



## USAID RULE OF LAW

The USAID Rule of Law project is a four and a half year, \$10.5 million project supporting justice sector reforms that enhance the timely delivery of justice for Serbian citizens. The project works with the courts, public enforcement departments and officers, and the State Attorney's Office to increase judicial efficiency, transparency, and access to justice.

### ACTIVITIES IN SERBIA

- Support to the development of – and ongoing assistance to the implementation of - Serbia's new 2020-2025 Judicial Development Strategy to improve court operations, reduce delays in court proceedings and increase public confidence in the courts. Initiatives include increasing utilization of E-justice tools, ensuring efficient delivery of court documents, streamlining court administration, supporting judicial assistants, and promoting transparency.
- Strengthening the capacity of court enforcement departments and public enforcement officers to ensure that civil and commercial court decisions can be executed in a timely, fair, and transparent manner.
- Supporting the State Attorney's Office to improve the quality and timeliness of legal advice and guidance provided to government bodies, and to reduce the volume and costs of litigation in which the state is engaged.

### RESULTS TO DATE

- The 2020-2025 Judicial Development Strategy was developed and adopted with broad stakeholder input prioritizing strengthened judicial independence, prosecutorial autonomy, and the integrity, quality, and efficiency of the judicial system, along with increasing the level of public trust.
- Adoption of Amendments to the Law on Enforcement and Security – drafted together with stakeholders led by the Ministry of Justice – is contributing to fairer, more efficient, and less costly enforcement, with strengthened measures in place to protect the human and economic rights of vulnerable citizens. The amendments also introduced an electronic

auction service (e-Auction), which brings a new level of transparency and accountability to the sale of qualified movable and immovable property. Over 26,000 e-Auctions were held in its first year, with an average increase of 5% in the amount of winning bids compared to previous years.

- Electronic data exchange related to parties to court cases between the judiciary, legal professions, and other state institutions enabled through the Judicial Information System has eliminated the need for all paper-based requests, and to date has saved more than USD 25.5 million in budget costs, including nearly 500,000 workdays of administrative staff time, and eliminating the need for 23 million paper documents, rendering this both a user and environmentally friendly tool.
- E-justice solutions implemented in Serbian basic and higher courts render the completion of everyday administrative tasks (service of process and court fee processing) more than 55% faster than before. This has eliminated at least 88 minutes a day that judges previously spent on administrative tasks, as well as saving more than 3,133 court staff workdays since the solutions were introduced. The innovations provide judges more time to handle substantive legal matters and make court procedures more efficient.
- Streamlined settlement guidelines/procedures developed and implemented in cooperation with the relevant judicial institutions in cases concerning the breach of the right to trial within a reasonable time have resulted in 4,176 finalized settlements since the guidelines were adopted in July 2018, saving 578,264 trial days and USD 465,220 in court costs through the end of 2021, cutting the time and costs of these high-volume repetitive cases by two-thirds.
- The upgrade and institution-wide introduction of a case management system (LURIS) for the State Attorney's Office allowed generation of accurate statistical and performance reports for the first time. This assists the institution with strategic resource and operational planning, which is now fully evidence-based. Further, the State Attorney's Office can now provide government ministries, and international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, with accurate data on the value of claims for/against the state, as well as the timelines in which these funds are due and owing. This information is crucial for fiscal consolidation of public finances, as it permits proper budgetary planning and projections not only on the annual level, but also for the three-year budgetary framework.
- A communications strategy with an implementation plan for the High Court Council and courts was developed, as well as a comprehensive practical public relations guide for courts on all aspects of their work pertaining to communications with media and citizens, all aimed at improving the public understanding and perception of the judiciary.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **PROJECT FUNDING**

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID/Serbia)

### **PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

Development Professionals, Inc.;  
Cecchi and Company Consulting, Inc;  
AlterFact Consulting; and  
Four Digits Consulting

#### KEY COUNTERPARTS

Ministry of Justice  
High Court Council  
Supreme Court of Cassation  
State Attorney's Office  
Public Enforcement Officers

#### PROJECT SPAN

Nationwide

#### PROJECT DURATION

July 2017 – February 2022

#### TOTAL FUNDING

\$10,498,460

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