TRADE, COMMUNICATION AND MUTUAL COOPERATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES AT NATIONAL, INTER-MUNICIPAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL; SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON SERBIA'S ROAD TO EU

1. EXCHANGE, COMMUNICATION AND MUTUAL INFORMATION

1.1. Timely information of local self-governments

SCTM has an important role in the provision, distribution and exchange of relevant information, the distribution and reproduction of the results of various activities and examples of best practices. To achieve these goals, in addition to various conferences, meetings, roundtables and other events, SCTM also uses its regular means of information – the magazine “Local Government”, electronic newsletter, its website and web presentation of its projects and programs being implemented, as well as various brochures, books and other publications.

Main activities

- Provide information on laws, bylaws and applicable legal regulations affecting the operation and development of local self-governments
- Timely dissemination of information on calls for submission of project proposals
- Informing local self-governments on examples of good practice in the country and the region
- Inform local self-government units about all activities and initiatives of the SCTM and the results of these initiatives
- Establishing strong ties and forming a network with all employees in local self-governments in charge of public relations

Indicator of success

High level of awareness of representatives of local authorities on all issues of importance for local self-government and the activities of the SCTM.

1.2. Promotion of cooperation with the media and informing the general public on the work of the SCTM, as well as work and the importance of local self-governments

In addition to regular communication with members, its primary group of recipients of information, SCTM has a close and successful cooperation with the media, national, regional and local, as a channel through which messages and information relevant to the association and the work of local authorities are fastest transmitted to the widest audience.

Main activities

- Delivery of calls for reporting and notification to all media with national and local coverage when it comes to activities carried out by the SCTM
- Monitoring media coverage of the activities of the SCTM and local self-governments in order to enhance awareness of the general public about the work and the importance of local self-governments and the association of local authorities
- Establishing close cooperation with editors of national and local print media; establishing direct, close, formal and informal cooperation and communication with editors in chief and

section editors

Indicator of success

SCTM is recognized as a reference point for all media for consultation, giving opinions and providing information and making statements and appearing in the media when it comes to any matters relating to the operation and functioning of local self-governments.

1.3. Improving information systems within the SCTM Expert Service

As a basis for high-quality and coordinated actions of the employees in the Expert Service in their work assignments, it is required to have full and timely information on all important aspects and events related to the local self-government for the activities of the SCTM.

Main activities

- Development of additional mechanisms of communication and information sharing between sectors, departments and employees
- Regular updating of the calendar of events and meetings and appropriate information of employees
- Regular briefings for staff on current issues in various areas within competence of local self-government and activities of the SCTM

Indicator of success

Information on laws and other regulations in force, the activities of local authorities and SCTM activities available to the employees on daily basis; coordinated actions of employees in all sectors and ministries.

2. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON THE WAY TO EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

An important task of the SCTM is to support towns and municipalities in the exchange of experiences, communication and cooperation at the international level. SCTM activities aim to provide support and knowledge for the requirements of preparing local authorities for the European integration process, developing cooperation with the EU Committee of the Regions and other institutions of importance to the local level, intensification of bilateral cooperation with local authorities in neighbouring countries, as well as participation in numerous programs and projects in cooperation with foreign partners.

Advocacy of the interests of its membership in international organizations is carried out through support of the Serbian delegation at the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council Europe, as well as through membership and activity in European and regional organizations: CEMR, NALAS, ALDA, ICLEI and the like.

SCTM achieves international cooperation through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, through regional cooperation and support for twinning of local authorities, as well as cross-border cooperation. Mentioned forms of cooperation are implemented through joint work of several sectors and services within the SCTM. Important in this area is also work of the Committee for European Integration and International Cooperation, which considers issues of importance for the local self-government when it comes to the European integration process, and advocates its interests before central governments and relevant actors involved in the integration processes in Serbia.

2.1. Multilateral cooperation

Main activities

- Participating on international meetings and advocating the interests of the membership at the international level, in international organizations and associations of local authorities at the regional (NALAS), European (CLRAE, CEMR, CoR) and global (UCLG, ICLEI) level
- Initiating organization of international conferences and meetings of international organizations in towns and municipalities in Serbia

Indicator of success

SCTM representatives actively participate in international organizations, associations, organs and bodies that deal with issues of importance to local self-governments. Documents adopted by the forums of international organizations to a large extent reflect the views and interests of the local authorities in Serbia.

2.2. Support for decentralized cooperation and twinning

Main activities

- Mediation in establishing contacts between interested towns and municipalities
- Establishing partnerships through the process of twinning and the realization of joint projects, with which domestic local self-governments, in cooperation with local authorities from Europe and the world, apply for support from the EU and international donors
- Establishing links with associations of local authorities in Europe, in order to ensure and enhance the twinning process, to spread examples of best practice and to ensure that information on the processes of international cooperation and EU integration and the role and responsibilities of local self-governments is available to local authorities of Serbia

Indicator of success

Number of established partnerships and twinning of our and foreign towns and municipalities, number of joint projects.

2.3. Providing support to local self-governments in the European integration process

Main activities

- Establishing cooperation with national institutions, bodies and organs in charge of European integration and international cooperation of Serbia, in order to provide high-quality advocacy of local authorities' interests in this process
- Involvement of local self-government, through the SCTM, in the process of negotiations on EU accession
- Capacity building of local self-governments to absorb EU funds and active participation of the SCTM in the process of programming pre-accession assistance (carried out within the Strategic Area 2)
- Participation of the SCTM in the process of screening and assessment of compliance of EU regulations with national legislation in areas related to the local level (carried out within the Strategic Area 1)
- Provide full information to towns and municipalities in Serbia on the EU accession process,

policies, regulations and programs

- Intensifying cooperation with the Working Group for the Western Balkans as one of the groups from the Civex Commission of the EU Committee of the Regions

Indicator of success

Degree of awareness of local authorities with those aspects of the process of rapprochement of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union that may have impact on the local level of government; involvement of representatives of local self-government and the SCTM in the negotiation process.

IV – DEVELOPING CAPACITY OF SCTM AS AN ORGANIZATION:

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING AND FINANCIAL VIABILITY OF SCTM

1. DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR WORK OF SCTM ORGANS AND BODIES PURSUANT TO THE NEW STATUTE

Upon its adoption on the 38th Assembly, the new Statute of the SCTM, harmonized with the Law on Associations, adopted in 2009, analysis will be made with corresponding amendments and annexes to the Rules for bodies and working groups of the SCTM.

Main activities

- Making the Rules for the Presidency and working bodies, and their harmonization with the Statute

Indicator of success

Adoption and implementation of new policies and rules by SCTM bodies.

2. IMPROVING THE FUNCTIONING OF SCTM THROUGH FURTHER PERSONNEL, ORGANIZATIONAL AND TECHNICAL STRENGTHENING OF THE EXPERT SERVICE

In the previous period, SCTM Expert Service underwent a period of intense transformation and reorganization, strongly supported by donor organizations. In the process, a complete set of rules and procedures was passed for the functioning of the Expert Service and strengthening of its personnel and technical resources. During the implementation of the new Strategic Plan, effects of the application of the rules and procedures will be continuously monitored and evaluated, while support will be further given to the employees in order to improve their professional knowledge, in accordance with the adopted Strategy of Development of Human Resources, and technical equipment will be further provided to the Expert Service to improve its capacity.

2.1. Adjustment and full implementation of the Strategy of Development of Human Resources and the rules related to internal organization and employees; continuous training of employees

Main activities

- Evaluation and improvement of existing organizational arrangements and job classification
- Assessment and adjustment of SCTM general acts with business processes
- Evaluating and improvement of the procedures related to human resource management
- Improvement of personnel potential; improvement of the system for development of potential of employees and management

Indicator of success

SCTM provides sustainable and flexible structure of employees whose knowledge, abilities, skills and practical experience are the basis of SCTM capacity, which is dedicated to the full range of SCTM goals and ready to provide high-quality services to its members and to advocate its interests.

2.2. Establishing a system for resource management, liaising with members and technical equipping

Main activities

- Full implementation and improvement of the document management system and the knowledge management system
- Establishing a system for liaising experts in various fields of local self-government with the SCTM and its management (fixed base of SCTM associates)
- Development and implementation of a quality assurance system (monitoring and evaluation) in the implementation of plans, programs and projects
- Further technical equipment in the function of more efficient work at SCTM seat and in the field
- Development and implementation of the system for continuous communication with the membership

Indicator of success

Efficient use of available knowledge; functional and transparent system of outsourcing; high-quality work of the Expert Service, quick and effective communication with members.

3. DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN FOR REALIZATION OF SCTM FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

In the previous period, a large part of the activities, and accordingly the budget of the SCTM, was covered from the funds of projects which, with donor support, SCTM implements in order to assist the process of decentralization and strengthening of local self-governments and their capacity. Given that these processes in Serbia are still in progress, the role of the SCTM in the implementation of donor supported projects and programs in the period covered by this Strategic Plan will continue to be significant. At the same time, there is an imperative to gradually but consistently achieve the objective of financial sustainability of the SCTM, so that, even upon termination of donor support, it may continue to carry out its activities and provide services to its members at least to the same extent as it now does.

The plan for achieving SCTM financial sustainability relies on three key assumptions:

1. That the membership understands the necessity that SCTM in due course of time becomes fully sustainable and independent of donor funds, while preserving the volume and quality of its work and services provided to members. The willingness of members to pay higher fees, according to the levels that apply to associations of local authorities in countries like ours, confirms this assumption.

2. That members who require some specific services by SCTM, when it means a greater scope of engagement of professional, organizational and other facilities, accept to pay extra for such services, under conditions that are more favourable than those prevailing on the market. Attitudes of the membership, as expressed in surveys conducted to analyse the membership needs, confirm the existence of this assumption.

3. Similar to the practice of developed associations of local self-governments, to set about an analysis of business opportunities and to initiate a series of activities which would provide additional resources to achieve the objectives of the SCTM as an association of local authorities. So far, mostly through the implementation of projects and programs, the SCTM has achieved a high degree of expertise and reputation in the country and in the region, therefore the assumption that a part of this knowledge could be put in place to acquire additional funds seems real.

3.1. Reform of the system of calculation and collection of SCTM membership fees

Main activities

- Comparative analysis of systems of membership fees calculation in associations of local authorities in the region and the European Union
- Developing a new model and formula for calculation of membership fees and achievement of membership's consent for its application
- Gradual implementation of the plan for membership fee collection (according to the possibilities of the membership), which provides complete financial independence of SCTM

Indicator of success

Share of income made from membership fees in total revenues of the SCTM increases significantly.

3.2. Introduction and implementation of the system for collection for specific services provided to the membership

Main activities

- Analysis of needs for specific services that membership would be willing to pay extra
- Developing the internal capacity of the Expert Service to provide its services and to charge them, and appropriate changes in the internal organization
- Development and gradual implementation of a program of chargeable services, in accordance with the interests and possibilities of members

Indicator of success

Part of the income set for performing SCTM main activities comes from the proceeds realized through specific services paid for by the membership.

3.3. Analysis of business opportunities to achieve financial sustainability and the development of a new business plan

Main activities

- Development of feasibility study for the commencement of an activity which draws profit
- Development of a business plan
- Appropriate organizational restructuring for performance of an activity that draws tax

- Commencement of performance of an activity that draws profit

Indicator of success

Part of the income set for performing SCTM main activities comes from the proceeds realized through performance of economic activity.

PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

One of the key principles of work, and at the same time a permanently important strategic objective of SCTM is to improve gender equality at the local level by providing equal status of men and women and equal opportunities for both sexes to participate in cultural, political, economic and social life in local communities. As an objective of general importance in all areas of SCTM activities, achieving gender equality has been singled out as a separate section under the Strategic Plan, with cross-sectoral character.

In this context, SCTM will monitor the development and perform analyses of the situation of gender equality at the local level, promote the European documents that are aimed at gender equality, advocate the issues of gender equality at the local level, work to strengthen the institutional capacity of local self-governments concerning issues of gender equality and build its own expert capacity.

SCTM will carry out activities in sensitization of relevant social actors at local and national levels aimed to strengthen women's participation in decision-making, particularly in the areas of economy, education, health and reproductive rights.

Main activities

1. Formation, activation and enhancement of activities of the Council for Gender Equality:

- Initiating the establishment of an institutional framework for gender equality in all units of local self-government
- Adoption and implementation of the European Charter for Gender Equality at the local level
- Creation and implementation of an action plan for gender equality
- Conducting training of employees in local self-governments
- Introduction and establishment of gender sensitive statistics at municipality/town level
- Writing project proposals and implementation of programs and projects addressing gender equality issues

2. Promotion and education of citizens and employees in local self-government:

- Organizing round tables, conferences and campaigns on gender equality
- Informing and educating citizens through national and local print and broadcast media
- Training of journalists on gender-sensitive way of reporting

3. Lobbying for gender equality at the local level:

- Strengthening the impact of the Council or bodies for gender equality by strengthening initiatives and relations of these bodies with decision-makers at the local level

- Conduct training on lobbying for members of the Council and the gender equality bodies