

External Evaluation Report
**Project: “Strengthening the Role of Local Communities/Mjesne
Zajednice in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015–2019”**
Jointly funded by
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Project name:	Strengthening the Role of Local Communities/Mjesne Zajednice in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015–2019		
Donors:	Government of Sweden (Sida) and the Government of Switzerland (SDC)		
Implementing agency/agencies:	UNDP		
Key project partners:	Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Justice of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry for Administration and Local Self-Government of Republika Srpska, the Government of Brčko District, the entity associations of municipalities and cities; local governments, mjesne zajednice and civil society organisations.		
Project Duration:	from	01/07/2015	to 30/06/2019
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Evaluation type: (mid-term or final)	Final		
Evaluator name(s):	Dr Marika Djolai and Samra Suskic-Basic		
Evaluation Duration:	from	20/10/2018	to 10/12/2018

List of Abbreviations

AMC	Associations of Municipalities and Cities
BD	Brčko District
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BiH Presidency	Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina
CH	Community Hub
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCD-DAC	Development Co-operation Directorate
DA	Dayton Peace Agreement
EU	European Union
EC	European Commission
FBiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
LG	Local Government
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MZ	Mjesna Zajednica (local community)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PBM	Project Board Meeting
RS	Republika Srpska
RUNO	Recipient United Nations Organization
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

Executive Summary

1.1. Overview

This report presents the findings of an external evaluation of the project *Strengthening the Role of Local Communities/Mjesne Zajednice in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015–2019* (hereinafter, the Project). The Government of Sweden (Swedish International Development Agency - SIDA) and the Government of Switzerland (Swiss Development Cooperation - SDC) fund the Project. The Project is still at the implementation stage. It is planned to last for 48 months from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2019 with an additional four-month no-cost extension beyond the planned end date.

UNDP was selected as the implementing agency, because of its extensive experience in development assistance, working with institutional partners, programmatic focus on strengthening governance and working at the local government and local community level in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This choice is well justified and significantly contributes to the success of the Project.

The overall goal of the Project is to improve the quality of life of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina through enhanced local services and strengthened democratic accountability and social inclusion. The Project focuses on encouraging community led local development and revitalising community governance through mjesne zajednice in order to achieve this goal. Mjesne zajednice is the smallest administrative unit for direct government engagement with citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The goal of the Project has been partially achieved with significant and measurable progress made toward achieving the three Project outcomes and their related outputs.

The purpose of the Final Project Evaluation is to 1) provide an impartial review of Phase I of the Project, 2) to strengthen the final twelve months of project implementation and 3) to inform future programming and contribute to the future scaling-up of the Project. The latter involves paying particular attention to the lessons learned through the current phase of the Project and the provision of forward looking recommendations.

The evaluation was conducted over the period October 2018 to December 2018. The Project had more than twelve months of project implementation activities to be realised, especially under project outcomes two and three, at the time of the Final Evaluation. It is for this reason that the evaluation not only observed achieved results against the set targets but also took into consideration those activities that were currently at different stages of implementation and estimated their likelihood of success.

This involved both **outcome evaluation** and **summative evaluation**. The former focused on those changes that have resulted from project activities implemented thus far, while the latter focused on providing recommendations based on the effectiveness and results achieved by the Project and estimates on whether and how the Project should continue. The evaluation design was participatory in nature and therefore engaged project staff, partners and beneficiaries. The evaluation team reviewed the Project progress reports and other relevant documents, visited 16 local governments and conducted 16 focus groups. The focus groups structured in 300 interviews engaged a sample of 48 mjesne zajednice, in local government representatives, local CSOs and other relevant Project partners. The Project was assessed against five core evaluation criteria formed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) aid-effectiveness principles: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and potential for sustainability.

The Project is implemented in 24 local governments and 136 mjesne zajednice grouped into four geographic clusters: North East Bosnia, North Bosnia, Central Bosnia, and East Herzegovina. The Project is implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry of Justice of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry of Local Self-Governance of Republika Srpska, the Government of Brčko District and the two entity Associations of Municipalities and Cities (AMCs).

This model was adopted in order for UNDP to obtain formal approval from the relevant institutions to work at the local government and mjesne zajednice level and in order to generate support among the institutional stakeholders and decision makers for the changes that the Project aims to achieve. The fact that the relevant institutions accepted direct involvement in the Project indicates their commitment to improve the governance system in Bosnia and Herzegovina and their support for the Project. **Each of the stakeholders, the entity institutions and Brčko District as well as local governments and mjesne zajednice played a specific and significant role in achieving one or more of the three Project outcomes.** It is noteworthy that despite government changes resulting from the local elections of 2016 and the general election of 2018 they all stayed fully committed throughout the Project cycle.

1.2. Evaluation findings and conclusions

The Project actively and directly engaged citizens in 136 mjesne zajednice and the team worked efficiently to implement the planned activities within the set timelines. Participants in the evaluation generally agreed that mjesne zajednice, the lowest level of self-governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina, have been revitalised and their capacities strengthened and that trust between their governing bodies and citizens has been regained as a result of the Project. The achievement of individual Project outcomes and outputs has contributed to reaching the overall Project goal of enhanced local services and strengthened democratic accountability and social inclusion in Bosnia and Herzegovina in a manner that has built solid ground for the sustainability of the Project results. In short, the concrete results show that the Project is **on track to achieve successful implementation and the desired impact.**

Based on this assessment, the evaluation team recommends that **the interventions continue past the lifecycle of the current phase** (Phase I). The depth of structural and political complexities in Bosnia and Herzegovina combined with the deepening democratic decline clearly calls for a continued commitment to improving democratic accountability and governance. Given the level of interest of the governments of Sweden and Switzerland in continuing their financial support for the next phase of the Project, with UNDP as the implementing partner, the forward looking discussion focuses on how to continue the Project.

The Project goal is in line with the needs of Bosnia and Herzegovina identified both at the national and micro level. The Project objective (to improve the quality of life of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina through enhanced local services and strengthened democratic accountability and social inclusion) fully corresponds to local and national priorities and the EU accession process, which it was designed to respond to strategically. Given the fragmented governance structure that has led to a loss of direct engagement between different levels of government and citizens, an external project focused on encouraging community led local development and revitalising community governance through mjesne zajednice is both timely and highly relevant. The Project fills a critical gap within the system of local self-governance, which has been weakened by the complexity of the multi-layer government structure and continuous democratic decline in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This problem is evident in all countries in the Western Balkans.

All of the interviewed Project stakeholders agreed with this assessment that the **Project is indisputably relevant to the political, social and institutional context of Bosnia and Herzegovina.** The Project is oriented toward addressing the need for interventions that directly engage citizens and is designed in such a way that enables the bypassing of politicisation and control by political parties. The depoliticisation of governance is one of the main needs in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Support for local development is the backbone of the Project design, both at the policy level and in terms of assuring access to and the delivery of essential public services. The development process can be observed through two broad driving processes: the commitment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the reform process driven by the EU accession agenda.

Overall effectiveness of the Project

Thus far, the Project has been **successful in creating a new gender-sensitive and socially inclusive vision of local communities** in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** and in motivating local government and a wide range of stakeholders to endorse this vision. In order to achieve this, the Project design was linked to key objectives that provide guidance for interventions to be successful in achieving the planned outcome and outputs. Initially, citizens and mjesne zajednice did not believe that the intervention would work. Yet direct operational engagement with mjesne zajednice councils and local associations **helped rebuild trust** among citizens and improved their relationship and communication with local government.

The critical pillars of the Project (a new vision of mjesne zajednice, good practice, capacity building, broad outreach and legal and policy reform) are well placed to reinforce democratic accountability through this new mechanism and approach.

Project efficiency

The evaluation team reviewed the Project finances in order to gain a sense of how the funds were spent; however, it did not engage in a cost-benefit analysis because this was outside the scope of the evaluation. The total project value is CHF 7,944,419. Approximately CHF 2,101,588 of the donor funds were used to fund local community priority projects via either a Local Development Fund (mjesne zajednice) or Local Initiative Fund (CSOs). Participating local governments had to commit to a financial contribution of 30 per cent of the cost of local community projects, which was an extremely effective strategic approach for mobilising a genuine commitment and securing a buy-in of the local governments. Some of the priority projects (2 per cent) received funding from other sources, while the financial contribution by citizens to local community projects (financial or in-kind) amounted to USD 120,000.

The number (204), adequate distribution and wide-reaching scope of the local projects represent one of the main indicators of the high level of efficiency and achievement of the Project. Furthermore, the envisaged cooperation model based on partnership with institutions and different levels of government in Bosnia and Herzegovina, worked well. As a result, the Project managed to achieve balanced representation among the participating local governments in both entities and Brčko District as well as an equal number of mjesne zajednice within the selected municipalities.

Except for the six-month delay in the Government of Brčko District endorsing the Project and the corresponding delay in the adoption of the Project Document by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, no major operational issues related to partnerships were reported to the evaluators. Despite the aforementioned issue, which caused a six-month delay in the implementation of Project activities and in the utilisation of funds, the evaluation did not identify any changes in strategy, approach or logical frameworks and the Project was implemented in a timely manner. However, rigorous UNDP protocols on quality assurance often slowed down the implementation of activities (particularly local projects) and this sometimes caused disenchantment among local community members. The Project showed a satisfactory level of efficiency and adequacy in terms of the utilisation of technical, financial and human resources.

The evaluation can unequivocally confirm that **the Project has had a positive impact on those local communities, citizens and local governments** where it is being implemented. However, to date, as anticipated the Project has been less successful in introducing systemic change. This applies in particular to legislative and policy reform and the full integration of gender-sensitive and socially inclusive approaches at the local level aimed at tackling the root causes of inequality.

This section analyses the Project impact against the following main evaluation criteria, these being: the main benefits (quantitative and qualitative) for local communities and citizens, the systemic impact, and stakeholder satisfaction with the level of partnership support.

Partnerships, in this case, have proven to be essential for ensuring the efficiency, impact and sustainability of the Project. The relationship between local government and mjesne zajednice improved and changed into positive partnerships in many of the project locations because of the Project. The impact of the Project on citizens and local communities in the project locations was direct and substantial, but there is no evidence that this has led to cooperation, significant collaborative efforts or partnership between non-project mjesne zajednice and local governments, which would be worth exploring in the next phase of the project.

The sustainability of the results and long-term impact of the Project was an integral part of Project planning and design. Furthermore, the project team developed a Sustainability Concept Note in 2017 to revisit the Project direction and to reinforce implementation and institutional/governance sustainability. The sustainability of the Project results and interventions was assessed from an intersectional perspective (organisational - practical, institutional and financial) in order to conclude whether it could continue without external assistance. The new vision of mjesne zajednice de facto transformed the organisational capacities of mjesne zajednice and this engagement allowed for an assessment of their capacities and commitment to the Project goals and the issue of sustainability. As previously mentioned, the Project managed to build trust and a genuine sense of ownership among the project stakeholders. This is key to their continued engagement.

Both practical and policy mechanisms necessary for long-term sustainability were addressed fully when building the capacities and **institutional/governance sustainability** of local governments and mjesne zajednice. However, the limited financial resources that are available to local governments will have a negative effect on future strategies and the implementation of activities.

New knowledge and skills were also marked as essential for influencing, building and maintaining partnerships with local government and continuous citizen engagement. It is the opinion of the evaluation that mjesne zajednice and local community members developed full ownership of the Project and that this will play an important role in building sustainability. The evaluation participants reported concerns over financial sustainability as the most critical issue within this domain.

Gender equality and social inclusion

The Project made every effort to mainstream the principles of gender equality and social inclusion- and this is due to the fact that the project developed a context driven Gender Equality Strategy in its inception stage. In terms of the inclusion of women and the socially excluded in specific local projects, policy design, training, increased activism and their participation in mjesne zajednice as well as their general empowerment the achievements are evident. The targets for the participation rate of women of 50 per cent and of the socially excluded at 30 per cent have mainly been achieved across the Project interventions. Qualitative data and evaluation findings indicate a genuine positive shift in women's empowerment, as manifested through the increased participation of women in local affairs. The Project has obviously provided an enabling environment as agency of women has visibly increased in their local communities, some have become entrepreneurs by spearheading start-ups, while others became initiators of civic engagement initiatives and fundraisers for municipal and local community projects. A separate project also funded by the Government of Sweden, *Women in Elections*, has been put in place as a spin-off of this Project, because of the potential for strengthening the leadership of women.

However, as this is not a part of mainstream education, there is a need for further education of citizens as well as capacity building of mjesne zajednice and local governments in order to ensure more socially inclusive and gender-sensitive planning and budgeting and its implementation.

1.2.1. Strategic recommendations

1. **An effort should be made to institutionalise the establishment and official endorsement of the new vision of mjesne zajednice in Bosnia and Herzegovina.** Various platforms, such as the entity associations of municipalities and cities (AMCs), should be utilised to share mjesne zajednice methodology and examples of substantial improvement in local government (through amendment of local government and/or mjesne zajednice statutes or decisions).
2. **Implement a structured advocacy campaign aimed at the endorsement of systemic legislative change** that will build on the work done and the lessons learned during Phase 1 of the Project. Various innovative approaches should be applied including a) familiarising the presidents of the AMCs and their respective members in Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the introduced changes and using the AMCs platform to raise public awareness, b) organising workshops for mjesne zajednice to discuss the various legal implications of the legislative changes and c) establishing partnerships with the media in order to increase public awareness regarding the recommendations and the need for systemic legislative change.
3. **Improve financial mechanisms of legislative and planning processes located at local governments and mjesne zajednice to support citizens' initiatives.**
4. **Redesign local government.** Support new profiling and restructuring of local government administration by helping the existing staff to become a more responsive resource for improved and effective work with mjesne zajednice. This can be done in many ways, including changing job descriptions, the creation of operational teams, setting up a specific department or identifying individuals who will be responsible for improving and standardising methods of work with mjesne zajednice.
5. **Systematise incentives for mjesne zajednice** through the allocation of grants by local government for various initiatives to support change at the local level. This could include a small grants scheme to support citizen initiatives for mjesne zajednice and CSOs, support for community hub initiatives and committing to the creation of incentives for mjesne zajednice staff.
6. **Support social inclusion and gender mainstreaming** by strengthening development capacities of local government and mjesne zajednice in terms of addressing the lack of understanding on what constitutes and how to address social exclusion. Combine this with a strategic gender sensitive planning and monitoring process, which is critical for ensuring sustainable gender-sensitive mjesne zajednice. This can be effectively done by further widening opportunities for women to act as agents of change in their communities and by expanding the potential for women's leadership and activism.
7. **Contribute to development.** Future Project interventions should aim to localise further the Sustainable Development Goals (in particular SDGs 5 and 11) by linking them to planned systemic changes at the local government and mjesne zajednice level.
8. **Develop a strategic framework for cooperation with civil society.** In accordance with the findings of the 2018 European Commission Progress Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina, develop a strategic framework for cooperation with civil society at all levels of governance. Utilise the potential of the Project to contribute to this new strategic approach by building on the achieved results in terms of working closely with civil society and by utilising a participatory approach.
9. **Strengthen horizontal and vertical linkages.** Local government has access to IPA II funds as part of Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress towards EU candidate country status. Strengthening horizontal and vertical linkages at the local level would provide local government with increased opportunities **to access IPA funds** under the sectors of Democracy and Governance, Social Policy, Environment and Climate Change (which have been the focus of local priority projects to date). The centralised government finance system distances local government and as a result financial

sustainability is among the top concerns of local government. Addressing this issue is essential for the sustainability of the Project and its activities.

1.2.2. Specific recommendations for Phase I

1. **Operationally, the Project should continue to work on Outcome 3** and explore avenues to amend the legal frameworks that regulate local self-governance in Republika Srpska, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Brčko District. This effort should in particular target potential influencers who would be willing to push the reform agenda on the table of members of parliament and other relevant institutional bodies (some already cultivated).
2. The members of the Project Institutional Partners Board recommended that UNDP alongside the Government of Sweden and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation should use their resources, reputation and contacts for a subtle outreach campaign among newly elected members of Parliament in order to familiarise them with the Project results and intention to instigate legislative changes.
3. Given that the Project does not have a comprehensive **communication strategy** where outreach activities could be embedded, the evaluation recommends the development of an advocacy or communication plan for Phase II and the appointment of a specialist as a permanent team member to lead this important aspect of the new vision for local governance and its improved impact.
4. Additional donor funds and co-financing arrangements should be sought in order to increase the number of positive grassroots initiatives and diffuse good practices across the country. This could possibly involve other international donors such as the EU Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina, bilateral donors and actors such as USAID, UK, Switzerland, OSCE, etc. Co-financing and in-kind contributions in particular should be sought from institutional partners, but out-of-the-box institutional arrangements and implementation modalities need to be set up at the senior level in order to make such arrangements possible.
5. The last phase of the Project should further pursue building mechanisms for synergy with projects supported by the Government of Sweden, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation as well as UNDP. Such projects could consider, for instance, expanding the eligibility criteria of their funding schemes to include actions specific to non-project mjesne zajednice and/or issue calls to mjesne zajednice for locally implemented projects.

2 Introduction

2.1. Project background and an overview of the Bosnia and Herzegovina context

The Project is a joint initiative of the Government of Switzerland (SDC) and the Government of Sweden¹ (Sida) implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The overall goal of the Project is to **improve the quality of life of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina through enhanced local services and strengthened democratic accountability and social inclusion**. The total Project budget is CHF 7,944,419. To achieve its goal the Project focuses on **encouraging community led local development and the revitalisation of community governance at mjesne zajednice (local community) level**. Mjesne zajednice are the smallest administrative units in the country and therefore represent government's closest link to direct engagement with citizens.

The Project connects fully with the governmental structures in the country, having relevant ministries as partners and working directly with local government and mjesne zajednice. There are a total of 2,583 mjesne zajednice in the country. Mjesne zajednice in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina have the status of a legal entity, but this is not the case in Republika Srpska.² They are grassroots organisations that serve communities that comprise on average 1,000 people. This allows them the possibility to participate directly in communal affairs and in the operation of local government as well as for the collective management of local resources.

The current political context in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a legacy of the conflict that occurred in the nineties and the Dayton Peace Accord that in 1995 put an end to the violence. The Dayton Peace Accord created an extremely complex institutional, administrative and governmental framework that consists of the state level, two entities (the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska) and the autonomous region of Brčko District. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is decentralised further into ten cantons formed according to regional orientation and ethnic grouping. Republika Srpska is a single administrative unit with regions as opposed to separate cantons. Including Brčko District, there are 145 local governments of which 80 are in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 64 in Republika Srpska and almost all of them subdivided into mjesne zajednice.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a consociational democracy³ with the country's power sharing based on ethnic principles aimed at the regulation and resolution of ethnic conflict. Yet this system actually weakens the democratic process and strengthens nationalistic parties and their leaders, who thrive on and perpetuate ethnic division. Despite the country's administrative and political division along ethnic lines, many communities, municipalities and cities remain ethnically diverse. Their residents have found a way to overcome the various divisions and challenges through interaction and the practices of everyday life.⁴ Yet the disadvantageous political context in the country continues to exacerbate the economic and social challenges. The intricacies of the political structure distance citizens and limit the scope of their relationship, engagement and participation in governance. The Project is attempting to mitigate the direct negative effect that this complicated structure has on the wellbeing and participation of citizens in their local communities and local governance.

At the national level, the **complicated government system** is one of the leading factors behind the ever present socio-political and economic challenges such as democratic decline, frequent political deadlock that blockades institutions and their operations and causes a continuous weakening of their

¹ The donors.

² UNDP Project report Comparative review of community governance models and practices in Croatia, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Analitika, (2016)

³ Arend Lijphart conceptually framed the term in the 1960s; the most notable work on Bosnia and Herzegovina is by Nina Caspersen.

⁴ Djolai, M., 'When the Rooftops Became Red Again: Post-war Community Dynamics in Bosnia and Herzegovina' (PhD Thesis, 2016).

ability to deliver, the continued failure of the rule of law and the exceptionally slow pace of the EU accession process and threats to human security and stability.⁵

Three distinct but related contextual factors are directly relevant for this Project. First, each level of government has its own set of laws, including those that regulate local self-governance. At the formal level, **three different legal frameworks regulate local self-governance, including community governance**: the Republika Srpska Law on Local Self-Government, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Law on the Principles of Local Self-Government and the Law on Local Communities of Brčko District. This forces local government across the country to implement different approaches to governance and this in turn has an effect on the participation and engagement of citizens. Because of a lack of political will and/or the absence of formal mechanisms that would facilitate discussion and cooperation, often regulations are not in alignment and there is no harmonisation of their amendment.

Second, in addition to the legal differences that exist between the two entities and Brčko District, the **institutional setup in Bosnia and Herzegovina further complicates implementation of the framework laws. It is very expensive and often inefficient and this further impedes service delivery**. Institutionally, local governance in Republika Srpska comes under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Administration and Local Self-Government whereas power for the said legal frameworks in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is regulated at the cantonal level (which does not exist in Republika Srpska) yet legal oversight over implementation rests with the Ministry of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Republika Srpska, mjesne zajednice are not endowed with legal status, which has direct implications for their operation and functioning. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, mjesne zajednice are legal entities but this does not always apply in practice because local government has the right to withhold their legal status. According to recent research, mjesne zajednice are among the most recognised mechanisms for citizen participation at the local level and the most used and most useful participatory mechanism in the country.

Third, this governance setup **lacks a people centred approach and completely undermines the needs of citizens and their potential for engagement and ability to contribute to society**. The Project addresses these issues directly. This lack of a people centred approach is a result of the continuous prioritisation of ethnic identification over citizen rights and deeply embedded clientelistic and corrupt practices that favour and propel the interests of a narrow circle of business and political elites.⁶ Some common issues that result from these challenges are that citizens, as service users, are not consulted about the selected approach to service delivery and are therefore unable to influence their quality of life in this respect. Local government most often fails to create opportunities for local people to shape policy choices and decisions on the allocation of resources. Democratic accountability from local government to mjesne zajednice is very limited and often non-existent, which is exacerbated by limited awareness on the part of local administrations concerning their responsibility in this respect.

The gap between government and citizens is less prominent in those countries where citizen centred governance, local knowledge, representation and roles are well defined⁷ and enables effective engagement. Democratic accountability remains one of the lowest points in Bosnia and Herzegovina with very weak lines of clear accountability among institutions at different levels of government. This justifies the Project focus on improving accountability in the country. One of the aims of the Project is to address this gap by encouraging interaction between citizens, mjesne zajednice and local government through increased participation in combination with the creation of a mechanism for the downward responsiveness of local government. The evaluation attempts to assess to what extent this has been achieved.

⁵ European Commission, *Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018 Report*, Staff Working Document, 17 April 2018. Available from <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-bosnia-and-herzegovina-report.pdf>.

⁶ Djolai, M., and Stratulat, C., *Clientelism in the Crisis of Democracy in the Western Balkans. An Anatomy of Stabilitocracy and the Limits of EU Democracy Promotion*, (2017), edited by M. Kmezić and F. Bieber.

⁷ Barnes, M. et al., *Designing citizen-centred governance* (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2008).

Lastly, **politicians, policymakers and government representatives are often uncommitted when it comes to tackling social exclusion and inequality in disadvantaged communities** and often fail to create formal mechanisms to address these issues. Such communities are often rural remote areas with high unemployment, national minorities and/or a high level of return among the displaced population. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, more often than not, local knowledge is not recognised as a valuable resource with the potential to contribute to local planning and targeting of policies and services.

Despite the recent stabilisation of the macroeconomic outlook, **Bosnia and Herzegovina remains amongst the poorest countries** in Europe and is the second poorest of the EU aspirant countries based on the relative volume of GDP.⁸ The population at risk of poverty⁹ in Bosnia and Herzegovina is at 27 per cent, while rural poverty (32.89per cent) is higher than urban poverty (17.29per cent). The incidence rate for those at risk of poverty or social exclusion is 9 percentage points higher in Republika Srpska (53per cent) than in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (46per cent) and is higher in rural (54per cent) than in urban areas (40per cent).¹⁰ The level of inequality in Bosnia and Herzegovina is among the highest in the western Balkans (higher in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina than in Republika Srpska and generally higher in urban areas). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, 10 per cent of individuals (aged 15 or older) report to be ‘somewhat’ or ‘very’ unsatisfied with life in general, particularly those in the older age brackets.¹¹ This corresponds directly with the wellbeing of people.

2.2. Objectives and scope of the Final Evaluation

The Final Project Evaluation was commissioned by the UNDP in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to strengthen the final twelve months of the Project implementation and to inform future programming. The purpose of the Final Project Evaluation is to provide an impartial review of Phase I of the Project *Strengthening the Role of Local Communities/Mjesne zajednice in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015–2019*. The Evaluation pays particular attention to the lessons learned through the current phase of the Project (Phase I) and provides forward-looking recommendations.

A team of two evaluators (a national expert and an international expert/team leader) were engaged by UNDP to conduct the Final Project Evaluation, between October and December 2018. The international expert was responsible for data analysis and the preparation of the evaluation report.

The evaluation is based on the UNDP **Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating Development Results** (2009),¹² the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) **Norms and Standards for Evaluation** (2016)¹³ and the five evaluation criteria of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) **Evaluation Standards for Development Interventions**:¹⁴ relevance, effectiveness, efficiency impact and sustainability.

The evaluation focused on assessing the relevance of the initiative to the priorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly the EU accession agenda. The implementation was measured against its effectiveness, efficiency and impact, based on the Project indicators and the set of criteria outlined in the Evaluation Matrix (*see Annex 4*), and the Project’s sustainability and potential for replication. The intention of the evaluation process was to understand in detail what the Project undertook to address

⁸ Eurostat, GDP per capita, consumption per capita and price level indices, December 2018. Available from https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=GDP_per_capita,_consumption_per_capita_and_price_level_indices. Accessed 1 January 2019.

⁹ World Bank, Poverty and Social Exclusion in Bosnia and Herzegovina Insights from the 2011 Extended Household Budget Survey (2011).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² UNDP, Addendum (2011). Available from <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/handbook/addendum/Evaluation-Addendum-June-2011.pdf>. Accessed 1 December 2018.

¹³ United Nations Evaluation Group, *Norms and Standards for Evaluations* Available from www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914. Accessed 1 December 2018.

¹⁴ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Quality Standards for Development Evaluation* (2010). Available from www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/qualitystandards.pdf. Accessed 1 December 2018.

and to accomplish and then to use the experiences and reflections of the Project stakeholders to verify the results. In order to achieve the best result, the evaluation was participatory, transparent, inclusive and flexible in nature and involved the relevant stakeholders. Alongside the evaluation criteria, aspects of the Project's ownership, trust and potential for systemic change were analysed in a holistic manner. The evaluation team held a separate briefing with the UNDP team and a meeting with the donors (SDC and GoS) in order to discuss the findings and collect their feedback and input. These were taken into consideration when preparing the draft version of the final report in order to ensure that their questions were taken on board and any issues clarified.

2.3. Approach and methodology¹⁵

The evaluation team worked in close cooperation with the UNDP focal points, especially the Project Manager and the UNDP Governance and Social Inclusion Sector Leader, as well as other team members¹⁶ to prepare and confirm the evaluation approach and activities. UNDP provided support in the organisation of field visits, interviews and focus groups (guided by the evaluation methodology outlined in the Evaluation Inception Report and Evaluation Matrix) and made all logistical and transportation arrangements. The Project field officers accompanied the evaluators on the field visits, but they did not attend the interviews or focus groups. Their presence was valuable for clarifying any questions that arose during the interviews and spending time with them was particularly useful for gaining information about the Project, the context and about mjesne zajednice selected for the evaluation.

The final evaluation used a mixed methods approach for qualitative data collection and data triangulation, relying on the consultant's skills and knowledge. The analysis used the combined analytical approach outlined in the Evaluation Matrix. To answer the question about the relevance of the Project in relation to the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina and needs of its citizens the evaluation applied context analysis (CPIA)¹⁷ when developing the interview protocols for institutional partners and local government representatives. It asked them about the relevance of the Project in terms of the political, social and institutional country context. The qualitative data was analysed using a mixed approach of framework¹⁸ analysis (given that the TOR already determined the evaluation questions) and thematic analysis¹⁹ (in order to identify any emerging themes from the interviews and focus groups that were not directly linked to the evaluation questions but were relevant in terms of answering them).

The evaluation addressed the **two crosscutting Project themes of Gender equality and social inclusion**. It assessed **Genders-sensitivity** specifically within the larger framework of gender equality, assessing how men and women participated in the development of viable municipal and cantonal strategies and how this translated into their participation in strengthening inclusiveness within the context of gender-sensitive planning and achieving a gender-equitable impact. The evaluation analysed the level of social inclusion in the Project interventions and results in terms of how many beneficiaries from socially excluded categories benefited directly from the interventions and whether their specific concerns and needs were addressed sufficiently in a strategic way at the project planning and implementation stages.

¹⁵ Annex 6, detailed methodological approach.

¹⁶ A list of all team members interviewed can be found in Annex 3.

¹⁷ In order to identify the needs of BiH and answer the question of relevance, the evaluation used context analysis based on the World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) approach (2009). Available from <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/10537>. Accessed 8 November 2018.

¹⁸ Pope et al., 'Analysing qualitative data'. *British Medical Journal*, no. 320, 2000, pp. 114–116. Available from www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1117368/pdf/114.pdf. Accessed 8 November 2018.

¹⁹ Attride-Stirling J., 'Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research', *Qualitative Research*, vol. 1, no. 3, 2001, pp. 385–405. Available from <http://goo.gl/VpQeQJ>. Accessed 8 November 2018.

2.3.1. Data collection

The evaluation entailed multiple steps for collecting the information necessary for understanding the level of progress and achievements of the Project to date. Individual interview protocols were prepared based on the evaluation questions outlined in the TOR, a desk review of the Project documentation and a briefing with the Project staff (*a list of interviewees is included in Annex 3*). Interviews were scheduled and undertaken in person and in focus group settings as well as via Skype (where appropriate). Thus, the evaluation used data from multiple sources and methodological triangulation to ensure data validity.²⁰ Furthermore, the evaluation used interview protocols (*see Annex 2*) for all focus groups and interviews with all mayors and local government representatives (interviewed if the mayors were unavailable), all project institutional partners (members of the Project Board) and the interview topical guide for donors, external consultants and members of the Project team. The interviews were recorded in writing and audio recordings were made of the focus groups, with oral consent from the participants.

Table 1. Focus group participants

Participants	139	100per cent
Women	50	36per cent
Men	89	64per cent
Age	Mixed	
Mjesne zajednice	86	62per cent
NGOs	34	24per cent
Public Institutions	10	7per cent
Beneficiaries	9	7per cent
Vulnerable	6	per cent

The quantitative data used in the evaluation derives from the Project documentation. The evaluators agreed at the start of the evaluation that the time constraints did not allow for the collection of quantitative data (e.g. a survey) to provide the relevant statistical data. The Project studies (e.g. the baseline survey and the citizens satisfaction survey) and data collected as part of the monitoring effort provided sufficient information about the Project results. As outlined in the Evaluation Matrix, quantitative data used to answer particular evaluation questions was analysed for category (sex, age, social group) and numerical variables (number of beneficiaries, mjesne zajednice, categories) and duration (of the intervention). In all cases, the evaluators used all available sources of information and evidence to form the evaluation conclusions and recommendations.

²⁰ UNDP, Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results (2009), Standard 4.5, Methodology p.23.

2.3.2. Methodological limitations

The length of the evaluation for a project of this size, scope and complexity was somewhat limiting. The evaluation team made all possible efforts to minimise the effect of the time constraint in line with its ability and resources. It acted in accordance with the standards of professional integrity, independence and impartiality and operated in the best interests of the Project implementer and the donors. It also kept in mind stakeholder and beneficiary interests. The key limitations are listed below.

1. The evaluation covered the period from the start of the Project up until 1 June 2018, which means that the Project reports and monitoring results for the last six months of implementation were not available.
2. The field visits did not cover all of the local governments and mjesne zajednice participating in the Project. However, the selected sample (based on a rigorous selection process) was substantial enough to provide a comprehensive picture of the Project's achievements and impact and to answer the main questions.
3. The possibility to observe/visit areas of priority project results²¹ or to visit mjesne zajednice other than those where the focus groups were held was very limited.
4. Mitigation strategy: The evaluation team strived, within realistic possibilities, to conduct and approach as many persons as possible and to obtain as much detailed information as possible and to incorporate as much feedback and comments as possible in order to create the most qualitatively acceptable final report.

3 Project analysis

At the time of the Final Evaluation, the Project was in the last twelve months of implementation of phase I. At that stage, the main focus was on implementation of activities under Project Outcome 3. The Project extension allows more time to implement activities and achieve the outputs planned under this outcome. This applies in particular to the building of two pillars that are essential for creating systemic change in local self-governance: 1) working toward improving local government statutes and making sure that they adopt new decisions related to the roles, rights and responsibilities of mjesne zajednice and 2) working on the new legislative framework in order to ensure that it is adopted.

It is the opinion of the evaluation team that **the Project has in general reached its overall goal** to improve the quality of life of citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina through enhanced local services and strengthened democratic accountability and social inclusion. Therefore, the evaluation team **supports the chosen focus of the Project as being fully justified**. The same is true of the Project decision to focus on the local community level in order to induce vertical change in the policy and governance systems and to create better vertical responsiveness in combination with improved cooperation.

3.1. Project description

Project implementation began on 1 July 2015. The planned end date for the Project was 30 June 2019; however, the governments of Switzerland and Sweden (the donors) and UNDP (implementing party) later allowed for an additional four-month no-cost extension. At the start, the Project faced a six-month delay in implementing activities and utilising the funds. Yet the evaluation found no changes in strategy, approach or the logical frameworks in relation to this delay. The Project planning and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of the expected results are defined in accordance with a set of indicators for three categories (impact, outcome and output); these are outlined in the Project's Logical Framework (Logframe).

²¹ Out of the nine local governments visited, the international consultant was only able to visit the school playground in Zenica and community hub premises in Pale/Prača, Jablanica and Gradačac.

There are three main outcomes linked to the overall Project goal:

Outcome 1. Citizens and government are committed to the realisation of the jointly agreed new inclusive and gender-sensitive vision of mjesne zajednice in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a foundation for more participatory and accountable local governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Outcome 2. Proactive competent and interconnected mjesne zajednice contribute toward the downward responsiveness of local government and improved service delivery.

Outcome 3. A new regulatory framework for the functional developed of mjesne zajednice by government will enable more inclusive, gender-sensitive and accountable local governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Each outcome was planned as a set of outputs with relevant indicators, means of verification and risk assessment in order to allow for monitoring and evaluation of their implementation and results. The interventions for each outcome were planned on three levels: macro (national, entity and regional level), meso (local government level) and micro (mjesne zajednice level). The latter have been fully achieved through the Project implementation. The Project developed a unique methodology to instigate change in the participating local governments and mjesne zajednice. This was done in a highly participatory and inclusive manner that primarily brought about a building of bridges between citizens and their local communities and institutions and UNDP.

At the design stage, the Project strategy combined a set of approaches designed to jointly reinforce the Project outcomes: i) awareness raising and the tailored capacity development of the target groups, ii) inclusive local planning processes involving citizens and local government, iii) participatory processes aimed at setting a new vision of mjesne zajednice that would influence legislative frameworks and empower mjesne zajednice as people centred structures of community governance, iv) the provision of financial support to implement priority projects and improve local infrastructure and service delivery and v) networking and the sharing of best practice across localities, regions and entities and the scaling-up of project results and ideas.

At the implementation stage, experts produced several comprehensive studies that were used to inform activities and to act as baseline information for the results framework and evaluation (e.g. a citizen opinion survey on local communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina). Embedding this new approach into the existing strategic and legal frameworks will strengthen the capacities of local government and mjesne zajednice in a way that promises to establish long-term sustainability.

The choice of UNDP as an implementing partner was strategic and beneficial to the Project, as discussed later under the section on effectiveness criteria. UNDP possesses special expertise in and has an effective approach to local governance and direct engagement with local government and citizens. Its track record of broad long-term engagement in development assistance in Bosnia and Herzegovina and of working with institutional partners in the country and on mainstreaming governance was evident both through the Project approach and the feedback received from the interviewed mayors and Project partners who have many years of collaboration with the agency (e.g. Bijeljina, Gradacac and Brčko District). UNDP is well placed to implement activities in the topical areas that are the focus of this Project. UNDP has excelled in designing an innovative approach for this Project that incorporates a complex set of goals and aspirations ranging from the empowerment of citizens to their engagement in local governance and policy processes, to strengthening social inclusion and the empowerment of women. It systematically piloted new mechanisms prior to their implementation and before scaling them up, continuously checking the fit with the needs of institutions and individual citizens.

3.2. Geographic scope

The Project was implemented in 24 municipalities²² (local governments) out of a total of 145 in Bosnia and Herzegovina and 136 mjesne zajednice out of 2,583 in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The participating local governments comprised of Banja Luka, Bijeljina, Brčko, Gračanica, Gradačac, Gradiška, Ilijaš, Jablanica, Ključ, Kotor Varoš, Laktaši, Ljubinje, Ljubuški, Nevesinje, Olovo, Pale Prača, Petrovo, Rudo, Sanski Most, Stari Grad Sarajevo, Tešanj, Visoko, Zenica and Žepče. Eight of the participating local governments had the administrative status of cities/towns. The participating local governments were **clustered in three groups**. This was done under the Small Grants Scheme in accordance with the start and end dates of the local priority projects implemented by mjesne zajednice or local CSOs. The evaluation attempted to assess the implications that the rural/urban and gradual implementation of local projects had had on the impact and sustainability of the Project.

The Project applied an area-based approach to operations by clustering participating local governments and their mjesne zajednice into four geographic regions: North East Bosnia, North Bosnia, Central Bosnia, and East Herzegovina. The logic behind this approach was to tailor assistance to the specific circumstances in the selected localities and to foster peer-to-peer exchange among stakeholders. There were mixed results and evidence of success, which are elaborated on later in this report.

Overall, the geographic clustering of the local governments had a limited but positive impact on the Project. This was most notable within the domain of efficiency and effectiveness. Concern about sustainability was also behind the clustering approach, because it represents an enabling factor for further nationwide replication through other geographic clusters.

The Project's regional grouping of local government was also driven by the intention to create synergies with other relevant programmes and initiatives implemented by UNDP in the same locations. One example is the Integrated Local Development Project, which is being implemented in 40 local governments in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The intension is to combine results, avoid duplication of activities and where possible rationalise the use of financial and other resources and by so doing add additional value to individual efforts within the Project.

3.2.1. Project organisation and management

The Project governance set-up was developed carefully in order to ensure quality control and sound management. It has the support of the relevant institutions that endorsed the Project through a written statement in December 2015 and in this way secured its formal 'institutionalisation'. The Project Board is the main decision-making body and includes different stakeholders: UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry of Justice of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry of Local Self-Governance of Republika Srpska, the Government of Brčko District and the entity associations of municipalities and cities. The Board meets quarterly to discuss issues related to the strategic direction of the Project, to partner local governments, review annual reports and assess the extent of Project progress against the set targets. The Project Board has been fully functional since the start of the Project (2015) and performed its duties accordingly. The institutional structure of the Project allows the Project team to interact in the broader context with partners and all institutional stakeholders.

The Project team comprises of the National Project Manager/Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) and core members. The full-time Project Manager/CTA has the authority to run the Project on a day-to-day basis on behalf of UNDP. It is the responsibility of the Project Manager/CTA to ensure that the Project produces the required results in accordance with the relevant corporate standards and within the constraints of time and cost. The Project Manager/CTA is responsible for the day-to-day project

²² In the documents interchangeably referred to as municipalities and local governments.

management, reporting and coordination. The core team members recruited in 2015/2016 were the Local Governance Advisor (an appropriate candidate at the specialist seniority level was not found), the Community Development and Citizen Participation Specialist, the IT Development Solutions Specialist/Gender Advisor and the field officers.

Donor participation in the Project included the Programme Officer for Governance and Municipal Services at the Embassy of Switzerland and the Programme Officer for Public Administration Reform, Public Finance Management and Anticorruption at the Embassy of Sweden.

Table 2. Project target populations²³

Project target population	FBiH	RS	BD	BiH total
Total (entity)	2,372,000	1,327,000	93,000	3,792,000
Average population per mjesne zajednice	1,614	1,113	1,193	1,384
Population in the participating mjesne zajednice	116,000	67,000	21,000	204,000
Share of the population participating	4.8per cent	5per cent	23per cent	5.3per cent
People with disabilities	10,000	6,000	2,000	18,000

At the design stage, the Project target was to improve the lives of 300,000²⁴ citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the target locations. Based on the Project’s monitoring data, the results framework shows that a total of **405,934²⁵ citizens either directly or indirectly benefited in some way from the Project**. The impact of the Project is evident when observed through the number of final beneficiaries and the different social categories²⁶ in the targeted local communities. More specifically, the planned beneficiaries included **30,000 children, 35,000 retired persons, 20,000 unemployed** and almost **20,000 persons with disabilities**. The table below shows the estimated outreach at the start of the project. The final numbers indicate that more than 10 per cent of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina have benefited from the Project, including excluded people and those at the risk of exclusion. The Project has made a tangible impact when it comes to women, both through focused initiatives for women and by gender mainstreaming across all interventions. The Project has **exceeded** the initial target of **100,000 women** beneficiaries by **at least 50,000**.

3.3. Relevance of the Project

The question of the relevance of the Project was discussed with the institutional partners (members of the Project Board and the mayors),²⁷ who have a good knowledge of the various needs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. An assessment of their input combined with a contextual analysis based on a desk review of the relevant programme documents led to the conclusion that the Project outcomes are very

²³ Final Project Document 2015.

²⁴ Final Project Document (2015) and the Project Annual Report for 2015.

²⁵ The Outcome Monitoring Summary template 06/2015-09/2018.

²⁶ Some of the Project documents refer to social categories as ‘socioeconomic’ stakeholders to cover socially excluded and vulnerable groups and women.

²⁷ The list of interviewees and methodological approach is discussed in the previous section.

relevant to the needs of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Project objective to improve the quality of life of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina through enhanced local services and strengthened democratic accountability and social inclusion corresponds to both local and national priorities, while the EU accession process and the evaluation find its strategic design to be responsive to these needs. Given that the fragmented governance structure in the country has led to a loss of direct engagement between different levels of government and citizens, an external project focused on encouraging community led local development and revitalising community governance through mjesne zajednice is both timely and highly relevant.

3.3.1. Project relevance to the needs and context of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Project objectives of improving local level governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina and transforming local institutions so that they become more attentive to citizens is highly pertinent to the needs of the country. The participating mjesne zajednice needed external support to develop their capacities, to engage citizens and to improve their relationship with their local government, while citizens needed new skills and capacities to address their needs and to hold the government accountable. According to recent research,²⁸ mjesne zajednice are among the most recognised mechanisms for citizen participation at the local level and the most used participatory mechanism and most useful, which further justifies the Project focus.

In the previous system, mjesne zajednice played an important role as a tool of governance. Many of the evaluation participants still remembered this and saw their revival as an important mechanism for addressing local needs.

The Project was designed with the intention to address gaps in accountability and the capacities of mjesne zajednice and local government. Mjesne zajednice have been seriously undermined and this has created a lack of confidence in their operational abilities and influence. The Project also set out to address gaps in the policy frameworks for local governance, which are either partially or totally absent. Local governance development strategies have yet to be adopted at the state, entity and cantonal level in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In Republika Srpska, the Strategy for Local Self-Government Development (2010–2015) is the guiding principle in the entity. The new strategy (2017–2021) underlines the need for government to implement its local responsibilities and public service delivery to the best of its ability and in the interests of its citizens. The document Training Strategies for Local Government Employees 2011–2015 is in need of revision, while many of the mayors and institutional partners cited challenges stemming from the inadequate and ‘unfinished’ governance system in relation to all aspects of the functioning of their local governments and they expressed their support for all interventions designed to tackle such challenges. Initially there were concerns that the mayors would resist the Project; however, the evaluation found broad support for the intervention among the mayors. This can be attributed to the highly visible benefits that the Project has brought to the participating local governments and mjesne zajednice and through its focus on addressing the everyday needs and problems of citizens.

At the design stage, the Project goal was based on a comprehensive analysis conducted by the governments of Sweden and Switzerland and the UNDP that took into account the multi-level governance structure, socioeconomic challenges, political complexity and limited organisational, operational and management capacities of the system. The decision to engage in the struggle to achieve gender and social equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina was based on the need to overcome the ethnic divisions that effect all levels of government across the country, while the crosscutting approach is intended to lay a foundation for progress and future development. The Project has managed to revive mjesne zajednice and to mobilise **citizens to become active in identifying local**

²⁸ Jusic, M., Local Communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Challenges and Prospects for Institutional (2014);

needs in their communities and in finding solutions to these problems. Prior to this, local government usually dealt with such matters.

With the exception of the situation analysis, the existing bilateral and multilateral cooperation frameworks and development strategies as well as programmatic documents and interventions formed the basis for clarifying the needs of Bosnia and Herzegovina. UNDP background programming documents made a key contribution to the Project design with key information embedded in recent systematic reviews of the needs of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This analysis involved broad participatory and inclusive processes and therefore has remained relevant throughout the Project implementation.

The UNDP Country Programme Document for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015–2019²⁹ identifies **governance as one of the three key programme areas that need improving in order to address the existing needs in the country.** The Swiss Cooperation Strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina (2017–2020)³⁰ defines good governance and gender equality as ‘transversal themes’ of the entire country cooperation programme. The Results Strategy for Sweden’s Reform Cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey 2014–2020 pledges to provide support in three main areas: Strengthening Democracy, Greater Respect for Human Rights, and a more fully Developed State under the Rule of Law. Citizen engagement and strengthening the voice of citizens and their participation in the political decision-making process is a focus throughout all programme domains³¹ and this has been translated successfully into the Project Document and implementation stage.

It is impossible for the Project to avoid the political, social and institutional country context because each element drives one or more of the challenges that are the focus of this intervention. Given the complexity of the Project objectives and the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a flexible approach to implementation was essential for achieving the planned results and managing the risks. The inclusive and participatory approach and extensive field presence of the Project enabled the Project team to identify the needs of local communities and citizens during the implementation and therefore reduce the level of reliance on assumptions drawn at the project design stage. Such approach to implementation of activities was essential if different political and institutional levels of government and their representatives were to accept the Project.

This notion was strongly emphasised in the discussion with local government representatives/mayors who were 1) familiar with the overall Project goal and intentions, 2) expressed their agreement with and appreciation for the support offered to local service delivery and in shifting the focus of citizens toward mjesne zajednice councils and their operations and 3) emphasised their support for reviving mjesne zajednice. Apart from generating trust by demonstrating genuine interest in the needs of citizens, the participatory approach created a sense of ownership over Project and played a key role in generating voluntary engagement in the Project activities. Yet despite the extensive training activities, there is no evidence that the Project used the Training System for Local Governments e-Platform as originally planned in order to ensure wider outreach and sustainability of the training programmes. Capacity development plays a crucial role in the empowerment of citizens and this avenue should be explored further.

Extensive efforts were made to ensure the following during the implementation:

- The Project was implemented in both entities and in Brčko District in order to overcome the political complexity that dominates all levels of governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Continuous efforts to amend the laws on local self-governance in both entities were conducted as part of the need to fill gaps in the policy framework for local governance.

²⁹ UNDP Country programme document for Bosnia and Herzegovina (2015–2019).

³⁰ Swiss Cooperation Strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2017–2020. Available from www.amica-schweiz.ch/deutsch-swiss-cooperation-strategy-for-bosnia-and-herzegovina-2017-2020/. Accessed 18 February 2019.

³¹ Ibid. p. 21.

- Ensure the involvement of all macro level institutions that have a formal role in local self-governance as Project partners in order to embed the Project institutionally.
- Address the need for citizen oriented interventions by designing them in such a way that enables them to bypass politicisation and control or capture by political parties.
- Respond directly to the needs of citizens in the local communities and by so doing align the Project closely to the social context.

However, the Project did not make any significant adjustment to its interventions in response to the identified needs of citizens and their growing dissatisfaction and nor did it respond to the **political challenges** that directly affected its implementation, exit strategy and sustainability following the elections of 2016 and 2018 and the formation of new government. Legal challenges to the Election Law related to the legal mechanism for electing the House of the Peoples of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and subsequent government appointments may turn into a serious obstacle to amending the legislation related to local self-governance and the status of mjesne zajednice. Yet there is no Project strategy for responding to this political and institutional problem.

3.3.2. The Project contribution to future development processes

The contribution made by the Project to local development is the backbone of its design at both the policy level and when it comes to access to and the delivery of essential public services. The development process can be observed through two broad driving processes: the commitment to achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals** and the reform process driven by the **EU accession agenda**. The latter is more forceful when it comes to instigating the changes that are essential for the development process.

The Project specifically contributes to UNDAF Outcome 4 (Economic, social and territorial disparities are decreased through a coordinated approach by national and subnational actors), which is also linked to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16³² and UNDAF Outcome 9 (Targeted legislation, policies, budget allocations and inclusive social protection systems are strengthened to proactively protect the vulnerable) as well as to SDGs 5 and 11.³³ The overall goal of the Project is to lay a foundation for a better life for the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina in their local communities and this can be seen as contributing to SDG 3. The Project is in alignment with two out of the four UNDAF strategic focus areas: social inclusion (education, social protection, child protection and health) and the empowerment of women, as outlined in the relevant programme documents.

The issues of the development process were addressed during the discussions held with the Project partners and local government representatives. At the local level, all of the mayors were well aware of the development ranking of their local government and aspired to improve their standing. Smaller rural municipalities are able to make a more coordinated and unified effort to advance their status and this is where the Project came across as particularly useful. Yet the larger local governments, particularly urban ones, with a large number of mjesne zajednice struggle to systematise and harmonise their efforts and face more diverse development challenges. In this sense, the Project is likely to make an uneven contribution to the development process at the local level.

Yet as one of the Project Board members emphasised, the Project has the potential to contribute to balancing out disparity in development among local communities and regional inequality. Creating stronger links between the Project outcomes nationally will enable this and the local level development agenda in relation to the thematic domains that are the focus of the intervention, namely gender equality and strengthened institutions. It is important for the priorities of mjesne zajednice to become part of local government development strategies, which are used as a tool in the planning of future investment in infrastructure, services and other aspect of daily life. Partnership and

³² Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

³³ Gender Equality (5) and Sustainable Cities and Communities (11).

cooperation with other donors and projects that specifically focus on the development agenda would be a worthwhile effort within this domain. Exploring avenues for linking citizen engagement to broadly supported local development processes would be especially beneficial.

The UNDAF outcomes serve as a mutual accountability framework between the United Nations and all institutional partners in Bosnia and Herzegovina both at the country level and within the domain of citizen needs. This is particularly relevant to the Project in terms of its partnerships. Because the Project works with the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry of Justice of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry of Administration and Local Governance of Republika Srpska and of the Government of Brčko District, it is important to have an overarching umbrella agreement on the Project implementation and future strategic consolidation.

Given the Project focus on introducing a new regulatory framework for functional mjesne zajednice and the institutional presence and framing of the interventions and their implementation within institutional priorities as well as those of the United Nations and other multilateral and international frameworks, the institutional partners see public administration reform as the key need in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Project as an important contribution to the national priorities. This is irrespective of the fact that local services are technically not within this domain.

However, the need for staff capacity development within local government and mjesne zajednice is also identified as one of the crucial needs that should be addressed as part of the Project. One members of the Project Board shared the opinion that the overall goal of the Project is not achievable unless there is a harmonisation of the legal frameworks on local self-government in both the entities and in Brčko District. The real advancement of public administration reform, in his view, would be for the relevant institutions to agree to have a state level law on local self-government that is guided by the European Charter on Local Self-Government (ratified by Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2002), which is the current focus of the Council of Europe.³⁴

Furthermore, after being on hold for a number of years, the **EU integration process** is currently the main reform agenda in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2015, the Stabilisation and Association Agreement entered into force and this opened the path for the next formal steps in the EU accession process. Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted its application to join the EU in February 2016. In September of the same year, the EU Council invited the EU Commission (EC) to present an opinion on the application by Bosnia and Herzegovina for which it delivered the questionnaire to the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina took until February 2018 to complete the questionnaire further reflects the complexity and sluggishness of reform in the country.

Parallel to these processes, Bosnia and Herzegovina implemented the German and United Kingdom led EU initiative defined as the Reform Agenda (over the period 2015–2018). Strong focus was on economic growth. One of its medium term priorities was the contribution to the Public Administration Reform, which emphasised the need for fiscal sustainability and the quality of public service delivery to citizens. Process was sluggish despite multilateral support. The 2018 EC report³⁵ concluded that Bosnia and Herzegovina had made no progress in achieving public administration reform in the preceding year.

This makes other pathways, such as the Project, important catalysts for the reform process. One member of the Project Board emphasised that public administration reform is the most important and “above all other reforms” in Bosnia and Herzegovina because of its potential to resolve some of the key weaknesses in government and the governance system in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He also stated

³⁴ A delegation from the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe carried out a monitoring visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina from 20–22 November 2018. Available from www.coe.int/en/web/congress/news-2018/-/asset_publisher/DySluB7ikmMo/content/congress-monitoring-visit-to-bosnia-and-herzegovina?_101_INSTANCE_DySluB7ikmMo_viewMode=view/. Accessed 8 January 2018.

³⁵ Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018 Report; 2018 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy.

that compared to all other similar development interventions the Project is far more connected to other reforms processes in the country, such as institutional and economic reform.

The Project contributes to the functioning of democratic institutions, which is very high on the list of EU accession related reform process priorities. The 2018 EC Report emphasised the continued lack of clarity in relation to the division of power between the entities, cantons and municipalities, highlighting the lack of cooperation between them and the relatively low level of financial autonomy at the municipal level.³⁶ Clearly, this is a serious obstacle to the country’s development. The Project can make a significant contribution in terms of its developed mechanisms for coordination between local levels of government and has the potential to replicate and institutionalise such measures at higher levels of government. Furthermore, the depoliticisation of the self-governance structures, to which the Project contributes, has the potential to improve all aspects of the institutional functioning of local government and support citizens in exercising their democratic right to mobilise and to propose, question and demand answers and action from their elected representatives.

3.4. Project effectiveness

This section of the evaluation will discuss the effectiveness of the Project by assessing the indicators of success outlined in the evaluation criteria in the TOR.³⁷ As the best approach to illustrate the intervention flow and logic as well as the extent of annual progress, the analysis is structured according to the outcomes. The assessment of the achievements per output and outcome is attached under Annex 1 to this report.

Table 3. Output/outcome indicators of achievement at the time of the evaluation

	Goal Indicators fully achieved	Goal Indicators partially/not achieved	Outcome Indicators fully achieved	Outcome Indicators partially/not achieved	Output Indicators fully achieved	Output Indicators partially/not achieved
Overall Goal		4				
Outcome 1 2 outputs			2	2	5	0
Outcome 2 7 outputs			3	6	6	15
Outcome 3 3 outputs			0	2	1	5

Overall, **the Project has made very significant achievements within the domain of the main goal and the three main outcomes.** It has created a new inclusive and gender-sensitive vision of mjesne zajednice in Bosnia and Herzegovina to act as a foundation for more participatory and accountable local governance in the country and is working to gain consensus for its endorsement by citizens and governments and their support for its implementation. The Project has made mjesne zajednice more

³⁶ Ibid. (p.4)

³⁷ The full list of questions about the effectiveness of the Project are outlined in the TOR and can be found in the Evaluation Matrix under Annex 4 to this document.

proactive, competent and interconnected and helped improve the downward responsiveness of local government and service delivery. The Project is leading the reform of the regulatory framework for functional mjesne zajednice and making local governance more inclusive, gender-sensitive and accountable in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

There has been significant progress toward the overall project goal to improve the quality of life of the citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina through enhanced local services and strengthened democratic accountability and social inclusion. The focus is on encouraging community lead local development and revitalising community governance through mjesne zajednice.

3.4.1. Did the outputs and outcomes contribute to Project?

Outcome 1. Citizens and government are committed to realise the new jointly agreed inclusive and gender-sensitive vision of mjesne zajednice in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a foundation for more participatory and accountable local governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The new vision of mjesne zajednice in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been created and all Project stakeholders have endorsed it. The first step under this outcome was the preparation of a comparative analysis study³⁸ of local community governance in five Balkan and European countries (including Bosnia and Herzegovina), which was conducted by the centre for social research Analitika. Recommendations from this study were analysed in order to find the most appropriate workable model for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Once selected it was used to identify the main approach and principles best suited to Bosnia and Herzegovina and for drafting the policy document for the new vision of mjesne zajednice. CSOs, private sector organisations, academics and media representatives also contributed to the formulation and creation of the model for the new vision of mjesne zajednice. The process directly engaged 1,017 participants, of which 62 per cent were men, 38 per cent women, and 17 per cent socially excluded.³⁹ These figures were close to the originally set targets of at least 1,500 representatives from civil society organisations, citizens groups and the private sector; at least 40 per cent women and at least 10 per cent comprising representatives from socially excluded and vulnerable groups.

The newly prepared vision of mjesne zajednice was then shared with all 145 local governments in Bosnia and Herzegovina and more than 2,500 people. This was achieved through the innovative use of social media, which enabled wider access for citizens.

All of the Project activities related to Objective 1 were conducted in a highly participatory manner and can be used to form the baseline from which the results and impact of the Project can be measured, including those listed below.

- **Citizen satisfaction survey:**⁴⁰ This survey included an opinion poll involving 5,169 respondents and 23 local governments and 97 mjesne zajednice. It defined the perceptions of citizens on how services are designed and delivered in their local communities. The survey results were disaggregated according to sex but not by social group. This made it difficult to ascertain the differences in perception/opinions⁴¹ resulting from the Project and to analyse the Project results when it came to the social inclusion of marginalised groups.
- **Comprehensive baseline study:** This study collected data and evaluated the existing structural and operational environment in 61 local governments and 603 mjesne zajednice that applied to

³⁸ Comparative review of community governance models and practices in Croatia, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland and Bosnia and Herzegovina (2016), Analitika

³⁹ The quantitative/numerical information about the number of activities/events/persons quoted in the Evaluation Report are taken from the Project annual reports for 2015, 2016 and 2017 and the Six-month Progress Report 2018 and the Cumulative Summary of Key Products and Outputs against the Project Objectives (September 2018).

⁴⁰ UNDP, Local communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina: what citizens think? (IPSOS Public Affairs, UNDP, 2017).

⁴¹ For example, the survey asked citizens about the patterns of communication and issues discussed with their mjesne zajednice (p.23); this was also addressed in the focus groups as part of the evaluation process.

participate in the Project. The two baseline studies can be used to measure the changes and impact resulting from the current phase of the Project (Phase I) and the following phases.

- **Gender Needs Assessment:** This assessment conducted participatory action research in seven municipalities, in order to identify both: root causes and structural barriers to equality of women in mjesne zajednice, but also the entry points and opportunities for improving gender equality outcomes and boosting women leadership. It consulted more than 120 individuals. The results were then integrated into the Gender Study titled: *Towards a Barrier Free Community*, and then further elaborated into programmatic interventions were tailored and translated into *Women in Elections* project which aims to strengthen the participation of women in local decision-making and public life and in leadership and economic empowerment. The latter is crucial for achieving the new inclusive and gender sensitive vision of mjesne zajednice in Bosnia and Herzegovina under Outcome 1.

The evaluation aimed to assess the extent to which the local communities involved in the Project accepted the new vision of mjesne zajednice as an operational approach/model and as the document⁴² that will guide their engagement. Some of the key findings from the focus groups are summarised below.

- Those who participated in the consultation process were more familiar with the content of the document and the four models for the new vision of mjesne zajednice than those who did not participate in its creation.
- The new vision of mjesne zajednice document is too long and the language it uses is too complex and thus incomprehensible to most citizens. When focus group participants were asked about it even the short summary version of the document was not recognised and was mostly not read or seen.
- The mayors gave a similar response and when asked about it in the interviews and struggled to identify the models for the new vision of mjesne zajednice.⁴³ Yet they were fully aware of the Project goal and mostly in favour of the idea of and expressed their support for reviving mjesne zajednice.
- All mjesne zajednice identified forums and civic participation as the most useful principles/models for their local communities and considered their usage as strongly established and something that would remain as a principle after the end of the Project. They were also very articulate when identifying the preferred role for their mjesne zajednice as a place for participation, sharing citizen interests, decision making, collective action, access to governance and connecting with local government/local authorities as well as connecting with citizens (socialising) and inclusion (particularly women, pensioners/elderly and youth in some cases).⁴⁴
- The model for community hubs was easily recognised and reported to be in use by the participants.

These are some of the positive and negative and intended and unintended changes that were brought about by the Project interventions, as identified by the evaluation participants.

- Mayor of Zenica: “Engaging mjesne zajednice activated their agency” and “their opinion matters.”
- Mayor of Pale-Prača: “citizens became more active” (confirmed by all focus groups) and “citizens are more alert and awake.”

⁴² The questions for the mayors, Local Government Project Coordinators and focus group participants about the new vision of mjesne zajednice can be found in Annex 2 under the interview protocols.

⁴³ The Mayor of Zenica, for example, could not recall the document or the four models, but expressed the opinion that citizens’ first point of contact for problems or needs should be mjesne zajednice. The mayors of Pale-Praca and Bijeljina could not comment on the new vision of mjesne zajednice, but very supportive of the Project and its approach to revitalising mjesne zajednice.

⁴⁴ E.g. Jablanica and Petrovo.

Focus groups participants stated that people's perception of and their behaviour toward mjesne zajednice had begun to change and that this had led to a reinstating of their connection with mjesne zajednice as a mechanism of governance.

Participants in the evaluation thought that citizens were more oriented toward legal modes of governance,⁴⁵ namely they were less likely to communicate local community or personal problems and needs directly to the mayor but more inclined to share this through forums or approach mjesne zajednice council in search of a solutions (using the models for the new vision of mjesne zajednice). Women were very satisfied that their voice is now heard and their opinions taken into consideration. Perhaps one of the most relevant reflections is that implementation of the new vision of mjesne zajednice forced local government to become more supportive of mjesne zajednice. The new vision of mjesne zajednice is a broad platform that allows for the adoption of relevant principles.

Conclusion

The policy design process was **highly participatory and comprehensive**, with broad public promotion and outreach. The participatory and inclusive approach to policy development included a very significant contribution from women and the socially excluded population. The level of expertise involved in creating the policy is commendable and it one the most comprehensive approaches that could be applied. It is an example of how to **enhance a government system whilst avoiding the politicisation of the process**. The UNDP managed to elevate the new vision of mjesne zajednice above the institutional complexities and ethnic divisions that usually complicate policy processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This approach **successfully bypassed one of the key contextual challenges** identified earlier in this document and created a nationwide harmonised methodology. The new vision of mjesne zajednice is a collaborative effort involving local institutions, organisations and other stakeholders and shows that it is possible to integrate horizontal and vertical contributions when having a sensible goal.

Based on the discussions with key stakeholders, the evaluation concludes that on a practical level the main advantage of the new vision of mjesne zajednice is the broad combination of tools and principles that are applicable to any local context in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Even under the best of circumstances and especially under the current challenges in Bosnia and Herzegovina local communities are vastly diverse in terms of geography, demography and socioeconomic aspects. The complexity and level of detail of the new vision of mjesne zajednice allows it to accommodate all of the different qualities and characteristics of mjesne zajednice and makes it possible to address the needs of local communities and citizens. Members of the Project Board from the relevant ministries verified the new gender sensitive vision of mjesne zajednice through their written formal endorsement of its implementation.

The new vision is broad and all-encompassing and the benefits of this are clear; however, this tends to make it difficult for members of mjesne zajednice Council and beneficiaries to comprehend it, particularly in terms of its practical application. This observation is also valid for other Project interventions that entail complex approaches that are difficult for citizens, particularly those in the lower education brackets and those living in less developed rural areas, to comprehend. Yet this struggle was much less present when it came to the implementation of the principles of the new vision of mjesne zajednice. This is because the themes of the vision had become more familiar and attuned to the circumstances of everyday life, particularly for those who had discussed such problems and reflected on the issues related to the provision of public services in the forums. Given the evaluation finding that all of mjesne zajednice had adopted or implemented the principles of the new vision it is clear that the Project has been successful in this respect. However, the reflections of citizens do call for a strategic revision of how to balance policy and intervention.

⁴⁵ Every Focus Group gave an example of problems that were discussed in the forums.

Outcome 2. Proactive, competent and interconnected mjesne zajednice contribute to the downward responsiveness of local government and improved service delivery.

Outcome 2 is oriented toward strengthening the capacities of local government, mjesne zajednice and local CSOs. It is aimed at motivating the different forms of voluntary citizen engagement, improving processes and mechanisms (both formal and informal) that ensure that the downward and upward relationship reflect responsiveness, communication and cooperation in interactions between the Project, local government and mjesne zajednice. The evaluation process has established through the project documents and interviews with the mayors that the local governments and mjesne zajednice who accepted to participate in the Project did so with genuine commitment and intent. At least 136 mjesne zajednice were engaged in the local policy design and 126 in the delivery cycle. The key challenge for this outcome was how to invent something new without completely changing mjesne zajednice and this required the development of multiple tools and approaches:

- establish Community Forums to act as a mechanism for direct citizen participation;
- implement two grant schemes, namely the Local Development Fund and the Local Initiatives Fund;
- implement extensive capacity development and training for members of mjesne zajednice councils and volunteers and local government coordinators;
- establish community hubs;
- improve mjesne zajednice working conditions (provide mjesne zajednice with offices and equipment);
- support networking between mjesne zajednice.

Community forums: From the start of the Project, **455 forums** were organised in the participating mjesne zajednice. This created a space for direct citizen participation in local issues for 12,787 people of which 3,786 were women (30per cent). At least two mjesne zajednice priorities identified through the forums had been included in **municipal budgets** of the respective partner local governments by the end of 2016, while 145 priorities identified through the forums were integrated into work plans and budgets and included in municipal budgets in 2017.

Participants in the focus groups identified forums as one of the key principles of the vision of mjesne zajednice when it came to usefulness for local affairs. They saw forums as being of particular use for initiating stronger citizen participation and engaging those community members who were not previously active in mjesne zajednice, such as young people, women, the elderly and marginalised groups (e.g. Roma in Bijeljina). The focus group participants confirmed increased citizen engagement, especially in the realisation of local priority projects that directly address local community needs.

The following are statements made by focus groups participants describing the importance and contribution of the forums: “citizens selected their own projects”, there was “increased volunteerism”, we were “thrilled with the response of volunteers”, it is “very important for small communities that were not forgotten”, “citizen awareness increased”, “it is the first time money went where it was needed”, there was “high volunteerism despite high unemployment”, the “role of women strengthened”, “citizens want to participate in their mjesne zajednice”, the “mjesne zajednice became alive”, there was “greater youth activism”, “increased trust”, it was “superbly organised”, “people are no longer pessimistic”, “people now want to contribute to their communities”, “citizens now have a channel of communication with the municipality.”⁴⁶

The focus group participants discussed the advantage of the forums in comparison to traditional citizen assemblies. They saw the **forums as offering a more inclusive approach** and an open floor for discussion of any issue of concern to a local community or an issue deemed personally important by a community member. In contrast, they described traditional citizen assemblies as usually organised to discuss a specific problem related to, for example, infrastructure or capital investment and said that

⁴⁶ In the focus groups, the evaluation participants referred to their local government the opština (municipality) irrespective of the formal status of their local government as a municipality or city/town.

women usually did not attend. The forum approach **encourages the participation of women and the engagement of young people** and many started to recognise opportunities for their ideas to be taken seriously and transformed into achievable projects (e.g. in Petrovo and Jablanica). At the time of the evaluation, 15 local governments had amended their statutes and the statutes of mjesne zajednice in order to formalise community forums and make them a formal mechanism and tool for citizen participation in their mjesne zajednice.

According to the focus group participants, the main reason for the acceptance of community forums is witnessing how the mechanism can work in the local community. They had first-hand experience of identifying a community need/problem up to the realisation of a local priority project that offered a solution to the need/problem. This engagement of citizens brought concrete results and they saw their ideas come to life and this led to a sense of empowerment among citizens and within mjesne zajednice. One of the main concerns expressed in the focus groups was that once the projects are finalised (Project LOT 1 and LOT2) this important motivation and incentive will be lost and that this would have a negative impact on maintaining citizen participation.

Small Grants Scheme funded local projects via two initiatives: the Local Development Fund (mjesne zajednice) and the Local Initiatives Fund (CSOs). Up until September 2018, **204** priority projects of mjesne zajednice were completed to the direct benefit of 122,418 citizens (42 per cent women or 52,484). In addition, there were 228,565 indirect beneficiaries out of which 105,839 (46 per cent) were women.⁴⁷ An additional 73 priority projects were either initiated or in the process of implementation at the time of the evaluation. A further 69 projects were funded by the Local Initiatives Fund and completed during the period covered by this evaluation. The number of direct beneficiaries was 32,956 and the number of indirect beneficiaries was 66,773 citizens. The number of socially excluded and vulnerable citizens directly benefiting from the CSO projects was 2,768 (8.5 per cent), while 8,861 women (27 per cent) benefiting directly from the CSO projects.

The evaluation team visited and validated some of the priority projects including playground reconstruction, mjesne zajednice space reconstruction, the reconstruction of buildings of former local culture hubs, the reconstruction of youth and sports facilities, school and library reconstruction (such as improving library premises in Banja Luka, securing primary school access in Jablanica, building a fence around the school grounds at a primary school in Zenica) and the purchase of medical equipment (three projects).

As beneficial as they were, the priority projects also represented a challenge when mjesne zajednice began to take on the role of service provider. Focus group participants and some of the interviewed mayors/Local government project coordinators⁴⁸ highlighted the legal restrictions that arose when mjesne zajednice took on the role of service provider, given that they do not have legal/formal jurisdiction and lack the capacities for service delivery. Nevertheless, mjesne zajednice are engaged in the delivery of certain services to citizens, but only on a case-by-case basis. Some examples⁴⁹ are given below:

- speech therapy provided for children with special needs in Kotor Varoš,
- refurbishment of the local library in Laktaši,
- the purchase and training in the use of a new ultrasound scan for the local healthcare centre in Brčko,
- training on how to operate a local water supply provider in mjesne zajednice in Maoča,
- establishment of a volunteer network to assist vulnerable members of the community in Petrovo coordinated with the local Red Cross,
- establishment of a citizens association to manage local water supply in Zenica.

⁴⁷ Cumulative Summary of Key Products and Outputs Against the Project Objectives (September 2018).

⁴⁸ Olovo, Tešanj, Banja Luka, Pale-Prača, Ljubinje, Nevesinje and Zenica.

⁴⁹ From project reports, but also feedback from focus groups.

Training and education activities: The focus group participants identified education as the most important contribution of the Project and the most beneficial outcome of their participation. The training and education activities were aimed at building the capacities of the presidents and council members of mjesne zajednice, the local government coordinators responsible for mjesne zajednice and CSO. Some mjesne zajednice encouraged young people from the community to attend the training events, particularly those on computer literacy and the use of ICT. The training not only improved the skills of members of mjesne zajednice council but also expanded the horizons of other members of mjesne zajednice (some of whom had never travelled outside of their municipality prior to the Project); this added the unintended project outcome of awareness raising to the capacity building activities. Some of the mayors noted in the interviews that one of the most noticeable differences between mjesne zajednice that were part of the project and those that were not is the new level of skill in communication and engagement among participating mjesne zajednice council members with local government (either when discussing projects or delivering annual reports to the municipal assembly).

Community Hubs: Feedback from the focus groups showed that creating mjesne zajednice spaces (meeting places, offices) and community hubs had had a very beneficial impact on the formal functioning of mjesne zajednice and on social life in the local communities. Evaluation field visits were held at the premises of the community hubs and this provided an opportunity to validate this Project output. They are used as meeting spaces and often comprise of more than one room (e.g. Zenica, Pale-Prača, Jablanica, Bijeljina and Gradačac). In addition to the premises of community hubs, most of mjesne zajednice involved in the Project now have an office/meeting space that is used by community members for forum meetings and other activities.

In total, 21 community hubs have been opened in partner local governments and more than 6,000 participants (55per cent men and 44per cent women) have so far registered for educational, cultural, youth and children's events as well as training and public education. Focus group participants expressed the opinion that the community hubs are beneficial for local communities, particularly for young people and the elderly. In certain municipalities, such as Olovo and Tešanj, the community hubs found a way to become **financially self-sustainable**, although this problem remains unresolved in the other municipalities. The Project is working on finding solutions to make all community hubs sustainable, which will be one of its main activities during the remainder of the Project.

Capacity building component and community hubs: These are leading task of strengthening leadership at the community level through mjesne zajednice and improving networking by developing networking models for mjesne zajednice. The Project is also developing platforms for innovative citizen engagement using business/start-up like modalities for community transformation.⁵⁰ This work is **essential for the sustainability of the Project results, particularly the sustainability of the community hubs**. The Project and its partners are brainstorming ideas to solve this problem. The Networks Foundation is also working directly with local government in order to help them develop plans for self-sustainability through a direct mentorship approach. This is because it identified a lack of future vision among local government coordinators. Their engagement is ultimately about teaching them how to think differently and strategically.

In 2017, six start-up events were organised and attended by 750 people (60per cent women) from 24 partner municipalities. Around 150 innovative ideas from participants were presented during these events and the 18 most successful ideas were selected for further mentoring. The goal of these events, in line with the capacity building activities, was to expand citizen understanding on the need to diversify sources of funding for local projects and for the running costs of mjesne zajednice. These events attracted a large number of women, who turned out to be very entrepreneurial. A similar finding emerged from the focus groups, especially in relation to women active in their mjesne zajednice.

⁵⁰ Annual Project Progress Report.

Mjesne zajednice networking: Two large events were organised in 2016 in Teslić and Ilidža (Sarajevo). They centred on countrywide networking, capacity building and the exchange of best practice. Led by an external expert, 35 good governance practices were used to draft the Good Governance Practices document the methodology of which ensures better standards of implementation and consistency across sub-municipal levels of governance. In 2018, in a partnership with the entity associations of municipalities and cities, the Project organised the initial meeting of local government coordinators for mjesne zajednice affairs and officially **established a formal Network of Mjesne Zajednice** (in September 2018) led by Association of Cities and Municipalities of RS and FBiH, but including Brčko District. The network will act as a platform for sharing tools and publications produced as part of the Project. The evaluation participants shared some of the local networking examples that were either formally organised by local government (e.g. Mjesne Zajednice Day in Laktaši) or informally by mjesne zajednice themselves (e.g. orientation for new mjesne zajednice councils in Zenica).

Conclusion

This outcome focused on implementation of activities and the principles of the new vision and on working directly with local government and mjesne zajednice. Firstly, this Project outcome was successful in achieving its targets. The most significant results for citizens and mjesne zajednice were achieved in the second and third years of Project implementation, when capacity development and support for local projects took place via the Small Grants Scheme. These were the most tangible results for all residents in the participating mjesne zajednice but also for the residents in neighbouring mjesne zajednice that were not part of the Project. The latter subsequently became interested in participating and in exploring the possibilities for collaboration. This Project phase led some local governments to fund local community projects and improvements that were not part of the Project (not including capital investment). These can be considered as indirect Project outcomes (e.g. free Wi-Fi for rural areas in Zenica, matching citizen's financial contributions for local community improvement in Petrovo and a new funding framework and application approach for local community projects in Gradačac).

Reviewing LOT 1 and LOT2 mjesne zajednice (first and second funding cycles) and the status of activities allowed the evaluation to review the follow-up dynamics and the likelihood of sustainability.

There were three main findings:

- The continuation of citizen engagement seems to vary on a case-by-case basis. The focus group participants in Brčko District, for example, reported a significant decline in activities and citizen engagement once the local projects were finalised (August 2017) whereas Laktaši remained very active. This suggests the need for a strategic review of the financial support for mjesne zajednice in the future and implies the need for an assessment of leadership qualities and abilities.
- Irrespective of the local project activities (year of implementation and LOT), the endorsement of education and training and their positive impact was consistent across all mjesne zajednice. The management and organisational capacities of mjesne zajednice and local government have improved significantly and there is the potential for further enhancement by institutionalising the capacity building process through specific strategically placed arrangements such as knowledge transfer and peer-to-peer support. However, in order for **the entity associations of municipalities and cities to be a leading partner to mjesne zajednice Network they are in serious need of capacity development.**
- The ability and commitment of citizens to volunteer for local projects, address local problems and help their neighbours and fellow citizens and to focus on fundraising are considered important indicators of improved wellbeing. The interventions and capacity building have made local government operations more transparent for citizens and lead to permanent changes in how they engage. In some local governments (such as in Zenica) the **way mjesne zajednice council members are elected has been changed to secret ballot and the overall transparency of the operations of mjesne zajednice council have improved.** In the current phase (Phase I), no

strategic approach targeted external financial resources and therefore this should receive more attention in the further implementation.

A result of the activities undertaken under this outcome is certainly greater awareness of democratic accountability as well as what it represents. This has led to increased expectations of local government, but in an organised and systemic way. Even in those cases where local legal frameworks and policies were not amended, the Project created sufficient know-how for productive and meaningful citizen engagement. However, the approach adopted by the Project is not conducive to inter mjesne zajednice and inter municipal cooperation, which is a lost opportunity. The recommendations section of this report proposes a way forward regarding this issue.

Outcome 3. A new regulatory framework for functional mjesne zajednice developed by government enables more inclusive, gender-sensitive and accountable local governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Outcome 3 is currently a key element in the work of the UNDP. It focuses on putting in place a new legislative framework (combination of new and amended legislation) on mjesne zajednice and reforming local government statutes and local acts that regulate the roles, rights and responsibilities of mjesne zajednice. The new regulatory framework will amend the exiting legislation in order to make it more favourable for mjesne zajednice and accountable governance and to enable more inclusive and gender sensitive governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the time of the evaluation (October and November 2018), the new regulatory framework was not in place in either of the two entities nor in Brčko District.

The evaluation assessed two aspects of this outcome: 1) Whether the stakeholders agreed that this legislative change is necessary in order to make mjesne zajednice more functional, in line with the project aims, and 2) whether it is realistic, given the extremely complicated governance system in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It is noteworthy that the Law on Local Self-Government of Republika Srpska (dating from 2007 with amendments adopted in 2014) was further amended at the end of 2016 (during the Project cycle) but not within the domain of the status and functionality of mjesne zajednice. This raises the question of how likely it is that the new amendments will be accepted by the end of the Project cycle.

The Project has made considerable progress under Outcome 3. Legislative commissions/working groups comprised of senior local governance experts have been established in both entities and in Brčko District. To date, 6 consultative meetings whose task is to draft specific recommendations for changes and amendments to the relevant legislative frameworks have been held. Short and long-term recommendations for potential changes to the draft legislation have been prepared and drafted for each commission in the entities and in Brčko District to take forward. Legal analysis and regulatory impact assessments have been prepared building on the new vision of mjesne zajednice and institutional and professional advice.

The Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina offered not just its initial support for reviewing the legal analysis and the advocacy plan for legislative amendments but agreed to introduce the matter into the annual work plan for 2017/2018/2019 for discussion. It continues to support introduced changes to the legislation for improvement of mjesne zajednice. The National Assembly of Republika Srpska also participated in the review of the legal analysis, particularly in framing short and long-term recommendations for the legislative amendments. However, given that the composition of both parliaments changed after the general elections in October 2018, this support may vary depending on the political will and interest.

Two of the interviewed institutional partners suggested that the UNDP should now step-up advocacy efforts to raise awareness about the Project in both parliaments and build networks of support among the newly elected MPs. The representatives of the entity associations of municipalities and cities and the Project donors agreed that the main focus over the forthcoming period should be on lobbying and presenting the results of the newly established best practice and frameworks for mjesne zajednice.

Changes to the legislation depend on political will. Brčko District is happy with its current legislation but needs to put greater effort into changing the statute for mjesne zajednice in order to create a more accountable system.

The mayors' views on amending the legislation varied. The mayors who expressed their support for the legislative amendments were from Zenica (although they indirectly placed more emphasis on the importance of public administration reform and EU support), Tešanj (who emphasised the importance of harmonising the legal frameworks across the entities and Brčko District), Jablanica (where the Local Government Coordinator stressed the importance of ensuring that all mjesne zajednice are equal in terms of their formal/legal status – account and seal), Bijeljina (stating that mjesne zajednice should have legal status where people and managers are responsible) and Petrovo (“mjesne zajednice is the core of a community and it should have a legal status where it does not exist.”).

When it came to the focus group participants, the main reasons for being in favour of having a legal status change were that it is necessary for operational and financial matters and that a formal/legal status endows a level of professionalism to mjesne zajednice councils when dealing with local and higher levels of government. Despite their concerns (which are often justified), the mayors agreed in general that the matter of the legal status of mjesne zajednice should be resolved. The mayors of Ljubinje and Nevesinje were the most reserved when it came to this matter, but they were still open to searching for the best solution. New regulatory solutions will have to balance the need for mjesne zajednice to have the necessary autonomy for active citizen engagement and put in place structures, systems and responsibilities that are cost-effective and guarantee accountability but without causing disruption to the operations and authority of local government.

Institutionalisation of practices by local governments for Mjesne zajednice: When it comes to impact at the local government level, fifteen out of 24 partner local governments amended their municipality statutes (and or mjesne zajednice statute at the level of FBiH and municipal decision at the level of RS). This change reflects the ownership by the local governments to reflect good practices through legal documents and use them at the municipal level in a standardize way with all MJESNE ZAJEDNICEs at the level of respective partner local governments. The change is a significant impact at the outcome 3 level for institutionalizing processes and ensuring improved and standardized practices are applied systematically and long-term. Remaining 9 are in the process of adaptation of their municipal statutes. Mjesne Zajednice roadmaps: The current Project interventions under this outcome are focused on the institutionalisation of mjesne zajednice methodology. There was broad consensus among the mayors concerning the need to institutionalise the methodology or more precisely to make the positive changes sustainable.⁵¹ A consortium of MDP initiatives in Doboј, GEA Banja Luka, Vesta Tuzla and the Centre for Civic Initiatives (Banja Luka) support this process. The aim of this activity is to create customised roadmaps for each mjesne zajednice (individual tailored documents designed together with each mjesne zajednice council). They are intended to act as a vehicle for strengthening upstream dialogue and interaction between mjesne zajednice and their local government and as a tool for upward representation of mjesne zajednice based on the four models of the vision of mjesne zajednice.

In addition, there is the ‘**Mjesne Zajednice Methodology**’ that contains 12 practical tools to ensure a systematic way of working for mjesne zajednice. Although all of these tools and mechanisms are no doubt useful, the Project should be careful to avoid overburdening mjesne zajednice. If they become lost in the structure then we risk overshadowing the main purpose, which is to encourage and support genuine grassroots citizen engagement.

⁵¹ The Mayor of Gradačac, for example, emphasised the sense of optimism resulting from the Project, increased citizen participation and the better operational functioning of mjesne zajednice as a direct result of the Project interventions in local communities.

Conclusion

Despite extensive efforts by the Project, the relevant laws (the Law on Local Self-Government of Republika Srpska, the Law on the Principles of Local Self-Government in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Law on Local Communities in Brčko District) have not been amended. Mjesne zajednice in Republika Srpska still do not have legal status and their financial and operational capacities are seriously limited. The political context remains unfavourable for these changes.

In the absence of legal changes, three Project mechanisms have the potential to lead to systemic change for mjesne zajednice: 1) local government adaptation and adoption of municipal/mjesne zajednice statutes; 2) mjesne zajednice roadmaps and 3) the appointment of at least one (or more, depending on the size of the local government) coordinator responsible for all mjesne zajednice affairs and for providing the necessary types of support.

3.4.2. Promoting inclusiveness of marginalised groups, gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment

Gender mainstreaming and social inclusion were comprehensive integral components of the Project planning and implementation. Starting with the development of mjesne zajednice Project Gender Strategy, there were continuous efforts to mainstream the principles of gender-sensitivity and social inclusion. At the design stage, the Project envisaged having the ratio of at least 30 per cent of socially excluded and 50 per cent of women among the Project beneficiaries and recipients in the direct activities.⁵² However, it failed to indicate the representation of women and excluded and vulnerable groups in the new mjesne zajednice and Project organisational structures. Furthermore, although the monitoring system has been successful in capturing gender disaggregated results it provides less information on the nature of socially excluded beneficiaries (youth, the unemployed, the elderly and people with disabilities). The Project reports do provide some insight into the specific activities and the specific types of support for the socially excluded but lack focus on the drivers of exclusion and sufficient elaboration on the longer-term impact that these interventions meant to achieve.

In addition to the analysis outlined in the previous section, other examples of where the Project successfully mainstreamed gender are as follows:

- ensuring the participation and representation of women in mjesne zajednice decision-making processes (forums), capacity building activities and local priority projects;
- ensuring equal use of the benefits and access to public services and infrastructure for both men and women;
- contributing to women's empowerment (funding projects by local women's associations, CSOs and informal groups) and employability;
- designing a gender-sensitive new vision of mjesne zajednice in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- creating the first mjesne zajednice spin-off project, titled 'Women in Elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina', which was kick started in early 2018 with the main objective to strengthen women's leadership and participation in political life;
- additional gender equality related indicators were added to Project Outcome 3 in order to reflect the input of women participating in the drafting of and advocating for gender sensitive legislation through the commissions in the two entity and Brčko District.

Project activities have resulted in women's priorities and those of marginalised groups being addressed successfully through local priority projects, through mjesne zajednice and local CSOs, and

⁵² **The Project Gender indicators:** 78,773 women empowered through the support they received through direct project interventions (training, forums and grants): 3,300 women participated in the forums, 1500 attended the training, 354 women attended start-up events, 7,474 women participated in CSO activities, 52,484 women benefited directly from the projects. A total of 72 CSOs helped empower women to increase their outreach and impact, 21 out of 24 CSOs opened free public spaces (community hubs) and 42 activities for women were introduced in 21 public spaces.

partially through the new vision of mjesne zajednice and its implementation. The evaluation found that women across the country have become leaders, community pillars and entrepreneurs by spearheading 60 per cent of all business start-ups, becoming the initiators of civic engagement initiatives and fundraisers for a number of local community projects. One of the participants of the focus groups in the Municipality of Pale-Prača shared her experience. She stated that after attending the training and education she had successfully fundraised money for five projects in the past year.

Inclusion of marginalised groups has been achieved across all interventions, which mostly reached the Project target of 30 per cent of socially excluded and vulnerable groups. It is essential for the inclusive vision of mjesne zajednice. Community actions also included 30 per cent socially excluded. Local CSOs were instrumental in addressing the needs of persons with disabilities (e.g. Banja Luka) and in supporting those at the risk of exclusion (e.g. Petrovo). All of the participants of the focus groups recognised the need to support the socially excluded in their communities and were willing to continue to engage them in activities.

Incorporating gender sensitivity and social inclusion in the policy processes and amended legal frameworks have been partially achieved. The new proposed regulatory framework does not contain specific wording or a clear pathway to ensuring more inclusive and gender sensitive local governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the use of gender appropriate language should be further revisited (e.g. the current term 'gradjani' (citizens) should be replaced by the terms 'gradjani/gradjanke' (gender sensitive term for citizens). It also remains unclear as to whether or how the new vision of mjesne zajednice will lead to a better understanding of the constraints that affect women and the drivers of social exclusion (e.g. the issues of discrimination and tackling poverty) in order to draft specific measures to improve the responsiveness of local government in relation to the needs of citizens.

Access to public services and local community resources is just one aspect of systemic inclusivity addressed through the Project. Addressing the vulnerabilities of women and socially excluded individuals and groups entails the protection of their rights and entitlements in line with the EU accession strategy and the ratified international frameworks and therefore should be included in policies at all levels of government.

3.4.3. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Because of its scope and complexity, the Project developed a strong monitoring framework and complex tools to document results and to demonstrate its achievements. **Monitoring and evaluation complies with the corporate standards and requirements established by UNDP**⁵³ as part of the programme and project management set-up. It is guided by management decisions that are in line with the requirements of the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation and the Government of Sweden. The main tools used for monitoring the Project are the Logical Framework, the detailed Gender Monitoring Plan that is based on specific indicator,⁵⁴ the Cost-Effectiveness Plan and indicators and the regular surveys of local government and mjesne zajednice stakeholders.⁵⁵

The Project engaged an external consultant to develop a **comprehensive monitoring framework** with qualitative and quantitative indicators for outcomes and outputs. The **M&E platform** was developed as a statistical and analytical tool for monitoring progress in the implementation of activities and the achieved results. The platform contains the baseline data collected at the start of the project⁵⁶ through

⁵³ UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results (2009); UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluations (2016).

⁵⁴ All data collected as part of the monitoring process is disaggregated according to sex.

⁵⁵ The municipality questionnaire, mjesne zajednice Questionnaire and the citizen questionnaire (also used as means of verification for indicators achievement).

⁵⁶ UNDP, Local Communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina: What do Citizens Say? (UNDP, 2016).

a survey of 5,169 Project respondents and non-project local governments, a citizen satisfaction survey and monitoring data.

The evaluation found that the M&E function was applied systematically but that because the database is maintained on two computers in the UNDP office the evaluator had only limited access. It uses the Atlas system for organising and processing data into results focused tables, which is the responsibility of the Project Manager and the M&E expert. The database allows for monitoring and risk assessment throughout the Project and the timely preparation of risk mitigation plans. The database also allows for the automatic creation and updating of the 'Lessons Learnt Diary', which provides for systematic review of the lessons learned and experiences gained throughout the Project implementation. Yet because the Project team does not have an assigned position for a dedicated M&E specialist within the organisational structure (not included at the Project design stage) utilisation of the database and all of its features remains a challenge.

The Project initially required monthly reporting from mjesne zajednice and their respective local government on the level of progress in implementation against the planned activities. The Project team later changed the reporting cycle to quarterly after it realised that that monthly reporting was too challenging for mjesne zajednice. This was one of the lessons learned through the early project implementation. Mjesne zajednice representatives first had to be trained and mentored in order to reach the required level of skill for preparing these reports. This was a steep learning curve for mjesne zajednice but they acquired a useful skill that is transferable to other activities. During the evaluation, a number of focus group participants confirmed that they found reporting challenging. However, they also stressed that the UNDP regional coordinators were very understanding and supportive and prepared to extend deadlines when necessary. **The focus group participants identified the preparation of the progress reports as one of the most difficult aspects of their engagement in the Project.** They used expressions such as 'demanding', 'insisting' and 'strict' to describe this Project requirement and stated that it took some time to adjust to this task. Yet they also stated that such demands were 'completely understandable' and 'justified'. This matter relates to the broader issue of local capacity building, which is discussed in more detail under the challenges section of this report.

Project monitoring also featured (but is not limited to) six-monthly progress reports, annual narrative and financial reports to the donors (specifically SDC) and to the Project Board. The Project evaluation comprises of a Mid-Term Review and Final Evaluation Report on Phase I. All of the reporting was conducted in a timely manner and against the logical framework indicators. The Project Manager is responsible for the reporting process.

It is the opinion of this evaluation that the **M&E component is comprehensive in planning but less so in its implementation.** Further effort is required to a) utilise the available tools and b) consolidate the framework so that the results feed into implementation. The recommendations section of this report contains a further review of these weaknesses.

3.5. Project efficiency

3.5.1. Implementing modus operandi

The UNDP implements the Project using funding provided by the governments of Sweden and Switzerland. The intervention was conceptualised by the donors and UNDP, who designed the Project. **The Project Document was finalised within the first six months of implementation,** in consultation with the relevant participating institutions. **The Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina signed the Project Document on 31 December 2015.** The Project is designed to work in partnership with the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, local government and local CSOs as implementers of specific activities. The Project Board, which meets quarterly, is comprised of partner institutions: the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry of Justice of Federation of the Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry of Administration and Local Self-

Governance of Republika Srpska and the Ministry of Administration and Local Self-Governance of Brčko District.

There was continuous engagement and collaboration between UNDP and the members of the Project Board throughout the Project cycle, which secured the necessary institutional support for some of the outputs and Outcome 3. With the exception of a six-month delay in the Government of Brčko District endorsing the Project, which also delayed the adoption of the Project Document by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, this business model worked well with no major operational issues regarding partnerships reported to evaluators. The Government of Brčko District appointed after the 2016 local elections was not responsible for this process and expressed its interest and commitment to being part of the Project.

The locally based implementing partner CSOs, who work directly with mjesne zajednice, were identified through public calls for proposals. Their selection was made in strict compliance with UNDP procedures. Focus group feedback on their capacities and conduct was positive in relation to their knowledge and expertise in carrying out the required tasks.

The Project managed to achieve balanced representation among the participating local governments in both entities and in Brčko District and maintain an equal number of mjesne zajednice within the selected municipalities/cities. The Project activities were planned at the design stage and outlined in the logical framework; however, there was no predetermination of the nature or scope of local projects by mjesne zajednice and CSOs (OCD projects). This allowed mjesne zajednice as stakeholders and beneficiaries to start by identifying the actual needs of their own communities and to create local projects. This enhanced the relevance and visibility of all community members and created a sense of ownership. Nor was there any pre-approval of local CSOs for OCD projects. This helped ensure transparency and fairness and went a long way toward building trust between UNDP and the local stakeholders. When asked about their first impressions of the Project, both as citizens and as representatives of their mjesne zajednice, the focus group participants reported that building trust between them and UNDP was an essential element for their engagement.

3.5.2. Project management and coordination: Human and technical resources

The UNDP Project team is highly experienced. It is comprised of the National Project Manager/Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) and core members. The Project Manager/CTA is full-time and has the authority to run the Project on a day-to-day basis on behalf of UNDP. This includes daily communication with all of the key stakeholders and maintaining an insight into all aspects of the Project. The Project Manager/CTA is responsible for ensuring that the Project produces the required results to the required corporate standards and within the set constraints of time and cost, the day-to-day project management, reporting and coordination.

Monitoring and evaluation is conducted at the Project level. The UNDP's Monitoring and Evaluation Analyst allocates a certain number of hours for support and quality control of the process in line with UNDP M&E rules and procedures.

The evaluation identified certain organisational shortcomings:

- Insufficient human resources put a lot of strain on the team, which struggles to balance the workload and implement the outputs (although this is not reflected in the results).
- UNDP managed procurement and operations for all individual mjesne zajednice and OCD project funds, received local government funds and directed them to external suppliers. This operational approach led to certain delays (several months on some occasions) in priority project implementation and this caused a certain level of frustration among mjesne zajednice.
- Donor engagement in operations and management procedures and approaches should be revised prior to the next phase of the Project.

- The position of M&E Expert/Associate/Officer was not planned at the Project design stage and this lack of a dedicated person made monitoring (utilisation of the M&E tool for data collection) and documenting the results challenging.

3.5.3. Budget overview

The Project operates annual work plans and budgets that are shared with the partners and donors in order to secure their approval. The UNDP office is responsible for the receipt of donor contributions, the distribution of funds for the grants scheme, the consolidation of financial and narrative reports and reporting back to the Project Board and the donors. It is also responsible for the receipt of local government financial contributions (30 per cent) for mjesne zajednice projects and for the procurement of local project supplies.

The Project contract is between UNDP and the Government of Switzerland, which regulates operations and finance. Each municipality participating in the Project received on average BAM 300,000. The total amount spent from the Local Development Fund on mjesne zajednice projects was CHF 1,748,225, while the Local Initiative Fund (which funds CSOs projects) allocated CHF 353,363.

The **financial operations** were managed in a satisfactory manner. With the exception of the initial six-month delay at the start of the Project, the transfer of funds corresponds to the delivered outputs. After the initial setback, activities picked up momentum and continued in a timely fashion, which is reflected in the financial and narrative reports. A **cost-benefit analysis** was outside the scope of this evaluation and therefore we did not look in detail into the direct funding allocated for the local projects.

The expenditure for the local project funds, both mjesne zajednice and CSOs, was in the range of CHF 2.1 million or more than one-third of the total funds spent directly on the ground, which makes the intervention cost-effective and efficient.

The total value of all projects (as of 30 June 2018) was BAM 4,940,157: the contribution from the Local Development Fund and the Local Initiatives Fund was BAM 3,630,157 with BAM 1,310,000 from local government. Other forms of contributions accounted for 2 per cent of funding for the projects, including direct citizen contributions that totalled USD 120,000. Out of 204 projects 35 (17 per cent) received a local government contribution that exceeded the required minimum of 30 per cent of co-financing, which is a significant achievement. The total value of the projects was USD 434,231.13. The Local Initiatives Fund contributed USD 347,661.27 while the contribution of local government was USD 86,569.86.

The established **co-funding mechanism** is one of the key contributors to the sustainability of the Project, because it created ownership at both the local government and mjesne zajednice level and is likely to act as an incentive for future funding and investment.

Table 4. Mjesne zajednice Project budget (1 July 2015 – 30 June 2018)

Annual cumulative period	Total Budget (CHF)	Total transfer of funds (SDC)	Expenditure (CHF)	Balance at the time of the evaluation
1 July 2015 – 31 December 2015		2,000,000	148,331.80	
1 January 2016 – 31 December 2016		1,000,000	1,470,90.38	
1 January 2017 – 31 December 2017		2,000,000	2,563,244.21	
1 January 2017 – 30 June 2018		800,000	1,090,425.41	527,098.21
Total budget	7,944,419	5,800,000	5,272,901.79	527,098.21

3.5.4. Collaboration with other UNDP projects/programmes

The Project operates within the UNDP coordination framework and regularly exchanges information with other running projects. For easier coordination, there is a system for tracking joint local governments where two or more active projects overlap. There are also regular planning sessions on coordination between UNDP sectorial groups (e.g. social development), which enables coordination for a specific focus or outcome such as empowerment of women and social inclusion. Other UNDP development assistance projects are currently being implemented in some of the local governments participating in the Project, such as the Municipal Environmental and Economic Governance (MEG) Project⁵⁷ and the Integrated Local Development Project (ILDP).⁵⁸ The latter currently works with 40 local governments. These were identified at the Project design stage as potential points for building synergies with the Project. Past interventions⁵⁹ funded by the Swedish and Swiss governments that were directly relevant to the Project were also reviewed during the proposal design stage.

The evaluation found strategically planned synergies between MEG and ILDP and the Project but no direct or planned collaboration between them. Although the Project Manager of MEG did emphasise that the project proposals they received from citizens in the overlapping municipalities were more coherent and better structured, which can be attributed to the training they received in writing project proposals/PMC through the Project.

Some common challenges were also identified. The Project Manager of ILDP stated that both ILDP and the Project are struggling to maintain the active participation of citizens/volunteers, which even where a project is still active seems to decline over time. Both project managers agreed that building

⁵⁷ The Municipal Environmental and Economic Governance (MEG) Project is a 12-year initiative of the Government of Switzerland that began in 2015. It overlaps with the Project in 4 to 5 municipalities.

⁵⁸ The Integrated Local Development Project (ILDP) is a joint initiative of the Government of Switzerland and UNDP, launched in 2008.

⁵⁹ The People Empowerment in Rural Areas (PERA) Project and the Governance of Municipal Water and Environmental Development (GOV-WADE) Project.

synergies between different projects would save resources and mutually strengthen interventions in the participating local governments. However, this needs to be planned and coordinated between the donors, UNDP and other implementing partners (where appropriate) in order to have the best effect. Further recommendations on synergy are discussed in the recommendations section. The entity associations of municipalities and cities participate in both the Project and MEG projects and can therefore play a significant role in outreach activities, especially in relation to local governments that do not participate in the Project.

3.5.5. Risk mitigation

The following potential risks were identified at the Project design stage.

1. Municipal resistance: There was significant concern that local government would be opposed to the Project because of a fear of loss of power.
2. Capture by the political elite: Politicisation affects all aspects of governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina with political parties controlling governance appointments at all levels, including mjesne zajednice.
3. Legislative inertia: Amending the legislature in Bosnia and Herzegovina is an extremely difficulty and lengthy process.

To complicate matters even more, the local elections of 2016 and the general election of 2018 took place during the project implementation. This changed the political context in the local governments (including a change in mayors) as well as the composition of the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the National Assembly of Republika Srpska. The new parliaments and entity governments had yet to be confirmed at the time of the evaluation, which means that there is still the risk of a less favourable environment coming into place for the completion of Outcome 3. Therefore, the Project team needs to retain risk analysis as its focus along with measures of mitigation through continuous engagement in outreach and advocacy.

The Project Mid-Term Review⁶⁰ identified the following potential risks and challenges:

- the transfer of practice to other mjesne zajednice and local government,
- citizens forums not linked to local government development planning processes,
- politicisation of citizen participation mechanisms occurring around the general elections in 2018,
- underrepresentation of youth in mjesne zajednice activities and in consultations on key decision-making processes,
- misunderstanding the purpose of the citizen forums compared to traditional forms of citizen participation such as citizens assemblies.

The risks identified at the Project design stage and those newly identified during the course of Project implementation were addressed through the following positive risk management actions, which should continue for the remainder of the Project implementation:

- The Project worked closely with the mayors and local government in order to ensure their inclusion from the very start (selection of the participating municipalities and mjesne zajednice) and applied a transparent approach when presenting the Project intentions and activities in order to build trust. The evaluation found no evidence of resistance or opposition on the part of local government to the Project.
- Many local governments (e.g. Zenica) changed the way members are elected to mjesne zajednice council, such as the introduction of direct voting or secret ballots, in order to reduce opportunities for capture by political and other elites. Overall, the evaluation did not find any

⁶⁰ Carried out by an external consultant who was interviewed as part of the evaluation process.

instance of political capture or politicisation in mjesne zajednice and the participants of the focus groups made only limited reference to this issue.

- Despite Project concerns, citizens forums have been fully endorsed as one of the main principles of the new vision of mjesne zajednice; they now operate in all participating mjesne zajednice and will continue as a mechanism for citizen engagement. They are already communicating local community needs to their administrations and there is a clear pathway for them to become a formal tool for the development planning process. The participant in the evaluation also predominantly expressed a preference for forums over citizen assemblies.
- The Project works with stakeholders at all levels of government and recognition from state and entity institutional partners has helped with confidence building in local government and mjesne zajednice.
- The Project continues to work on amending the legislation in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska. Outcome 3 has already resulted in many positive changes, particularly in terms of institutionalising the mechanisms for the new vision of mjesne zajednice at the local government level and in creating a conducive environment for the shift in perception regarding the legislative changes.
- The evaluation, as described earlier, found evidence of women’s empowerment but also the inclusion of youth⁶¹ and the elderly who are now becoming active and their voice heard in forums, while their needs, within the limitations discussed earlier, are being addressed by local CSOs.
- The transfer of practice, as this evaluation recommends, should continue to be in focus during Phase II of the Project. The entity associations of municipalities and cities are currently engaged in activities to secure the transfer of knowledge and methodology, while local government coordinators are being trained to become trainers for mjesne zajednice not included in the Project; some focus group participants have already reported being engaged in sharing knowledge and practices with other mjesne zajednice.

3.6. Project impact

The Project **impact hypothesis**⁶² builds on the assumption that by advancing relevant regulatory frameworks mjesne zajednice in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be affirmed as modernised and legitimate community governance units able to respond more effectively to the needs of citizens. By strengthening the capacity of mjesne zajednice to engage productively in local decision-making and by providing them with viable participatory mechanisms to represent citizens within municipal plans and budgets the Project will affirm mjesne zajednice as a bridge between communities and local government. It will change the way citizens voice their opinion their ability to be heard by government. In terms of support, the Project focused on service delivery and redefining the roles of mjesne zajednice. It was assumed that the **new vision of mjesne zajednice would lead to stronger engagement of higher levels of government in community relevant policymaking** and lead to improved interaction between citizens and their government.

The evaluation can unequivocally confirm that **the Project has had a positive impact on mjesne zajednice, citizens and local governments in those locations where it is being implemented.** However, thus far, the Project has been **less successful in the way it that tackles the root causes of inequality and in introducing systemic change, particularly legislative reform, policy reform and the full integration of gender sensitive and socially inclusive approaches at the local level.**

This section will analyse the Project impact against the four main evaluation criteria and the **main benefits (quantitative and qualitative) for local communities and citizens** and analyse **systemic**

⁶¹ Focus group participants in, for example, Petrovo, Jablanica and Bijeljina, stated that young people were active in their mjesne zajednice and recognised the importance of the Project.

⁶² The Final Project Document: Strengthening the Role of Local Communities/Mjesne Zajednice in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2015).

impact and stakeholder satisfaction with the partnership support. The evaluation used mixed indicators,⁶³ quantitative and qualitative, (collected as part of the evaluation process) in order to determine any improvement in the quality of life for the citizens in the areas of intervention.

3.6.1. Impact at mjesne zajednice and local government level

The support for service delivery had the most visible impact in mjesne zajednice. According to the Project data, a total of 204⁶⁴ projects were completed through the Local Development Fund and this resulted in either **direct or indirect benefit for 402,777 citizens**. The local priority projects directly contributed to **improving the quality of life of different social groups**, including **31,279 marginalised and vulnerable citizens, 70,433 women and 2,943 people with disabilities** as well as the participation of **3,756 volunteers**. A further **68 projects** were completed through **the Local Initiatives Fund**. These projects were implemented by local CSOs and either **directly or indirectly made life better for 96,899 citizens**, including **2,667 marginalised and vulnerable citizens, 8,226 women, 520 people with disabilities, 5,186 children and 5,525 elderly people**. A total of **2,276 volunteers participated in these projects**. It is important to emphasise that there were 228,565 indirect beneficiaries out of which 105,839 (46per cent) were women. These figures take into account the implemented infrastructure projects (local roads and children's playgrounds), street lightning, public services, healthcare, culture and other projects.

While it is possible to confirm numerically the number of socially excluded beneficiaries (socioeconomic stakeholders), it is more difficult to confirm the extent of the systemic inclusion process. The local Social Inclusion Index is currently not available for Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is a serious weakness when it comes to measuring the impact or changes that have resulted from the intervention. There was the expectation at the Project design stage that the local Social Inclusion Index (SII/HSEI) would be completed by this stage of the Project implementation and therefore available to provide solid empirical ground and a baseline from which to assess the Project impact. It is currently under development as part of the new Human Development Report on Social Inclusion, which is also supported by the Government of Switzerland.

The major impediment to measuring impact in Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to a senior participant in the evaluation, is the absence or unavailability of credible statistics for use as a baseline, especially at the local level. This problem is systemic in nature and cannot be resolved within the framework of the Project. To compensate for this weakness, the Project made a commendable effort to document local level results and disaggregate them according to social group.

Qualitative verification of the impact of the Project was guided by the **Theory of Change**, which anticipated an improvement in the quality of life of citizens and mjesne zajednice. This was found to be consistent across all of the targeted local governments. The Project has enabled local government and mjesne zajednice to act as catalysts for improved service delivery. This is a direct result of the new vision and approach to mjesne zajednice and the strengthening of the capacities of local bodies and citizens. The project's impact is reflected in institutionalization of practices at the level of municipal statute changes that integrate project's results. This ensures sustainability of practices. Focus groups participants shared examples of how their life had improved and the evaluators verified a number of local priority projects, some of which are described below.

- In Zenica, older generations of citizens and pensioners use the newly refurbished premises of mjesne zajednice in Sjemen to socialise and participate in activities and local projects. The outdoor chessboard that is set in front of mjesne zajednice premises on a green space that was landscaped as part of the Project is particularly popular among the pensioners.

⁶³ The indicators and analytical approach are specified in the Evaluation Matrix.

⁶⁴ There were 208 initially, because in five instances there were two separate projects within the same budget and these were counted as one project.

- Pupil safety has increased significantly at the primary school in Jablanica since access to the school was secured and protected. This was a long running problem that used to cause great anxiety among community members but they are now happy with the solution.
- In Pale-Prača, the new ambulance vehicle makes it easier to deliver health services to beneficiaries in remote rural areas and to the elderly who lack transportation and are not able to walk to the health centre. It is now also possible to transport patients to hospitals in Sarajevo and Goražde.

Expectations of potential follow-up assistance were generally high among the mayors, the elected representatives of mjesne zajednice and the final beneficiaries. These expectations feed into considerations related to the sustainability of the Project results, which is discussed more in the ensuing section. The **most frequently reported expectation** among the participants of the evaluation was that the Project would continue to operate in all of the partner local governments and mjesne zajednice and that **UNDP would continue to provide financial and expert** (primarily through the UNDP regional coordinators) **support**. Other expectations related to the types of support that emerged through the analysis of the interviews and focus group discussions are given below.

- Mjesne zajednice are expecting a) financial support from local government in a form similar to that which they have been receiving as part of the Project implementation and b) that all of the identified local priorities will be integrated into the local government budget and be prioritised by the relevant local government departments.
- The mayors of smaller local governments emphasised the lack of financial resources as one of the main problems and held the expectation that UNDP would continue to provide financial support for local projects (e.g. Pale-Prača and Petrovo). Some of the larger municipalities, such as Zenica and Bijeljina, continue to suffer the consequences of long-term poor management of common resources, which places them under serious financial strain. Their expectations for continued UNDP support are similar to those expressed in the smaller local governments.
- Some of the mayors and local government Project Coordinators emphasised the importance of continued UNDP support for knowledge transfer from the Project mjesne zajednice to other mjesne zajednice within their governance region (e.g. Jablanica).
- Across the focus groups, women consistently expressed their expectation of increased support for their projects, activities and newly formed associations. CSO activists also stressed their expectation of continued support for their projects for persons with disabilities and other socially excluded groups (e.g. Banja Luka and Bijeljina).

Several focus groups participants observed that citizen expectations are often very high and with many unrealistic demands and high expectations of assistance from local government and donors. This can be interpreted as both a positive impact and negative result. In the positive sense, it demonstrates increased citizen participation and interest in addressing the needs of their local community; however, this can also have a negative effect on citizen engagement and the Project in general, because failed expectations can lead to disappointment and disillusionment. The municipal budgets for 2019 had not been finalised by the time of the evaluation and this made it difficult to confirm which of the proposed mjesne zajednice projects will be funded over the next calendar year.

Overall, this evaluation **views the presence of expectations as an indicator of the success of the Project**. This is because such expectations among citizens are an indication of their awareness concerning their role and alertness to and engagement in thinking about the future.

In terms of the level of stakeholder and final beneficiary satisfaction with the Project implementation and partnership support, the evaluation participants expressed very positive views. The next section elaborates on this aspect.

The level of satisfaction and opinions on the main Project activities was assessed for the Mid-Term Review⁶⁵ that took place in October 2017 wherein 89 per cent of the respondents were satisfied with the implementation rate of the activities in their mjesne zajednice, local government, CSO or external partners. Satisfaction with the Project in general was expressed by 96 per cent, while 94 per cent of the respondents stated that they were satisfied with the level of cooperation with the UNDP field staff. These results were also confirmed in the focus groups and interviews with the mayors.

In the evaluation process, satisfaction was assessed based on the following indicators: 1) the implemented activities addressed the needs of citizens, 2) the experience of implementation was positive and 3) the communication and support for implementation was good between different Project stakeholders (UNDP, mjesne zajednice, local government and cantons – although the cantons were not formal partners of the Project they did have a role in the implementation of priority projects).

3.6.2. Systemic impact

In terms of systemic change, the most significant impact is expected to come through the **legislative reform**. The Project is at an advanced stage of institutionalising policy and legislative reforms and has analysed carefully how mjesne zajednice can work best. It developed a common vision for the new role that mjesne zajednice can play in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Outcome 1) and worked with local government, mjesne zajednice in their communities to translate these ideas into practice (Outcome 2) and institutionalizes these practices through adaptation of municipal statues (Outcome 3). The Project will therefore be able to propose a strong **legal basis for all mjesne zajednice in the country** to function more effectively. In this light, the third outcome comes to create a new legal structure that fits with the vision across all tiers of government and to create an environment where mjesne zajednice can become effective and democratic channels for citizens to participate in their own governance.

The aim of the Project is for mjesne zajednice to have legal status in both the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Republika Srpska, to be able to operate as public service providers, to act as a platform for citizen engagement both practically and in policy development and to make local communities generally more self-sustainable and less dependent on local government. The policy reform, particularly at the local government level, should result in better responsiveness of the local administration toward mjesne zajednice. This can be done by having a dedicated, one or more, member of the local administration to deal with all aspects of business concerning mjesne zajednice, which the Project should support further.

Overall, the Project has made some outstanding achievements that have had both a direct and indirect impact on citizens. However, there are still some limitations to carrying forward these advances. First, the engagement of citizens in mjesne zajednice and utilisation of the principles of the new vision are very much driven by the presence and support of UNDP and dependent on the voluntary commitment of members of mjesne zajednice councils. There is also **strong dependence on local government in terms of financial and operational support**. Yet this support is still not systematic or consistent and is vulnerable to political influence and changes. It is also vulnerable to the deeply embedded challenges to the rule of law at all levels of government. Second, the definition of the changes in wellbeing are rather narrow in theoretical terms and the question of how to measure the impact in this domain and **whether the achievements can be fully and solely attributed to the Project intervention remains**. It is very difficult to ascertain the impact on all residents in one target municipality or city, despite the assumption in the results framework that they all benefit in some way.

⁶⁵ Survey was completed by 140 respondents, with 60 per cent were from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 32 per cent from Republika Srpska, and 8 per cent from Brčko District

3.6.3. Which partnership aspects worked best and why?

Partnerships are essential for the efficiency, impact and sustainability of the Project. The evaluation focused on an assessment of the partnerships, primarily between mjesne zajednice and local government and their partnership with UNDP. This was done through the focus groups and interviews with the mayors/local government coordinators and as specified in the interview protocols. It also assessed the partnerships between UNDP and the participating ministries, the Government of Brčko District, the governments of Sweden and Switzerland and the entity associations of municipalities and cities.

The following conclusions were drawn from the collected data:

- The Project implementation would not have happened without the **partnership between UNDP and local government and mjesne zajednice**, which were formalised under Outcome 1 (local government) and Outcome 2 (mjesne zajednice). Building **trust** was essential for the established and functioning of this connection throughout the Project.
- The **institutional partnership** between UNDP and the relevant ministries played a **strong role in defining the new vision of mjesne zajednice**, in instigating changes to the legal frameworks and in institutionalising the new mechanism and models for mjesne zajednice.
- The relationship between local government and mjesne zajednice has improved as a result of the Project and **evolved from a donor-recipient relationship into a partnership in many of the local governments**. This shift is reflected in the improved communication that now exists between local government and mjesne zajednice (mayors personally and local government service responsible for mjesne zajednice). Local government became more receptive to local community needs and more prepared to listen and to fund local community projects. The mayors are better informed about increased citizen participation and engagement, which is generally perceived as positive. **Exchanges between mjesne zajednice and local government are now more structured** and this can be attributed to the training and education on communication skills that representatives of mjesne zajednice received through the Project.⁶⁶
- **A financial partnership** has been established in the form of local government co-financing of local priority projects (30per cent) in all Project locations.
- The partnership with the **Government of Brčko District** encountered some challenges at the start of the Project when there was a six-month delay to confirm its participation in the Project. The current Mayor and the Local Government Coordinator for the Project are new and were therefore unable to provide specific information on the reasons for the delay. They rated their cooperation with UNDP as highly satisfactory for the Project and mentioned other UNDP projects where they had similarly successful cooperation, such as the construction of a new police building.
- **The Ministry of Administration and Local Self-Governance of Republika Srpska**, and in particular the Minister, was very satisfied with the Project partnership with UNDP. The **Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina** was very satisfied but expressed its concern over the potential burnout of project staff.
- Both entity associations of municipalities and cities reported an excellent relationship with UNDP throughout the Project duration. The UNDP Project Manager presented the Project and the new vision concept for mjesne zajednice at the Republika Srpska ASM Presidency meeting, where communication with UNDP was also rated as excellent.
- **The partnership and collaboration between mjesne zajednice and CSOs is quite new but very beneficial** for two reasons. CSOs were able to deliver projects that were outside the scope, expertise and the capacities of mjesne zajednice (e.g. working with persons with disabilities and children). They also got an opportunity to collaborate with mjesne zajednice and through this gain access to funds and joint activities that increased their own activities and ability to assist their final beneficiaries.

⁶⁶ Focus group result.

3.7. Project sustainability

The evaluation found that significant attention has been devoted to the issue of the sustainability of the results and the long-term impact of the Project and that this was an integral part of its design. **The plan was to transfer the Project tools and resources to local government partners** (local government and mjesne zajednice). This included, national web portals and community support initiatives, tailored training material and the developed systems for community involvement and the strategic planning tools. Sustainability was also built around the transfer of knowledge and by embedding the legislative and policy framework models at the local government level with the support of the relevant partners to reduce dependence on external project assistance and developing stakeholder engagement aimed at full ownership.

Some of the mechanisms planned at the design stage were intended to achieve the following:

- wide dissemination of practical guidelines (e.g. the new vision for mjesne zajednice and document on good practice),
- continuous interaction with partners at all levels of government (to influence policy and secure co-financing for the local community projects),
- capacity development of local governments and mjesne zajednice,
- development of a sense of ownership over the Project among those citizens who participated either directly or indirectly,
- revision of municipal (and or MJESNE ZAJEDNICE statutes and decisions) for integration of good practices for long-term and all-inclusive effect.

The Project team developed a Sustainability Concept Note that was shared with the donors in 2017. It focuses on the outlook for institutional/governance sustainability, the products with the highest potential for scaling-up aimed at systemic change and specific recommendations on how to reinforce sustainability efforts throughout the remainder of the project implementation. The evaluation loosely mirrored the outline of this concept note when assessing Project sustainability and preparing recommendations.

The sustainability of the Project results and interventions was assessed from an **organisational (practical), institutional and financial perspective** in order to conclude whether it could continue without external assistance. The evaluators held extensive conversations with participants of the focus groups, the mayors and other local government representatives and the Project partners about how to make the project results sustainable. It is important to emphasise that apart from the international consultant all of the contributors to the evaluation were citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This brings a **local perspective** to their view on how local communities can and should be transformed. The division of categories used here is for analytical purposes only, because locals speak both as a citizen wishing to have their life improved and in their organisational or institutional capacity. The new vision of mjesne zajednice de facto transformed the organisational capacities of mjesne zajednice and in so doing allowed for an assessment of their abilities and commitment to achieving the Project goal. **The sustainability of the Project ultimately rests on the local governments and mjesne zajednice** and, as previously mentioned, the Project management endeavoured to **build trust and a sense of genuine ownership over the Project among these stakeholders** aimed at their continued engagement in activities, service delivery and civic action.

Institutionalisation of the Project will not involve multiple levels of government, such as the entities and cantons, and therefore transferring the Project to local government should be fairly straightforward. Yet with it comes the major responsibility and challenge to ensure its continued success. Therefore, institutional changes at the municipal levels are critical for systemic changes that will affect the way each local government will continue to work after the project life with all their mjesne zajednice long term. The changes at the **inter-municipal cooperation** and mjesne zajednice **Network** should have a central place in the consolidation and scaling-up of the Project.

The **organisational and policy tools** that mjesne zajednice, local government and the beneficiaries singled out as key contributors to sustainability are listed below.

- The focus group participants emphasised two principles of the new vision of mjesne zajednice as the most likely to be permanently embedded: **mjesne zajednice as a forum for civic participation and service provision in mjesne zajednice** (focused on concrete priorities relevant to citizens). All of mjesne zajednice involved in the evaluation confirmed their intention to make the **forums permanent**. This will help ensure the sustainability of the new vision and engagement in these local communities.
- The most important crosscutting principles for citizens are **accountability, coordination between all mjesne zajednice bodies** (as well as local associations), **transparency, hierarchy** and most importantly **trust**. The evident lack of trust between mjesne zajednice and local government and between mjesne zajednice and UNDP at the start of the Project transformed into a trusted partnership as the Project progressed.
- Mjesne zajednice need to **continue to function as a direct link between citizens and government** and remain **at the centre of the new mechanisms and approaches**. This was emphasised as particularly relevant by the mayors of the larger municipalities with a large number of mjesne zajednice (e.g. Zenica, Gradacac and Bijeljina) and by the focus group participants.
- Mjesne zajednice need to **continue to support citizens and advocate for their interests**. This is an all-encompassing process that starts with identifying local problems through the forums and ends by resolving such problem in partnership with local government.
- The **Good governance practices**⁶⁷ document is important as a rulebook and should become a code of conduct in order to remind all actors of the codes and standard of behaviour that have been agreed under the umbrella of the Project. Adhering to standards will help guarantee the long-term sustainability of the instigated positive changes.

The practical tools/mechanisms in the Project that have a high likelihood of sustainability because of their relevance to mjesne zajednice and/or local government are described below.

- **Mjesne zajednice spaces** refurbished as part of the Project (office and equipment) will remain in use and therefore the long-term financial commitment of local government to maintain them and cover their running costs is essential.
- **Community hubs** will continue to operate and host activities and events.
- **Knowledge** was reported to be the most important Project contribution by those evaluation participants who underwent extensive education and training through the Project. The focus group participants identified new **skills** obtained as part of the Project capacity development activities as the most relevant for the sustainability of the Project goal: facilitation (because it builds the skills of facilitators in the local community), training of trainers in local communities (as it supports the continued successful running of community forums) and project cycle management (which supports financial sustainability and local service delivery/problem solving). New knowledge and skills were also marked as essential for influencing, building and maintaining partnerships with local government and citizen engagement. Transfer of **knowledge has the highest potential for scaling-up the project activities and for creating systemic change**.
- **Changes in municipal and mjesne zajednice statute or decision** will allow for cross-transfer of knowledge from project to non-project mjesne zajednice.

Republika Srpska Association of Municipalities and Cities suggested some of the areas for its future collaboration and partnership as follows: To act as a hub for disseminating the Project information and results and sharing information with those municipalities that did not participate in the Project, distributing the 'Good Practice' document and the new vision of mjesne zajednice document to all

⁶⁷ Good Governance practices document is a document that was produced through the Project, which consolidates over 36 examples from 136 MZs and 24 local partner governments in alignment with the Vision models. It was widely distributed to each of the 145 local governments (including Brcko District) in the country.

local government in Bosnia and Herzegovina and playing an active role in collecting feedback information.

Both entity associations of municipalities expressed their long-term commitment to the Project, which clearly indicates a strong sense of ownership. They see their main role as communicating the Project results and good practice to other municipalities not involved in the Project through their established network of practitioners (one in each entity), which can also be used to further support the process of strengthening the capacities of mjesne zajednice.

The identified policy and practical mechanisms have the potential to contribute to the sustainability of the Project goal. This primarily entails improving upward and downward interaction between mjesne zajednice and local government by enhancing the capacities of citizens and mjesne zajednice in terms of communication, planning and representation and improving the responsiveness of local government in terms of addressing the needs of citizens and mjesne zajednice. To date, 14 local governments have either initiated the process to amend their statues or have already done so in order to better integrate the new model and vision of mjesne zajednice by amending municipal procedures that determine the manner for dealing with citizens and mjesne zajednice requests. This new local regulatory framework directly contributes to the sustainability of institutional/governance in respect to the Project goal.

4 Lessons Learned

This evaluation finds that the lessons learned are given only limited space and attention in the annual progress reports. It therefore recommends that all lessons learned through the Project be recorded, because they are essential for the next phase. In addition, the mid-term review document did not focus on the lessons learned; this would have been helpful for the final evaluation. The ensuing sections outline the lessons learned in three Project aspects as they emerged in the evaluation process: 1) the Project context and citizen engagement, 2) social inclusion and 3) gender mainstreaming.

4.1. Project context and citizen engagement

- Training, consultations and brokering between different project stakeholders offer a good platform for instigating new interactions, exchanges and partnerships between local government, mjesne zajednice, CSOs and citizens. They lead to the creation of projects, the development of joint activities and collaborative action.
- With strong capacities, which is mjesne zajednice oriented towards citizen's needs results in mobilising greater number of citizens.
- Local CSOs can be a strong partner to local government and mjesne zajednice in addressing the needs of citizens, especially when mjesne zajednice does not have a regulated legal status.
- Elections (e.g. local 2016 / general 2018) tend to amplify ethnic-nationalist rhetoric in public discourse and divert attention away from the country reforms, including that of public administration and governance. The only exception is when local projects (e.g. infrastructure) are used to help elect a candidate. The way to combat such negative influences is described in the Challenges section of this report.
- Engaging and soliciting input from and the support of all of stakeholders, especially their early involvement and the buy-in of local groups and NGOs, is essential for assessing the actual needs, securing full ownership and for mobilising true social change.
- Active and organised mjesne zajednice are better 'heard' by mayors and local government.
- Individuals/members of mjesne zajednice with enhanced capacity can do a lot for mjesne zajednice and its citizens when it comes to activism, fundraising, priority setting and lobbying local government.

- Mjesne zajednice roadmaps documents should be short, concise and focus only on those elements of the new of vision that are specific to a given mjesne zajednice. This corresponds to the findings of the focus groups, where participants were asked not to identify all elements of mjesne zajednice vision but only those that are actually relevant to them or in use. This lesson should be taken into consideration in relation to the sustainability of the Project and when scaling-up the interventions.

4.2. Social inclusion

Perceptions on who is socially included or excluded are deeply embedded in the societal norms and historical and cultural practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina and therefore it should not be expected that a project of four years duration would be able to change such preconceptions. However, significant lessons emerged from the Project activities and continuous engagement with citizens on what to expect when focusing on the inclusion of marginalised groups. First, solidarity is one of the strongest elements of cohesion within local communities. If someone in the community needs help then it can be expected that a collective action on the part of friends, neighbours and the wider community is very likely to take place. This is particularly relevant as baseline information, because it indicates that citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina do not necessarily need to be persuaded in order to embrace those in need.

However, there is a serious lack of understanding among citizens and local government officials in terms of who belongs to the category of socially excluded and what are the drivers and manifestations of exclusion. The Project documentation indicates that Project staff had conversations with the final beneficiaries in order to clarify this issue. The following lessons were learned through these conversations:

- Engaging and soliciting the input and support of all stakeholders, especially their early involvement and the buy-in of local groups and NGOs, is essential for assessing the actual needs, securing full ownership and mobilising true social change. Mjesne zajednice can be a strong partner to local government and the centres for social care. Mjesne zajednice possess an in-depth knowledge of the actual needs of citizen. They are usually the ones who implement humanitarian and solidarity actions for their citizens and this means that they are best placed to have information on who is socially excluded.
- Cooperation between mjesne zajednice and the CSO sector is an enabler of social inclusion and women's empowerment through local projects.
- A socially inclusive approach should be integrated into all activities and interventions and the application of the approach must be carefully monitored if it is to take root and have a long-term impact. When a local government, for example, adopts all municipal models for mjesne zajednice decisions and statutes it should adopt procedures that are socially inclusive.

4.3. Gender mainstreaming

The position of women in Bosnian and Herzegovinian society has deteriorated since the end of the socialist era and even more so after the war that ended in 1995. Low participation of women in the labour market, politics and community initiatives and life restricts society from benefiting from all that they could contribute. The inclusion of women is one of the most important tasks of the Project and important lessons can be taken from the implementation thus far:

- It has been noted during the course of the Project implementation that additional interventions targeting gender equality could significantly enlarge the Project results and help create a multiplier effect.
- Local female leadership depends on contextual enablers, identifying the right 'entry points' and providing programming opportunities.

- The Project has managed to identify approaches and ways to tackle these issues through lessons learned during the implementation of the activities.
- Views on gender roles in local communities are pretty much set for women and men along traditional lines⁶⁸ and yet with the right interventions this can change.
- Gender issues are not just about women but also about striking a balance between gender norms and perceptions. In the Project this was identified as ‘he for she’ as a stepping stone for moving from women’s issues to gender issues and for sensitising men about their own gender roles and responsibilities in relation to promoting gender equality.

5 Challenges

The Project focuses on establishing more participatory and accountable local governance to which both citizens and government should be fully committed by the end of the Project. However, two main challenges could seriously impede the Project in achieving the desired result. The first is the fact that mjesne zajednice in Republika Srpska lack legal status and the second is that voluntarism is the main mechanism for many of mjesne zajednice presidents and council members.

5.1. Uncertainty about legal reform

One of the Project goals is to push for changes to the legal status of mjesne zajednice in Republika Srpska and amendments to the Law on the Principles of Local Self-Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, it is unlikely that either of these changes will occur by the end of the Project. There is a commitment by the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to move forward with this Law but the amendments to this Law are not yet in procedure; this is expected to take place in the coming months. The post electoral picture after the general election in 2018 is currently not very favourable and it remains unknown as to when a new Government will be formed. It is also unlikely that the new government would submit an amended Law on Local Self-Governance under technical mandate.

There was a revision of the new Law on Local Self-Government in Republika Srpska in 2016; however, it did not incorporate any proposals to assign legal status to mjesne zajednice or to simplify the election procedure for members of mjesne zajednice council in order to depoliticise the process. Yet, in June 2017, the Government of Republika Srpska adopted the new Local Self-Government Strategy 2017–2021,⁶⁹ which pays particular attention to the role of mjesne zajednice, effective and efficient local government, improved public services and dialogue between citizens and municipalities and cities. This created a positive context for the Project activities, future goals and sustainability, although the legal status of mjesne zajednice remains unchanged.

In addition, the Law on Local Self-Government of Republika Srpska has a provision on citizen engagement and participation in local self-government outlined in Section X (articles 105-112). The new Law is quite broad and gives legal grounds for realising some of the principles of the new vision for mjesne zajednice. In the right contextual setting with the political will of the major institutional players, these legal provisions could be maximised to strengthen the role of mjesne zajednice in Republika Srpska. This in turn could lead to further awareness among local community members and help motivate them to become engaged in demanding legal amendments.

⁶⁸ The participants in the focus groups in Olovo claimed that men deal with infrastructure projects and construction work in mjesne zajednice, while women run sawing courses and other activities related to domestic household work and their perceived roles. However, when the evaluator asked about female headed households (e.g. widows or single mother), all of the participants agreed that their traditional gender roles could be changed and that women could take part in local community activities typically assigned to men.

⁶⁹ The Project Annual Progress Report 2017.

The evaluation recommends that the Project further explore these possibilities, given its focus on citizen participation. This would logically link to institutionalisation of the new vision mechanisms, implementation of mjesne zajednice roadmaps and changes to local government statutes. However, it is worth noting that mjesne zajednice in Republika Srpska are still without legal status.

The evaluation finds that there is **no consensus around the legal status of mjesne zajednice at the local institutional level**. Some mayors, both in Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (in those municipalities where they do not have legal status), are opposed to the idea of mjesne zajednice having legal status. They list the following reasons: concern over increased costs for the municipality related to the administration of mjesne zajednice accounts and cost compensation for mjesne zajednice and the inability of mjesne zajednice to conduct public procurement independently. Interestingly, some mjesne zajednice either were opposed to having legal status or did not have a strong view on the matter of legal status. Concerns over the legal status of mjesne zajednice expressed by focus group participants focused much more on their inability to finance operations and on being dependent on the local government. In order to avoid alienating local government, it is important that the Project consider these concerns.

5.2. Volunteerism

Volunteerism of the president and council members of mjesne zajednice is one of the key challenges to the future sustainability of the Project achievements. The participants of the focus groups brought up this issue (there was no specific question about volunteerism in the focus group protocol) and discussed it passionately. This shows that the Project should take the challenge of volunteerism seriously. The problem is that mjesne zajednice council presidents do not receive basic compensation for their time or the costs they incur running activities, projects, forums and travelling to different municipal areas (distances can be quite significant in rural municipalities). It means that even though their role is formal (in some cases) they do not receive even minimum compensation for their engagement. It is not only that they are volunteers but that they are also managing other volunteers in mjesne zajednice, which is an additional layer of responsibility and commitment to the life and operations of their mjesne zajednice.

The demands imposed by the Project, as beneficial as they were, increased the burden of the presidents and council members of mjesne zajednice. The situation is particularly challenging in mjesne zajednice where the municipalities do not have professional staff (secretaries or similar) responsible for dealing with mjesne zajednice or where there is no financial provision for basic annual running costs from the municipality. The focus group participants asked for some form of professionalisation and it is important to revisit this issue in the next phase of the Project. However, the voices against professionalisation of mjesne zajednice councils warned that no matter how small the remuneration it might become the main motivation for citizens to run for membership of mjesne zajednice council. In some of the evaluation mjesne zajednice members reported being prepared to work without remuneration, while in others they were adamant that they did not want to continue their engagement on a voluntary basis. This issue is addressed further in the Recommendations section of this report.

This should not be confused with the issue of citizen participation in mjesne zajednice actions and activities, local projects and local CSO activities, which should remain voluntary. Voluntary participation and engagement is also about socialising, cooperation, solidarity and collective action among citizens and, as reported by the focus group participants, all are important features of the Project. According to the evaluation participants, voluntarism among citizen is limited by lack of time (employed community members), lack of incentives (youth), lack of physical ability (the elderly) and a lack of means and/or visible results. Tackling the problem of voluntarism should be one of the priorities for the next phase of the Project and involve the utilisation of different tools:

- The pros and cons of volunteerism versus professionalism were examined in the comparative analysis of local community governance drafted at the start of the Project.⁷⁰
- The form and level of community engagement can differ widely. The Project would benefit from conducting research to investigate what motivates citizen engagement in mjesne zajednice and municipalities. One possibility is to use Rosenblatt's (2010) Pyramid of Engagement for analysing the ebb and flow of community engagement and citizen participation.
- Work with local government to resolve the status and, where possible, financial arrangements for mjesne zajednice presidents and members of the council.
- Apply the legal remedy. Both entities and Brčko District have a law on volunteerism that defines the framework, working status and remuneration for volunteers (e.g. prescribes per diem and regulates the right to claim expenses). Consulting these laws can help create solutions.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

6.1. Conclusions

- The Project was developed to strengthen local self-governance and democratic accountability and social inclusion at the local level in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Project evaluation finds that the need for interventions and support in these priority areas is still very much present.
- Innovation is the key contribution the Project makes to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Project has created a model and a new vision that will help find solutions that are more effective in solving the problems that exist between citizens and the institutions responsible for governance, particularly at the local government and mjesne zajednice level.
- All of the Project stakeholders agreed that the Project is highly relevant to the needs of Bosnia and Herzegovina and that it will improve the life of citizens and local communities and in so doing complement the ongoing reform efforts to which the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina are committed and as part of the EU accession process.
- The evaluation participants generally agreed that mjesne zajednice, which is the lowest level of self-governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina, have been revitalised, their capacities strengthened, and their trust restored through the Project. Although not measurable, it seems that mjesne zajednice and local government in rural areas have benefited most from the Project through capacity development, awareness raising and broadened attitudes when it comes to citizen engagement and women's empowerment.
- The local priority projects implemented by mjesne zajednice and CSOs were interesting and relevant to the needs of the local communities. The total budget spent on the Small Grants Scheme was BAM 4,940,157 (BAM 3,630,157 from the Local Development Fund and BAM 1,310,000 from the Local Initiatives Fund) distributed by UNDP and co-funded by local government (30per cent). It was cost effective because they not only achieved the expected results but also served as a tool for citizen engagement and motivating citizens to stay engaged in the community forums as well as in the three other models developed as part of the new vision of mjesne zajednice. The co-funding mechanism proved to be highly efficient as a partnership model.
- The Project is implemented in partnership with different stakeholders and this requires continuous engagement and a coordination mechanism. It is implemented in local communities and this has brought about changes at mjesne zajednice and municipal/local government level. It has the potential over time to yield sufficient impact to lead to wider changes across the country.
- Focusing on the lowest level of authority and working toward legislative changes at the entity level should lead to the amendment of policies and this in turn will increase the downward

⁷⁰ Analitika, Comparative Review of Community Governance Models and Practices in Croatia, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Analitika 2016).

accountability of institutions toward citizens. At present, no other formal mechanisms facilitate this shift in interaction and cooperation between local government, mjesne zajednice and citizens.

- The current business model has worked well and therefore it is the recommendation of this evaluation that it should be replicated and that certain elements, including the innovative component, strengthened.
- Support for the Network of Mjesne Zajednice should continue through the entity associations of municipalities and cities and good practice should continue to be systemically documented and disseminated. In the longer term, the entity associations of municipalities and cities should continue to monitor the implementation of the new vision of mjesne zajednice as part of their efforts to continue the exchange of good practice among mjesne zajednice and local government.

6.2. Recommendations

Recommendations are partly outlined in this section. They are described in more detail through specific recommendations in the Concept Note, which discusses the way forward for the Project during Phase II.

6.2.1. Strategic recommendations

- **An effort should be made to institutionalise the establishment and official endorsement of the new vision of mjesne zajednice in Bosnia and Herzegovina.** Various platforms, such as the entity associations of municipalities and cities (AMCs), should be utilised to share mjesne zajednice methodology and examples of substantial improvement in local government (through amendment of local government and/or mjesne zajednice statutes or decisions).
- **Implement a structured advocacy campaign aimed at the endorsement of systemic legislative change** that will build on the work done and the lessons learned during Phase 1 of the Project. Various innovative approaches should be applied including a) familiarising the presidents of the AMCs and their respective members in Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the introduced changes and using the AMCs platform to raise public awareness, b) organising workshops for mjesne zajednice to discuss the various legal implications of the legislative changes and c) establishing partnerships with the media in order to increase public awareness regarding the recommendations and the need for systemic legislative change.
- **Improve financial mechanisms of legislative and planning processes located at local governments and mjesne zajednice to support citizens' initiatives.**
- **Redesign local government.** Support new profiling and restructuring of local government administration by helping the existing staff to become a more responsive resource for improved and effective work with mjesne zajednice. This can be done in many ways, including changing job descriptions, the creation of operational teams, setting up a specific department or identifying individuals who will be responsible for improving and standardising methods of work with mjesne zajednice.
- **Systematise incentives for mjesne zajednice** through the allocation of grants by local government for various initiatives to support change at the local level. This could include a small grants scheme to support citizen initiatives for mjesne zajednice and CSOs, support for community hub initiatives and committing to the creation of incentives for mjesne zajednice staff.
- **Support social inclusion and gender mainstreaming** by strengthening development capacities of local government and mjesne zajednice in terms of addressing the lack of understanding on what constitutes and how to address social exclusion. Combine this with a strategic gender sensitive planning and monitoring process, which is critical for ensuring sustainable gender-sensitive mjesne zajednice. This can be effectively done by further widening opportunities for

women to act as agents of change in their communities and by expanding the potential for women's leadership and activism.

- **Contribute to development.** Future Project interventions should aim to localise further the Sustainable Development Goals (in particular SDGs 5 and 11) by linking them to planned systemic changes at the local government and *mjesne zajednice* level.
- **Develop a strategic framework for cooperation with civil society.** In accordance with the findings of the 2018 European Commission Progress Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina, develop a strategic framework for cooperation with civil society at all levels of governance. Utilise the potential of the Project to contribute to this new strategic approach by building on the achieved results in terms of working closely with civil society and by utilising a participatory approach.
- **Strengthen horizontal and vertical linkages.** Local government has access to IPA II funds as part of Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress towards EU candidate country status. Strengthening horizontal and vertical linkages at the local level would provide local government with increased opportunities **to access IPA funds** under the sectors of Democracy and Governance, Social Policy, Environment and Climate Change (which have been the focus of local priority projects to date). The centralised government finance system distances local government and as a result financial sustainability is among the top concerns of local government. Addressing this issue is essential for the sustainability of the Project and its activities.

6.2.2. Specific recommendations for Phase I

1. **Operationally, the Project should continue to work on Outcome 3** and explore avenues to amend the legal frameworks that regulate local self-governance in Republika Srpska, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Brčko District. This effort should in particular target potential influencers who would be willing to push the reform agenda on the table of members of parliament and other relevant institutional bodies (some already cultivated).
2. The Project should follow the recommendation of the members of the Institutional Partners Board that UNDP alongside the Government of Sweden and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation should use their respective resources, reputations and contacts to institute a subtle outreach campaign among newly elected members of parliament. The aim would be to make them familiar with the Project results and intention to instigate appropriate changes to the legislative.
3. Given that the Project does not have a comprehensive **communication strategy** where outreach activities could be embedded, the evaluation recommends the development of an advocacy or communication plan for Phase II and the appointment of a specialist as a permanent team member to lead this important aspect of the new vision for local governance and its improved impact.
4. **Additional donor funds and co-financing arrangements should be sought** in order to increase the number of positive grassroots initiatives and diffuse good practices across the country. This could possibly involve other international donors such as the EU Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina, bilateral donors and actors such as USAID, UK, Switzerland, OSCE, etc. Co-financing and in-kind contributions in particular should be sought from institutional partners, but out-of-the-box institutional arrangements and implementation modalities need to be set up at the senior level in order to make such arrangements possible.
5. The last phase of the Project should further pursue **building mechanisms for synergy with projects supported by Government of Sweden, Swiss Development Cooperation as well as UNDP**. Such projects could consider, for instance, expanding the eligibility criteria of their funding schemes to include actions specific to *mjesne zajednice* and/or issue calls to *mjesne zajednice* for locally implemented projects.

7 Concept Note for Phase II

The following section focuses on recommendations for Phase II of the Project, including the need to address challenges, the potential for replication and scaling-up and proposing the Theory of Change. Based on the general findings and an assessment of all criteria of relevance to this evaluation, it is clear that there is significant potential for scaling-up the Project and its individual elements. First and foremost, the general evaluation is that UNDP should continue to work on the topic of strengthening mjesne zajednice and citizen engagement and that the Government of Sweden and the Government of Switzerland should extend their support.

The outreach of the interventions implemented under the Phase I should be extended to support a long-term impact on the governance agenda and to achieve a critical mass that would be sufficient for democratisation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The intervention needs to develop stronger links with the reform agenda and the EU accession process and this would need to be accelerated over time in order to keep pace with other countries in the Western Balkans and to establish Bosnia and Herzegovina as an equal partner in regional cooperation. Ultimately, the project has the right mechanisms to challenge politicisation, bypass the political complexities in the country and create systemic change.

At the point of the Final Evaluation, the Project has more than a year of implementation left (taking into account the recently approved four-month extension up until the end of 2019). The main focus of the remaining intervention should be on Outcome 3, which has still not been fully achieved, and on developing mechanisms for Project sustainability.

This section was drafted in line with the UNDP Sustainability and Scaling-up Note (2018), which focuses on a) the institutional/governance sustainability outlook, b) the mechanisms that hold the highest potential for scaling-up and that would enable systemic change and c) specific recommendations on how to reinforce sustainability efforts for the remainder of the Project implementation.

General considerations that help justify the recommendation to continue the Project include the following: The need to expand the intervention and widen its effect so that more citizens can benefit from the activities that have been implemented thus far and that reliance on existing mechanisms and principles, particularly those outlined under the model and new vision of mjesne zajednice, will lead to a multiplier effect on citizen engagement and participation and allow them to play a new and enhanced role in their local communities.

7.1. Strategy outline for Phase II of the Project

Phase II of the Project should build on the current approach and continue the work with local government and mjesne zajednice. Yet it should place additional emphasis and give extended focus to developing avenues for collaborative work with other international and United Nations agencies and projects in order to identify and maximise the strengths and contribution that other agencies/projects can bring to the Project. This would broaden the support for the issues of democratic accountability and social inclusion. Furthermore, the Project should tap into all existing resources in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly for capacity building and outreach activities, some of which were identified at the design stage for Phase I.

Knowledge transfer and peer-to-peer support, particularly in terms of motivating local government and mjesne zajednice to extend their know-how, is essential for outreach work. Volunteering is at the hearth of the Project and therefore needs to be further explored and supported, particularly within the context of the deepening socioeconomic challenges, which should also be identified more clearly and recognised in Phase II. **Trust** and Project **ownership** are the two main driving forces behind the success of the current phase and they need to be valued and systemically recognised as constitutive mechanisms of the Project approach.

The strategy proposed for the consolidation and expansion of the Project focuses on the geographic scope of the interventions and partnerships. It is aimed at achieving systemic change in mjesne zajednice and local government in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Focus should be given to consolidating and expanding those areas highlighted in the evaluation and equal attention given to achieving institutionalisation and the implementation of activities, done in direct collaboration with citizens and mjesne zajednice. Phase II should enable full integration of the mechanisms developed under Phase I, but in a strategic way at the local government and mjesne zajednice level. A monitoring system should be developed for the continuous monitoring of the sustainability of the results achieved under Phase I of the Project.

As mentioned previously, the Project should move closer toward formal collaboration with other UNDP projects and/or other international partners in order to take advantage of the complementary work areas and/or geographic focus. As part of this consolidation effort, the Project should look into the possibility of outsourcing specific interventions/activities to other projects. This could be done either in the current or new local governments. In addition and as outlined in the recommendations section, a strategic effort should be made to identify and utilise public sector capacity development initiatives or funded development areas. If institutionalisation is one pillar of the sustainability of the Project then citizen participation and voluntarism is the second. This needs to be consolidated strategically into Phase II. The findings of the evaluation point to the fact that Phase II should also last for four years in duration in order to accommodate the complexity and aspirations of the Project.

Table 5. Phase II of the Project: Scaling-up interventions and approaches

Areas and activities for consolidation	Areas for expansion	Level	Partnership	Institutional owner of the product	Sustainability evidence	Project Phase
Policy and strategic embedding of the new vision of mjesne zajednice (MZ)						
Acceptance of the new gender-sensitive vision for MZ by formally established bodies.	The strategically fragmented vision of MZ for acceptance: policy and practical level. Make it simpler for citizens.	MZ, LG, entity, canton and state.	UNDP, local institutions, ministries, cantons and the entity associations of municipalities and cities (AMCs).	LG / MZ	Yes, for the new vision of MZ. Community hubs can play a pivotal role, but this needs to be reviewed.	Phase I & II
Projects and actions by MZ and CSOs that promote one or more of the pillars of the new vision.	Monitoring of results and impact	MZ and LG	UNDP, local institutions, CSOs and the entity AMCs.	LG / MZ	Yes. The evaluation findings (qualitative) and the intention to continue with implementation of the principles.	Phase I & II
Social media presence and outreach activities.	Outreach/PR strategy for all elements.	Local, entity and state.	UNDP, local institutions, CSOs and the entity AMCs.	LG / MZ (UNDP)	Yes	Phase II

Strategic implementation of mechanisms/tools						
Policy design and delivery cycle.	Clear definition, scope and timeline.	MZ, LG, entity and canton.	UNDP, local institutions and ministries.	LG / MZ	Citizen forums reported as being continued, but without any clear link to policy reform.	Phase I & II
Improved LG operational, management and reporting capacities.	Setting targets, the scope and timeline.	MZ, LG	Local, entity and state level institutions.	LG / MZ	Knowledge transfer, peer-to-peer support and capacity development.	Phase I & II
De-concentrated local services piloted within the target MZ by 2019.	Legal and operational definition of de-concentration revised.	MZ, LG	Local, entity and state level institutions.	LG / MZ	Some but not strategic or legal.	Phase I & II
Citizens in the target MZ engaged in voluntary actions and campaigns.	Strategic review and planning of volunteer engagement .	MZ, LG	UNDP, local institutions, ministries and the entity AMC.	LG / MZ	Yes, but highlighted as a main challenge.
The strategic alignment of local planning and budgeting.	Consolidation of the MZ and CSO fundraising strategies; planning for citizen contributions and co-financing.	MZ, LG	UNDP and LG	LG / MZ	Yes, but without any assurances or strategic commitment.	Phase II
The National MZ Network.	Development, implementation and the monitoring strategy. AMC capacity development	MZ, LG, entity and canton.	UNDP, local institutions and the entity AMCs.	LG / MZ / entity AMCs	Yes, the entity AMCs committed to their continued engagement.	Phase I & II
Building partnerships.	Strategic planning for inter-LG, inter-MZ,	MZ, LG, entity and canton.	UNDP and local institutions.	LG / MZ	Some, but not systemic.	Phase

	and UNDP projects.					
Institutionalisation of policy and regulatory reform at different levels						
Amending the entity legislation.	Develop further.	Entity and canton.	UNDP and the entity ministries.	Entity ministries	Work in progress.	Phase I & II
Further amendment of LG and MZ statutes and acts.	Engage the FBiH and the State in designing a development strategy for local self-governance.	Entity and state.	UNDP and local institutions.	LG / MZ	Where the LGs accepted the amendments there is the likelihood of sustainability.	Phase I & II
.....	Develop horizontal and vertical accountability mechanisms.	LG and entity	UNDP and local institutions.	LG / MZ	No	Phase II
Areas and activities for consolidation	Areas for expansion	Level	Partnership	Institutional owner of the product	Sustainability evidence	Project Phase
Policy and strategic embedding of the new vision of mjesne zajednice (MZ)						
Acceptance of the new gender-sensitive vision for MZ by formally established bodies.	The strategically fragmented vision of MZ for acceptance: policy and practical level. Make it simpler for citizens.	MZ, LG, entity, canton and state.	UNDP, local institutions, ministries, cantons and the entity associations of municipalities and cities (AMCs).	LG / MZ	Yes, for the new vision of MZ. Community hubs can play a pivotal role, but this needs to be reviewed.	Phase I & II
Projects and actions by MZ and CSOs that promote one or more of the pillars of the new vision.	Monitoring of results and impact	MZ and LG	UNDP, local institutions, CSOs and the entity AMCs.	LG / MZ	Yes. The evaluation findings (qualitative) and the intention to continue with implementation of the principles.	Phase I & II
Social media presence and	Outreach/PR strategy for all elements.	Local, entity	UNDP, local institutions, CSOs and	LG / MZ (UNDP)	Yes	Phase II

outreach activities.		and state.	the entity AMCs.			
Strategic implementation of mechanisms/tools						
Policy design and delivery cycle.	Clear definition, scope and timeline.	MZ, LG, entity and canton.	UNDP, local institutions and ministries.	LG / MZ	Citizen forums reported as being continued, but without any clear link to policy reform.	Phase I & II
Improved LG operational, management and reporting capacities.	Setting targets, the scope and timeline.	MZ, LG	Local, entity and state level institutions.	LG / MZ	Knowledge transfer, peer-to-peer support and capacity development.	Phase I & II
De-concentrated local services piloted within the target MZ by 2019.	Legal and operational definition of de-concentration revised.	MZ, LG	Local, entity and state level institutions.	LG / MZ	Some but not strategic or legal.	Phase I & II
Citizens in the target MZ engaged in voluntary actions and campaigns.	Strategic review and planning of volunteer engagement.	MZ, LG	UNDP, local institutions, ministries and the entity AMC.	LG / MZ	Yes, but highlighted as a main challenge.
The strategic alignment of local planning and budgeting.	Consolidation of the MZ and CSO fundraising strategies; planning for citizen contributions and co-financing.	MZ, LG	UNDP and LG	LG / MZ	Yes, but without any assurances or strategic commitment.	Phase II
The National MZ Network.	Development, implementation and the monitoring strategy. AMC capacity development	MZ, LG, entity and canton.	UNDP, local institutions and the entity AMCs.	LG / MZ / entity AMCs	Yes, the entity AMCs committed to their continued engagement.	Phase I & II
Building partnerships.	Strategic planning for inter-LG,	MZ, LG, entity	UNDP and local institutions.	LG / MZ	Some, but not systemic.	Phase

	inter-MZ, and UNDP projects.	and canton.				
Institutionalisation of policy and regulatory reform at different levels						
Amending the entity legislation.	Develop further.	Entity and canton.	UNDP and the entity ministries.	Entity ministries	Work in progress.	Phase I & II
Further amendment of LG and MZ statutes and acts.	Engage the FBiH and the State in designing a development strategy for local self-governance.	Entity and state.	UNDP and local institutions.	LG / MZ	Where the LGs accepted the amendments there is the likelihood of sustainability.	Phase I & II
.....	Develop horizontal and vertical accountability mechanisms.	LG and entity	UNDP and local institutions.	LG / MZ	No	Phase II

7.2. Scaling-up: areas for consolidation

The experience from the current phase of the Project in the selection of the municipalities and mjesne zajednice will enable faster and more efficient interventions. Policy and regulatory frameworks are in place and can be replicated (e.g. the new vision of mjesne zajednice policy document, the good practice document and the framework for making amendments to the legal acts and statutes of local government to empower mjesne zajednice).

1. Practical aspects of the Project: Capacity development, accountability and service delivery

Outputs/activities to be replicated in the new municipalities in line with the recommendations based on the qualitative data analysis derived from the evaluation fieldwork.

- **Community forums:** As outlined in the sustainability section, the focus group participants expressed their intention to continue to operate the community forums. As one of the strongest pillars of citizen participation, they should be replicated in the new local governments/mjesne zajednice.
- **Education and capacity building:** The focus group participants identified **education and capacity building** as the single most important contribution of the Project. This element should be replicated and expanded further (e.g. through the introduction of additional training for business start-up initiatives, communication and negotiation skills and social inclusion).
- **Knowledge cross-transfer:** This should become a flagship initiative to utilise the skills of the Project participants, specifically for writing project proposals, facilitation and project management. **The model for knowledge transfer should be used in the conduct of joint local projects with new mjesne zajednice, ranging from preparing the project proposals to implementation and reporting. This would address the expressed lack of confidence among current project participants when acting as trainers or tutors for the new mjesne zajednice and teaching them how to prepare project proposals and implement projects.**

- **Service delivery:** Can a mjesne zajednice act as a service provider? If Phase II decides to pursue this roadmap further then there would be a need for a considerable risk mitigation strategy. It should be developed in collaboration with the local government in order to determine the responsibilities of each stakeholder, including the donors and UNDP. This recommendation draws upon the challenges outlined above. Service delivery interventions should be better defined in both scope and nature. Phase II, for example, could draw up a list of specific service areas such as those aimed at children, adults, healthcare, finance, culture, tourism and sport and planning services. Yet even though some of the mayors believed that mjesne zajednice could act as service providers the current laws on local self-government limit this. The concerns expressed by some of the mayors should be given seriously consideration, because if a lack of skills, resources and/or financial control causes localised service to fail then it is the local government that will need to deal with both the interrupted of service provision and the negative financial consequences and impact that the failure is likely to have on citizens and mjesne zajednice.
- **Broader outreach:** The Local Development Fund and the Local Initiatives Fund should continue, but with certain adaptations to ensure wider outreach. **The way forward would be to build inter-mjesne zajednice and inter-government cooperation** with grants awarded to two or more local governments/mjesne zajednice (potentially a combination of project and non-project mjesne zajednice), which is already being piloted. This could spark a more organic knowledge transfer between pilot and non-pilot mjesne zajednice. UNDP could then adapt its mentoring and capacity development to the realistic needs on the ground, which would alleviate somewhat the current burden of extensive field presence.
- **Community hubs:** These should continue to operate, based on the assumption that their sustainability and status will be resolved by the end of Phase I of the Project. This should include the issues of ownership of the community hubs and the professionalisation of community hub managers. The Project has already developed a template for the planning and assessment of the sustainability of community hubs. The recommendations section of this report offers an insight into the way forward.
- **M&E platform:** All mjesne zajednice involved in the Project should continue to utilise the M&E platform for the duration of Phase II and this data could be used for impact assessment.

7.2.1. Scaling-up and areas for expansion

A consultation process should be carried out for the new activities and interventions in Phase II, because the exercise has proven to be a highly effective tool for creating a sense of ownership over the Project and building trust between UNDP and mjesne zajednice. This would also provide an opportunity for the current phase (Phase I) local governments to engage in further work during Phase II of the Project.

Establishing synergies between different projects funded by the Swiss and Swedish governments would be beneficial to certain aspects of the Project. There is also the possibility to build synergies with projects supported by other donors that also work at mjesne zajednice and municipal level. Some of these possibilities are summarised below.

- Building synergy requires a strategic approach in order to achieve effective cooperation. It should not be done on an ad-hoc basis or under the assumption that just because two projects by the same donor operate in one municipality that this will automatically result in cooperation.
- The objectives of compatible projects, whether similar in area or scope of action (not just geographic location overlap), need to be assessed in order to find out if collaboration would empower each project and, most importantly, target the beneficiaries of both projects.
- The evaluation identified the possibility to build synergies between the Project and the Municipal Environmental and Economic Governance Project (MEG) and the Integrated Local Development Project (ILDLP). This potential synergy centres on sharing resources and working together on

integrating the local projects and plans of mjesne zajednice into the local development strategies. More specifically, there is a clear link between the Project and ILDP through Outcome 3⁷¹ and MEG through Outcome 2.⁷²

- There is also potential for building synergy with the European Union and USAID and the Embassy of Switzerland supported Local Government Initiative, which was launched in October 2017, which seeks to identify common challenges to local government operations that hamper the efficient provision of public services.

One of the major concerns expressed by the evaluation participants was that once UNDP concludes the Project implementation the funding would dry up completely, leaving many problems that still need to be resolved and new community needs identified and assessed. The focus groups participants had many aspirations and ideas for their mjesne zajednice and the newly established citizens associations (CSOs) expressed their wish to continue to operate, while the community hubs have multiple potential.

In addition to strengthening the responsiveness of local government to the needs of mjesne zajednice and committing to incorporate the identified priorities into local government budgets, a new approach to tackling the potential lack of funding would be to develop and support business start-up initiatives. The focus group participants expressed interest in small business development, particularly further training and access to know-how, and this intervention is already being piloted under Phase I of the Project. It would resolve several challenges identified during the evaluation, which mainly concern financial and overall project sustainability. This type of intervention would also build confidence, provide encouragement and keep citizens motivated and engaged. Dependent on the available funding and human resources, a competitive small grants scheme for the award of financial contributions to the most successful small business proposals could be developed during Phase II following the same methodology as the grants scheme under Phase I.

The small business proposals would obviously have to incorporate elements that benefit the local community and/or address the issue of social inclusion. The Project reports contain evidence of the entrepreneurial inclination and readiness of citizens to contribute financially or in-kind to their local communities, which they have done via local development initiatives in the targeted mjesne zajednice under Phase I to the amount of USD 120,000.

7.2.2. Scaling-up: Geographical coverage

Part of the consolidation effort to ensure wider outreach and the systemic embedding of the policy and regulatory frameworks should focus on geographical coverage. There are three possible scenarios:

1. Continue to work in the same local governments/mjesne zajednice, but with an expanded scope of work. The logic behind developing new interventions in the current local governments/mjesne zajednice is to further strengthen their role, maximise the effect of Phase I and maintain citizen engagement.
2. Expand the geographic scope to increase outreach and impact by selecting a new local governments/mjesne zajednice cluster.
3. Combine the approach of expanding the work in the current local governments/mjesne zajednice with the inclusion of new municipalities and local governments/mjesne zajednice.

It is the opinion of this evaluation that scenario 3 is the best way forward, but the decision should be based on the availability of financial and human resources, the lessons learned and the ability to adopt

⁷¹ Outcome 3. Citizens and socioeconomic partners play a proactive role in development management and benefit from the improved public services.

⁷² Citizens and businesses in the target localities benefit from good quality services in the environmental and economic sectors provided by local governments.

good practice. More specifically, Phase II should carry out a comprehensive review of operations and human resources in order to ensure successful implementation. Yet scaling-up the Project geographically and expanding its scope to include new local governments would not be possible if the same operational structure remains in place. The team should be expanded to include a project administrator (primarily to support the small grants scheme and related administrative tasks as well as all other technical requirements), a partnership coordinator, a communication and outreach specialist, a M&E specialist and a legal expert. It is recommended that the Project consider carrying out an impact assessment analysis and use the findings in the design of Phase II. Given the complexity of the intervention (particularly under scenario 3), the duration of Phase II of the project cycle should remain the same: four years.

The benefits of scenario 3 are a) the inclusion of new mjesne zajednice into the current partner local governments and b) new municipalities using the modified (based on the lessons learned and new priorities) selection criteria and the approach developed for Phase I. This would not only strengthen mjesne zajednice but also secure additional benefits through inclusive processes and interventions for more groups and individuals, which would in turn contribute to solidifying the Project goal. Overall, the Project outcomes can keep the same focus and aspirations as Phase I but with strengthened and more developed strategic focus on sustainability (based on the achieved results).

The evaluation found that collaboration between local government was most often established through the personal connections of mayors (built through networking events such as workshops and conferences and through common business interests or other personal links and that this was not dependent on whether they were neighbouring local governments). If we assume that such partnerships will prevail, the regional clustering of municipalities is not essential. Yet the clustering of neighbouring mjesne zajednice, particularly in rural areas, has proven to be more conducive to creating partnerships, particularly for priority projects and in general for expanding collaboration under the small grants scheme. Clustering also supports efficient project implementation, the work of the Project field officers and draws on contextual similarities when finding solutions. Geographic clustering is also likely to have a better impact in terms of systemic change and establishing broader Project ownership at the municipal level. The number of the new municipalities would depend on the factors outlined above but should not exceed fifteen.

Lastly, the Project needs to assess and reach a strategic decision on whether to focus on working in rural areas (which are more disadvantaged) or to place more emphasis on urban areas (to achieve a larger overall impact).

7.2.3. Scaling-up: Social inclusion and gender mainstreaming

Social inclusion should remain the focus of Phase II, because mjesne zajednice and local government are the key actors in tackling vulnerability and working toward women's empowerment. Poverty is usually one of the main drivers of vulnerability and exclusion yet other drivers, such as a lack of social, civil and political rights, often lead to a lack or loss of social identity and marginalisation and leave the poorest in society with no voice or pathway to participation. The most excluded groups and those at risk of poverty in Bosnia and Herzegovina cover a wide spectrum: the unemployed and long-term unemployed, youth, the elderly, single headed households, persons with disabilities, national minorities and minority returnees. The interplay between **social forces and institutional factors** in Bosnia and Herzegovina leads to exclusion and forces the most vulnerable to the margins of society. The Project has been effective in not only addressing vulnerabilities of women but importantly on capitalising on their strengths for increased activism and participation of women in public life. This success is drawing from early design and application of gender mainstreaming strategy, which is based on a solid insight into contextual enablers and entry points for turning women into agents of change.

The Project has also worked with success on improving the relationship between social actors and the formal institutional frameworks that create exclusion. It also tackles other factors such as traditional

and discriminatory cultural practices and behaviour that perpetuate exclusion and are especially obvious in local communities. In addition to continuing to strengthen women as agents of change in their local communities, the next phase of the Project should further build on mechanisms such as Ukljucise.ba web platform designed to give voices to the most excluded people in the country and use these participatory methods to better structure programming in order to develop a stronger focus on determining a sense of direction for excluded groups. Phase II should also include interventions focused on tackling the problem of 'brain-drain', which is one of the most prevalent concerns in Bosnia and Herzegovina today, primarily among the unemployed youth, who are considered excluded through multiple criteria.

Perhaps the most important area that needs to be addressed during Phase II is educating citizens about what constitutes social inclusion and exclusion and who are the socially excluded. The focus group participants were often unable to identify those who classify as socially excluded during discussions on the Project contribution to and the inclusion of marginalised groups. In these discussions, it was difficult for them to distinguish between those who suffer social exclusion and the vulnerable. This is essential if the Project is to instigate a change in mindset and for ensuring that systemic change comes with a social inclusion and gender-mainstreaming dimension. Both downward and upward interaction between local government and mjesne zajednice must contain elements of empowerment of women and social inclusion.

7.3. Theory of Change

To date, the Project has had a positive impact on local communities and the lives of citizens. The evaluation recommends that the next phase of the Project (phase II) develop a comprehensive Theory of Change with impact indicators and an outcomes framework to document the created changes. In its simplest form, Theory of Change is defined as a "description of a sequence of events that is expected to lead to a particular desired outcome."⁷³

This approach is widely applied in international development programmes, including those supporting governance. Most funders and donors also use some form of theory of change to define their programming impact hypotheses. The main advantage of using theory of change is that it allows you to measure progress against the achievement of longer-term goals and that it goes beyond the identification of programme outputs and allows for better evaluation.

The Project impact hypothesis is that the advancement of the relevant regulatory frameworks will affirm mjesne zajednice in Bosnia and Herzegovina as modernised and legitimate units of community governance more able to respond effectively to the needs of citizens. By strengthening the capacity of mjesne zajednice to engage productively in local decision-making and by providing them with viable participatory mechanisms to represent citizens within municipal plans and budgets, the Project will affirm mjesne zajednice as a bridge between communities and local government and change the way the opinions and needs of citizens are voiced and heard by their governments. In other words, if the Project is successful then citizen participation in community governance and activities will increase and they will be motivated to engage more in decision-making processes within their municipality.

The change is reflected in the following ways:

- creation of a new joint vision on the contemporary role and responsibilities of mjesne zajednice in the country,
- reform of the legal basis for community government (mjesne zajednice) in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Project Theory of Change should also take into account factors that affect the quality of life such as whether people have access to quality infrastructure and services, whether they feel included in

⁷³ Davies, R., Criteria for assessing the evaluability of a Theory of Change (2012)

the democratic process and believe that their elected representatives genuinely serve their needs and whether they feel accepted, involved and supported in their local community.

The current phase of the Project (Phase I) has a comprehensive impact hypothesis with well-defined assumptions and proposed actions. It reflects one aspect of the overall Project goal, namely to improve the quality of life of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina through enhanced local services and strengthened democratic accountability.

As outlined in the Conclusions section, today, three and a half years into the Project implementation began, this need still exists. The theory of change does not connect with an important segment of strengthening social inclusion (with the exception of infrastructure projects and facilitating interaction, which is not well defined) and gender mainstreaming, which needs to be addressed during phase II of the Project.

The current Project has already prepared key elements for building a theory of change: it has conducted comprehensive research (baselines), prepared the new vision of mjesne zajednice document (which itself contains theory of change, although not explicitly framed as such) and the Good Practice document. They foresee different scenarios ranging from 1) the maximum wherein mjesne zajednice and local government adopt all principles of the new vision for mjesne zajednice and proposed good practice to b) the minimum wherein mjesne zajednice and local government adopt only a limited combination of the principles and approaches during the next phase of programming as well as any variation in between these two options. The theory of change for Phase II of the Project should develop this further.

The second important element relevant to the theory of change is the change to the legal frameworks that regulate the status and functioning of mjesne zajednice in both entities and in Brčko District. The theory of change must assume both the maximum expected outcome wherein all proposed amendments are adopted and put into practice during the project cycle and the minimum possible outcome wherein only some amendments are adopted as well as certain variance in between these options.

The change to the legal framework should be observed in combination with the change to statute of local government, namely the status and functioning of mjesne zajednice. This would constitute an institutional factor in the theory of change. Lastly, the current phase (Phase I) produced baselines at the start of the Project that provide an evidence base for identifying pathways for measuring impact and change for Phase II. The evaluation recommends that Phase II of the Project have a fully developed Theory of Change. This would 1) help with the design of the Project interventions (which will lead to the specific desired outcomes) and 2) it could be used at the final evaluation stage to guide the understanding of the impact of the Project and when assessing the bigger picture of the Project implementation within the complex context of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It will show all the pathways that might lead to change, including those not directly associated with the Project and would describe not just how but why the change will occur. This is particularly relevant for achieving systemic change.

8 Annexes

8.1. Annex 1. Performance/results status according to the outcome and output indicators

OUTCOME	INDICATORS	Performance/ Results as of October 2018
<p>Overall goal: To improve the quality of life of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) through enhanced local services and increased democratic accountability and social inclusion.</p>	<p>Indicator: The number of citizens benefiting from improved access to and the quality of infrastructure and services in the target mjesne zajednice (MZs). Target: The proportion of citizens (disaggregated by sex) without access to priority infrastructure and/or services (priorities to be set by the MZs) decreased by 30per cent by 2019.</p> <p>Indicator: The level of citizen satisfaction (disaggregated by sex and age) with services and infrastructure provided in the target MZs. Target: Satisfaction gap decreased by 30per cent by 2019, both overall and separately for women.</p> <p>Indicator: The turnout in MZ elections in the target MZs. Target: The proportion of non-voting electorate decreased by 20per cent by 2019.</p> <p>Indicator: The level of the Social Inclusion Index in the target MZs. Target: The social inclusion gap reduced by 30per cent by 2019, both overall and separately for women.</p>	<p>The evaluation established that to date the Project has partially managed to meet its overall goal. There is enough evidence to show that many citizens are benefiting from improved access to and the quality of infrastructure and services (405,934 citizens reported to be benefiting, which exceeds the original target by 30per cent). However, the evaluation found no evidence of a decrease in the number of citizens without access to priority infrastructure and services. This indicator should be revisited in order to capture the Project impact, while the monitoring results should be disaggregated by sex.</p> <p>A comprehensive baseline study and citizen satisfaction surveys were prepared at the start of the Project. Yet the Project Mid-Term Review survey did not address this question. It is the recommendation of this evaluation that a survey be conducted at the end of the Project in order to verify this indicator.</p> <p>The evaluation found no evidence/ data on voter turnout for the MZ councils. The qualitative evidence indicates that some local governments (LGs) introduced secret ballots in line with standard electoral practice (e.g. Zenica). The ‘political barometer’ benchmarking tool should be utilised to a greater extent in order to verify the democratic accountability of LGs, with benchmarks to be clearly defined. It was not possible to establish whether the social inclusion gap</p>

		decreased in the target MZs and if so by what percentage. This was because the Social Inclusion Index at the MZ level is not available in BiH. The monitoring data indicates that 30per cent of the Project beneficiaries were socially excluded. According to UNDP, this indicator should be reviewed for verification purposes.
<p>OUTCOME 1</p> <p>Citizens and government are committed to realise the jointly agreed upon new inclusive and gender-sensitive vision of MZs in BiH as a foundation for more participatory and accountable local governance in BiH.</p>	<p>Outcome Indicators</p> <p>The number of MZs engaged in and contributing to the definition of the new gender-sensitive vision of MZs in BiH.</p> <p>Target: 120 MZs.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of socioeconomic stakeholders (disaggregated by sex), including socially excluded and vulnerable groups, and women engaged in and contributing to the definition of a new gender-sensitive vision of MZs in BiH.</p> <p>Target: 1,500 representatives from civil society organisations, citizens groups and the private sector, with at least 40per cent women and at least 10per cent socially excluded and vulnerable groups (2016).</p> <p>Indicator: The level of acceptance of the new gender-sensitive vision of MZs by formally established consultative bodies.</p> <p>Target:</p> <p>Indicator: The percentage of citizens (disaggregated by sex) in the selected partner LGs familiar with the new vision of MZs that are willing to engage in its realisation.</p> <p>Target: 80per cent of citizens in the selected partner municipalities are familiar with the new vision of MZs and willing to engage in its realisation.</p>	<p>This is fully achieved and exceeded the target (138per cent). 166 MZs from 84 LGs contributed to the definition of the new vision of MZs in BiH.</p> <p>This has been partially achieved. 1,017 participants (62per cent men, 38per cent women) took part in 22 vision-setting meetings and the final MZ Validation Conference (December 2017).</p> <p>This has been fully achieved. The new vision of MZs in BiH is fully endorsed by the Project partner ministries, LGs and MZs.</p> <p>This has been partially achieved. The Project monitoring data indicates that at least 60per cent of the citizens are familiar with the new vision of MZ and willing to engage in its realisation. The data is not sex disaggregated.</p>
<p>OUTCOME 2</p> <p>Proactive, capacitated and</p>	<p>Indicator: The number of MZs in the target LGs effectively engaged in local policy design and the delivery cycle.</p>	<p>This has been partially achieved, but remains an ongoing activity. Community forums are the key</p>

<p>interconnected MZs contribute to the downward responsiveness of municipal government and improved service delivery.</p>	<p>Target: 80 MZs effectively representing at least 100,000 citizens by 2019.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of MZs in the target LGs with improved organisational and technical capacities.</p> <p>Target: At least 80per cent of participating MZs (at least 40per cent of beneficiaries are women) (2019).</p> <p>Indicator: The percentage of MZs that lack basic operational capacity.</p> <p>Target: The share of participating MZs lacking such conditions has halved by 2019.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of citizens in the target MZs (disaggregated by sex and age) benefiting either directly or indirectly from improved access to and/or the quality of public services because of the Project by 2019.</p> <p>Target: At least 3,600 citizens (at least 40per cent women) benefit directly and at least 10,000 citizens (at least 40per cent women) benefit indirectly from improved access to and/or the quality of public services because of the Project by 2019.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of deconcentrated local services piloted in the target MZs by 2019.</p> <p>Target: At least 5 deconcentrated local services piloted in the target MZs by 2019.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of citizens in the target MZs engaged in voluntary actions and campaigns.</p> <p>Target: 2,500 by 2019.</p> <p>Indicator: The level of citizen contribution (financial and in-kind) made to local development initiatives in the target MZs.</p> <p>Target: The total financial and in-kind contribution by citizens amount to at least CHF 150,000 each by the end of 2019.</p>	<p>mechanism for MZs engagement in policy design and the delivery cycle (455 forums have been held since the start of the Project). 136 MZs in the Project LGs effectively engaged in local policy design and 126 MZs engaged in the delivery cycle.</p> <p>This has been fully achieved. The operational capacity of all MZs has increased, only 6per cent of all 136 partner MZs still lack basic operating capacity (because of the remoteness of their location). The original target has been exceeded significantly.</p> <p>This has been fully achieved. 204 MZ projects have been completed to the direct benefit of 122,418 citizens (42per cent or 52,484 women). There are 228,565 indirect beneficiaries (46per cent or 105,839 women). The results are not disaggregated by age. Given that youth and the elderly are often an excluded category, the Project should make an effort to disaggregate monitoring data according to age.</p> <p>This has not been achieved. The deconcentration of local services is dependent on the legislative framework that regulates such acts and the capacity of MZs to provide service delivery and on political will in the LGs.</p> <p>Although the Project has made significant efforts to lay a foundation for this target, the evaluation found that LGs more often than not are not in favour of deconcentration.</p> <p>This has been fully achieved and the target exceeded. More than 15,000 citizens volunteered for the implementation of MZ and CSO projects.</p>
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	<p>Indicator: The volume of financial resources attracted annually for local initiatives by CSOs in the target areas resulting from successful applications to funding organisations by the Project.</p> <p>Target: The volume of financial resources has increased by at least by 20per cent on aggregate for the participating MZs.</p> <p>Indicator: The National MZ Network is established.</p> <p>Target: A functional countrywide MZ Network is established by 2017.</p>	<p>This has been achieved. The contribution by citizens (financial and in-kind) to local development initiatives in the target MZs amounted to USD 120,000.</p> <p>This has been fully achieved. The CSOs fundraised USD 600,000 for the duration of the Project, which is a direct result of their developed skills in preparing project proposals (E.g., a Women’s CSO in Pale-Praca reported raising close to BAM 50,000 for several projects). The baseline was zero (0), meaning that local CSOs previously lacked the capacity and inclination for fundraising.</p> <p>This has been fully achieved (although the MZ Network was only established in September 2018, a year later than the original target). In partnership with the entity associations of municipalities and cities (AMCs), the formal Network of MZs was officially established at an event that gathered 80 cross-entity participants (LSG network coordinators) who adopted the Rules of Procedure of the Network. The primary focus of the MZ Network is on sharing knowledge and good practice, especially with LGs and MZs that are not part of the Project, and advocacy.</p>
<p>OUTCOME 3 A new regulatory framework developed by government for the functioning of MZs enables more inclusive, gender-sensitive and accountable local governance in BiH.</p>	<p>Outcome Indicators</p> <p>Indicator: The new MZ related legislative framework is in place (a combination of new and amended legislation).</p> <p>Target: The MZ related gender-sensitive legislative framework has been drafted, widely consulted and handed over to governments at the entity, cantonal and Brčko District level by 2019.</p> <p>Indicator: The models for local government statutes and decisions related to the roles, rights and</p>	<p>This has not yet been achieved. UNDP is working toward achieving this goal, although there is serious concern over whether this is achievable. Cantonal level governments are not involved in the Project. The new governments are still not in place following the general election of 2018, which is a serious impediment to the successful completion of Outcome 3.</p>

	<p>responsibilities of MZ have been drafted.</p> <p>Target: The model local government statutes and decisions on MZs, which take gender equality and inclusion into account, have been drafted, consulted and handed over to the AMCs and municipal governments countrywide.</p>	<p>This has been partially achieved. At the time of the evaluation, 15 LGs had completed a process of amending their statutes and documents regulating the roles, rights and responsibilities of MZ. The AMCs will play a role in the dissemination of the model and adoption procedure among LGs that are not part of the Project.</p>
OUTPUT	INDICATORS	Performance/ Results as of October 2018
Outcome 1: Citizens and government are committed to realise the jointly agreed upon new inclusive and gender-sensitive vision of MZs in BiH as a foundation for more participatory and accountable local governance in BiH.		
<p>Output 1.1. Analytical report on MZs with specific focus on good practice in BiH and abroad finalised.</p>	<p>Indicator: The analytical report on MZs. Target: The analytical report on MZs, including a comparative review of the legal frameworks in BiH and other countries, is prepared and widely disseminated (2015).</p>	<p>This has been achieved: Three analytical reports.</p>
<p>Output 1.2. The contemporary vision of the role of MZs in BiH has been broadly adopted and disseminated.</p>	<p>Indicator: The number of consultative workshops, national roundtables and the percentage of socially excluded groups (disaggregated by sex and age). Target: At least 10 consultative workshops (in each entity and in Brčko District) and 2 national roundtables organised during the vision setting process (at least 10per cent of participants are representatives of socially excluded groups and 40per cent women) (by 2016).</p> <p>Indicator: The number of women's organisations consulted in the preparation of the framework. Target: 30.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of inputs that address social inclusion and gender equality reflected in the new vision document. Baseline: At least 5.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of learning and study visit events for key stakeholders and the percentage of female participants. Target: At least 2 study visits organised for key stakeholders in European countries, with at least 40per cent female participants (by 2016).</p>	<p>This has been achieved.</p>

Outcome 2: Proactive, capacitated and interconnected MZs contribute toward the downward responsiveness of municipal government and improved service delivery.		
<p>Output 2.1. Participating municipalities and MZs selected, based on their level of commitment and demonstrated good practice in relation to municipal-MZ cooperation, and specific project baselines. established</p>	<p>Indicator: The number of awareness raising activities conducted in the shortlisted municipalities and the number of their MZs involved in the selection process. Target: At least 15 awareness raising activities organised within preselected municipalities by April 2015.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of municipalities and their constituent MZs selected for participation in the Project. Target: At least 20 municipalities and at least 120 MZs selected by mid-2015, based on set criteria.</p>	<p>This was achieved in 2016.</p>
<p>Output 2.2. The capacities of participating municipal officials, MZ leaders and staff in terms of moderation, planning and reporting techniques has increased.</p>	<p>Indicator: The number of awareness raising activities conducted in the shortlisted municipalities and their MZs in the selection process. Target: At least 15 awareness raising activities organised within preselected municipalities by April 2015.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of municipalities and their constituent MZs selected for participation in the Project. Target: At least 20 municipalities and at least 120 MZs are selected by mid-2015 based on set criteria.</p>	<p>This has been achieved.</p>
<p>Output 2.3. Priorities of MZs and citizens effectively embedded into municipal budgets and strategic frameworks.</p>	<p>Indicator: The number of MZ leaders and staff with strengthened organisational capacities and skills. Target: At least 500 MZ leaders and staff (minimum 40per cent women and balanced political representation) receive training or coaching by 2019.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of training programmes for municipal officials, MZ leaders and staff designed. Target: At least 10 tailored and interactive training programmes designed and implemented by 2019.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of CSO and MZ activists who strengthen their knowledge and skills in local development and community strengthening. Target: At least 2,000 CSO and MZ activists in the target areas receive training or coaching by 2019 (including at least 40per cent women and 10per cent representatives of socially excluded groups).</p>	<p>This has been partially achieved.</p>

<p>Output 2.4. MZ projects contributing to better service delivery (including the pilot deconcentration of local services to MZs) supported.</p>	<p>Indicator: The number of citizen forums at the MZ level in the targeted MZs and the number of citizens directly engaged. Target: At least 100 MZ level forums established as the voice of citizens in public affairs, bringing together at least 3,000 citizens (at least 40per cent women and at least 10per cent socially excluded groups) by 2019.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of MZ forums established and serving as participatory platforms to prioritise and discuss community matters and the number of citizens engaged through these platforms. Target: At least 15 MZ forums established as a collective representation body in each participating municipality and the provision for the structured engagement of citizens in local public affairs, with a total number of at least 3,000 citizens represented (of whom 40per cent are women and at least 10per cent representatives of socially excluded and vulnerable groups) and at least 3 gatherings annually.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of MZ priorities effectively embedded into the annual work plans and budgets of the respective municipalities. Baseline: N/A (2015). Target: At least 2 community priorities by each MZ are embedded into the municipal annual work plan and budget during each project year.</p> <p>Indicator: The percentage of embedded MZ priorities acted on by the municipalities. Baseline: To be established (2015). Target: 80per cent by 2019.</p>	<p>This has been partially achieved. Not all of the MZs submitted their priority projects to LG and therefore it was not possible to verify the proportion of these priorities included in the LG budgets.</p>
<p>Output 2.5. CSO initiatives contributing to social inclusion, women's empowerment and support for community volunteerism.</p>	<p>Indicator: The number of MZ proposed projects co-funded by the relevant municipalities and supported by the Project. Target: At least 120 by 2019.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of women directly benefiting from the implementation of MZ projects in the target areas. Target: 2,000 by 2019.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of persons with disabilities directly benefiting from the implementation of MZ projects in the target areas. Baseline: To be established once the MZs are selected (2015).</p>	<p>This has been partially achieved. The introduction of deconcentrated services remains a work in progress.</p>

	<p>Target: At least 100 by 2019.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of projects that introduce a deconcentrated local service in the targeted MZs by 2019.</p> <p>Target: At least 5 projects in the targeted MZs are formalising deconcentrated local service delivery in the target MZs by 2019.</p>	
<p>Output 2.6. The countrywide MZ networking initiatives give MZs a stronger voice toward municipalities and in policymaking processes and facilitate the exchange of good practice.</p>	<p>Indicator: The number of MZs involved in the national exchange network countrywide.</p> <p>Target: At least 200 by 2019.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of visits to the MZ website portal.</p> <p>Target: At least 10,000 hits.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of MZ actively engaged in national competitions.</p> <p>Target: At least 100 MZs participate annually.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of publications disseminated through the network.</p> <p>Target: At least 5 thematic publications, with outreach (via the website, social media or through printed publications) to at least 1,000 MZs.</p>	This has been fully achieved.
<p>Output 2.7. The use of modern technology to consult citizens and report to them widens participation and increases the legitimacy of MZs.</p>	<p>Indicator: The number of ICT solutions designed and piloted to improve access of citizens to services and encourage citizen participation in public local affairs.</p> <p>Target: At least 3 by 2019.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of citizens in the target MZs using ICT to engage in public decision-making or consultation processes.</p> <p>Target: At least 2,500 citizens per participating municipality (at least 40per cent women and 10per cent representatives of socially excluded groups).</p>	This has been partially achieved.
<p>Outcome 3: A new regulatory framework for functional MZs developed by governments enables more inclusive, gender-sensitive and accountable local governance in BiH.</p>		
<p>Output 3.1. Draft gender-sensitive and inclusive legislation prepared and advocated for at the entity and Brčko District level.</p>	<p>Indicator: Draft legislation prepared that incorporates the main principles and vision of MZs.</p> <p>Target: Draft legislation prepared for both entities and Brčko District by 2019.</p> <p>Indicator: Regulatory impact assessments on MZ reform prepared for all draft legislation.</p> <p>Target: Regulatory impact assessments, including from the viewpoint of the implications of gender equality and social</p>	This has been partially achieved.

	<p>inclusion, prepared for both entities and Brčko District by 2019.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of consultative and outreach consultation events on the legal drafts.</p> <p>Target: At least 10 consultative events are organised with at least 200 key stakeholders and policymakers (of which at least 40per cent are women).</p>	
<p>Output 3.2. The models for municipal MZ decisions and statutes as well as municipal procedures that take into account the aspects of gender equality and social inclusion drafted and disseminated.</p>	<p>Indicator: The models for municipal MZ decisions and statutes and municipal procedures prepared.</p> <p>Target: The models for statutes and decisions on MZs are drafted and disseminated, including municipal procedures related to the engagement of MZs in public consultations and interaction between municipalities and MZs.</p> <p>Indicator: The number of municipal governments in the country that have improved their statutes and decisions related to MZs.</p> <p>Target: At least 15 municipal governments adopt improved MZ statutes and decisions.</p>	<p>This has been partially achieved.</p>
<p>Output 3.2. Practical guidance on implementing the new legislation prepared and widely disseminated.</p>	<p>Indicator: The number of municipal governments provided with practical guidance.</p> <p>Target: Representatives from all participating municipalities and at least 10 others are familiar with the practical guidelines.</p>	<p>This has been partially achieved.</p>

8.2. Annex 2. Questionnaires/Interview Guide

Evaluation Questions	MZ Focus Groups
	Guide
	Introductory Question: Tell us your name and how long have you participated in the Project.
Relevance	Opening Question: How did you first hear about the Project? What made you interested in it? Think back to when you first got involved in the Project: What was your first impression? Did you participate in the consultation for creating the MZ vision? If not, did you read it?
Effectiveness	What are the positive changes brought about by the Project interventions? What are the indirect changes, if there were any? Which mechanisms from the Project implementation are most significant (to answer good practice)? Was there anything that could have been done better and if so how?
Efficiency	What is your opinion of the communication with UNDP, local government and CSOs? Have there been interactions with other MZs, collaboration or exchange of experience?
Impact	Has there been a change in the financial resources available to the MZ? Would you say that the community members (citizens) are more engaged now? Can you give an example?
Sustainability	In your opinion, what are the main drivers of sustainability of the Project? What activities will your MZ continue after the formal end of the Project? What further actions are required in order to strengthen your MZ?

Evaluation Questions	Interview Guide
	Mayors/Local Government (LG) Project Coordinator
Relevance	What role do they see MZs playing and how does the new MZ vision support this role?
Effectiveness	Has the relationship between the municipality (LG) and the Project MZs changed? In your view, did the Project manage to promote inclusiveness of marginalised groups, gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment?
Efficiency	How many community priorities have been identified in the local government budget for 2019 (because of the Project)? Has there been communication with other local governments and the possibility to exchange experience and best practice?
Impact	What has changed in terms of the functioning of MZs that you can see? Is there a notable difference between the MZs in the municipalities included in the Project and those that are not?
Sustainability	What role can the local government play in strengthening MZs after the Project ends? Should the Project continue in the new phase?

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
PROJECT PARTNERS	
Relevance	Were the project objectives and outputs relevant to the needs of BiH?
	What role do they see MZs playing and how does the MZ vision support this role?
	What potential is there to contribute adequately to the development processes in the future?
Effectiveness	What were the examples of good practice within the Project?
	Were the Project interventions to achieve the intended results effective?
	Has the Project managed to promote inclusiveness of marginalised groups, gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment and to what extent?
Efficiency	Was there anything in the coordination and implementation of the Project that could have been done better or differently?
Impact	In your opinion, what is the main impact of the Project?
	To what extent are the key partners and stakeholders satisfied with the Project implementation, specifically in terms of the relevant partnerships?
Sustainability	To what extent are the Project results sustainable? What type of follow-up assistance is required to ensure project sustainability?
	What further actions are required in terms of putting the necessary legislation in place to address formal issues that concern MZs?
	What is the likelihood that a common policy framework endorsing the MZs vision will be developed and adopted by the end of the Project implementation? What actions are required to achieve this?
	What roles can be assumed by local government, the entity associations of municipalities and cities, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of BiH, the Ministry of Justice of the FBiH and the Ministry of Administration and Local Self-Governance of Republika Srpska to strengthen MZs? Do they have the willingness and capacity to assume such roles?

8.3. Annex 3. List of Interviewees/Focus Group Participants

MZ focus groups

Municipality of Nevesinje (total 9, including 2 women)

Aleksandra Kravić, Executive Director of the women's association 'Hercegovka'

Dragan Ivković, council member of mjesne zajednice in Drežanj

Siniša Kilibarda, assembly member of the association 'New Idea'

Aleksandar Duka, council member of mjesne zajednice in Luka

Miroslav Bulajić, council member of mjesne zajednice in Luka

Branimir Tamindžija, member of the association Multipl Skleroze Istočne Hercegovine (Multiple Sclerosis East Herzegovina)

Žarko Knežević, President of mjesne zajednice council in Bijenja

Jelica Čabrilo, member of mjesne zajednice council in Bijenja

Nenad Vulić, an activist at mjesne zajednice in Bijenja

Municipality of Tešanj (total 10, including 4 women)

Armin Husanović, Secretary of mjesne zajednice in Miljanovci-Lončari

Emir Kotorić, Secretary of the Football Club 'Borac' in Jelah

Armin Maglić, Director of the Jedinstvena Organizacija Mladih

Fadila Mujčić, member of the association 'Vodovod Bukovac' and mjesne zajednice in Raduša

Dževad Bekrić, member of the Football Club 'Pobjeda' and mjesne zajednice in Tešanjka

Jasmina Čehajić, Secretary of mjesne zajednice in Tešanjka

Haris Ćostanić, member of the association 'Mladih Tešnjka' and mjesne zajednice in Tešanjka

Suada Mujčić, member of the association 'Ruka' and mjesne zajednice in Kalošević

Irma Hadžimehić, President of the Assembly of Municipality

Jasmin Šišić, Technical Secretary of mjesne zajednice in Raduša and Administrator for the association 'Vodovod Bukovac' in Tešanj

Municipality of Kotor Varoš (total 10, including 6 women)

Mladen Tepić, President of the association 'Zmajevac'

Zoran Petrušić, member of mjesne zajednice council in Maslovare

Dragica Tepić, Family Centre 'Kuća Radosti' in Kotor Varoš

Ljubinka Jovičić, Family Centre 'Kuća Radosti' in Kotor Varoš

Bojan Đekanović, a beneficiary of mjesne zajednice in Kotor Varoš

Stanko Tepić, member of mjesne zajednice in Kotor Varoš

Snežana Mirković, President of mjesne zajednice council in Obodnik

Maja Narić, volunteer and service user at mjesne zajednice in Obodnik

Branka Jurić, volunteer at mjesne zajednice in Obodnik

Olivera Buhović, Chairman of the Assembly of the women's association in Kotor Varoš

Municipality of Stari Grad (total 6, including 2 women)

Jasna Podrug, Secretary of mjesne zajednice in Sedrenik

Remza Čokotahorivić (?), Secretary of mjesne zajednice in Mošćanica

Jasmin Parla, Member of mjesne zajednice council in Sedrenik

Ferid Šabeta, member of mjesne zajednice council in Mošćanica

Sanel Dragolovčanin, President of mjesne zajednice council in Širokača and Co-Chairman of the Council of the Municipality Stari Grad in Sarajevo

Husein Holjan, Secretary of mjesne zajednice in Širokača

Municipality of Olovo (total 7, including 1 woman)

Amir Muminović, member of mjesne zajednice council in Solun

Jasmina Hodžić, President of then woman's association 'Rahvanija' and mjesne zajednice in Dolovi

Nihada Zukić, member of the woman's association 'Rahvanija' in Olovo

Zijad Busnov, President of mjesne zajednice council in Olovske Luke

Amir Al-Masau, member of mjesne zajednice in Olovske Luke

Senahid Ibrahimović, President of association 'DVD' in Olovo

Dženan Smajić, President of mjesne zajednice council in Olovo

Municipality of Ljubinje (total 9, including 0 women)

Čedo Turanjanin, President of mjesne zajednice council in Vođeni

Srećko Turanjanin, member of mjesne zajednice in Vođeni

Srđan Milošević, member of the CSO 'Odbojkaški klub Ljubinje'

Miljan Ćorović, beneficiary representative to mjesne zajednice in Kruševica

Mitar Đurica, member of the CSO 'Razvojne inicijative mladih' (translation here) in Ljubinje

Đorđe P(?), member of mjesne zajednice in Krajpolje

Branko Kisa, President of mjesne zajednice council in Kruševica

Petar Novokme, member of mjesne zajednice in Dubočica

Branko Sorajić, member of mjesne zajednice in Dubočica

Municipality of Laktaši (total 8, including 2 women)

Danica Bartolić, member of the women's association 'Osmjeh žene'

Dijana Trubajić, Public Library 'Veselin Masleša'

Božidar Todić, member of mjesne zajednice council in Klašnice

Dragan Jošić, member of mjesne zajednice council in Klašnice and Manager of the Community Centre in Laktaši

Dragiša Stanivuković, President of mjesne zajednice council in Klašnice

Milan Polić, President of mjesne zajednice council in Laktaši

Radoslav Savanović, Director of primary school 'Desanka Maksimović' in Trn

Slavko Knežić, President of mjesne zajednice council in Trn

Ključ Municipality (total 8, including 1 woman)

Anes Jukić, President of mjesne zajednice council in Krasulje

Adnan Hamedović, Omladinski Razvojni Centar (translation here) 'Dekameron' in Ključ

Anel Hotić, member of the CSO 'Kosmos'

Mediha Hodžić, Secretary of mjesne zajednice in Ključ

Jasna Belladem, beneficiary of mjesne zajednice in Ključ

Čazim Zec, Director of the primary School 'Velagići' and mjesne zajednice in Krsasulje

Edin Husić, Secretary of mjesne zajednice in Krasulje

Raif Hodžić, Secretary of mjesne zajednice in Biljani

City of Banja Luka (total 8, including 4 women)

Bogdana Stanojević, member of the Basketball Club 'Partizan'
Milica Bosančić, SC 'Dajte nam šansu – zvjezdice' (Give us a chance – little stars)
Željka Ninković, SC 'Dajte nam šansu – zvjezdice' (Give us a chance – little stars)
Jela Vidović, member of mjesne zajednice in Saračica
Draško Kremović, member of mjesne zajednice in Saračica
Svjetlana Raduš, Director of the primary school 'Aleksa Šantić'
Dejan Tinonov, member of mjesne zajednice in Rosulja
Čedomir Raković, member of mjesne zajednice in Paprikovac

Municipality of Zenica (total 10, including 4 women)

Jadranka Čičak, President of mjesne zajednice council in Sejmen
Fahrudin Pojskic, Co-President of mjesne zajednice council in Sejmen
Alija Beganovic, President of mjesne zajednice council in Perin Han
Mirsad Tufekčić, member of mjesne zajednice council in Nemila
Haris Ahmetovic, member of mjesne zajednice council in Perin Han
Celik Ibrahim, President of mjesne zajednice council in Nemila
Zuhra Smaka, Director of the primary school 'Edhem Mulabdić'
Alen Kapikovic, member of mjesne zajednice in Nemila
Zdenka Kovačević, final beneficiary of the CSO project
Antonina Stambuk, member and beneficiary of mjesne zajednice in Sejmen

Municipality of Pale/Prača (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina) (total 8, including 3 women)

Almin Ćutuk, President of mjesne zajednice council in Hrenovica
Saneta Imsirovic, JU Dom zdravlja
Edib Sipović, Secretary of mjesne zajednice in Hrenovica
Munir Radača, member of mjesne zajednice council in Prača
Nedžad Rugovac, President of mjesne zajednice council in Prača
Jusuf Čolo, Secretary of mjesne zajednice in Prača
Aida Crnčalo, President of Women's Association for Rural Development in Prača
Adnela Žigo, final beneficiary of the CSO project

Municipality of Jablanica (total 8, including 3 women)

Haris Halilhodžić, member of the CSO 'Pod istim suncem'
Derviš Gabela, President of mjesne zajednice council in Ostrožac
Ćamila Imamović, member of the CSOs 'žena' and 'Most'
Džana Šehić, President of mjesne zajednice council in Donja Jablanica
Nađa Begović, final beneficiary
Samko Sarajlić, President of mjesne zajednice council in Jablanica 2
Kuric Ahmed, member of mjesne zajednice in Slatina
Elim, member of mjesne zajednice in Doljani

Bijeljina Municipality (total 11, including 6 women)

Dragana Mijatović, member of mjesne zajednice in Vuk Karadžić
Marko Krajišnik, member of mjesne zajednice in MZ Vuk Karadžić
Miloš Pavlović, representative and beneficiary of mjesne zajednice in Ledinci

Milka Đukanović, representative and beneficiary of mjesne zajednice in Ledinci
Slavica Obrenović, representative and beneficiary of mjesne zajednice in Suvo Polje
Slobodanka Mihajlović, representative and beneficiary of mjesne zajednice in Suvo Polje
Raco Marjanović, representative and beneficiary of mjesne zajednice in Suvo Polje
Tanja Milenković, representative of the CSO 'Impuls' in Bijeljina
Ranko Rankić, representative of the CSO 'Nada' in Bijeljina
Begzada Jovanović, representative of the CSO 'UREM' in Bijeljina
Milenko Jovanovic, representative of the CSO 'UREM' in Bijeljina

Brčko District (total 10, including 4 women)

Nebojša Jokić, representative of the Department for Mjesne Zajednice of Brčko
Aleksandra Novak, representative of the Department for Mjesne Zajednice of Brčko
Amir Karamujić, representative of the Department for Mjesne Zajednice of Brčko
Emira Zečić, member of mjesne zajednice in Maoča
Anela Kurtalić, member of mjesne zajednice in Maoča
Hajrudin Mujdžić, member of mjesne zajednice in Grčica
Muhiba Mujdžić, member of mjesne zajednice in Grčica
Ševket Mihmić, member of mjesne zajednice in Donji Brezik
Dražen Ružičić, member of mjesne zajednice in Donji Brezik
Arnautovic Emim, member of mjesne zajednice in Grčica

Gradačac Municipality (total 7, including 3 women)

Mirel Bijedić, member of mjesne zajednice in Vida I
Fadila Halilkanović, member of mjesne zajednice in Vida I
Muhamed Suljić, member of mjesne zajednice in Biberovo Polje
Mirza Mešić, member of mjesne zajednice in Biberovo Polje
Denis Begović, member of mjesne zajednice in Mionica I
Merisa Huseljić, member of mjesne zajednice in Mionica I
Amir Kadic, member of mjesne zajednice in Sibovac and representative of the CSO 'GIP'

Petrovo Municipality (total 10, including 5 women)

Seslak Sladjana, Red Cross Petrovo
Marica Nikic, Red Cross Petrovo
Milica Lukić, Youth Club 'Maestral' Petrovo
Stoja Nedeljko, member of mjesne zajednice in Porječina
Branco Marjanović, member of mjesne zajednice in Porječina
Milorad Mihajlović, member of mjesne zajednice in Petrovo
Jefa Misanovic, member of mjesne zajednice in Porječina
Svetisav Radić, member of mjesne zajednice in Krtova
Dragan Protic, member of mjesne zajednice in Petrovo
Dr Branko Lukic, JU DZ Petrovo

Mayors and Mjesne Zajednice Project Coordinators

City of Zenica

Fuad Kasumović, Mayor

Aida Isaković, Mjesne Zajednice Project Coordinator

Municipality of Olovo

Hedija Jamaković, Mjesne Zajednice Project Coordinator

Municipality of Pale (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Asim Zec, Mayor

Almin Ćutuk, Chairman of the Municipal Council of Pale

Hamdo Selimbegović, Mjesne Zajednice Project Coordinator

Municipality of Jablanica

Šaćir Buturović, Mjesne Zajednice Project Coordinator

Municipality of Nevesinje

Milenko Avdalović, Mayor

Sandra Zirojević,

Ljubica Benderać, Mjesne Zajednice Project Coordinator

Municipality of Ljubinje

Darko Krunić, Mayor

Persa Klimenta, Chairman of the Municipal Council of Ljubinje

Marko Gordić, Mjesne Zajednice Project Coordinator

Municipality of Bijeljina

Mičo Mičić, Mayor

Ankica Todorović, Mjesne Zajednice Project Coordinator

Dragan Vujić, Advisor to the Mayor

Brčko District

Siniša Milić, Mayor

Srđan Blažić, Mjesne Zajednice Project Coordinator

Municipality of Tešanj

Suad Huskić, Mayor

Hasan Plančić, Mjesne Zajednice Project Coordinator

Municipality of Kotor Varoš

Vidosava Tepić, Mjesne Zajednice Project Coordinator

Municipality of Gradačac

Edis Dervišagić, Mayor

Nermina Hadžimuhamedović, Mjesne Zajednice Project Coordinator

Municipality of Petrovo

Ozren Petković, Mayor

Vlado Simić, Mjesne Zajednice Project Coordinator

Municipality of Laktaši

Ranko Karapetrović, Mayor

Đorđo Mušić, Mjesne Zajednice Project Coordinator

Municipality of Ključ

Nedžad Zukanović, Mayor

Azra Kujundžić, Mjesne Zajednice Project Coordinator

Municipality of Stari Grad (Sarajevo)

Selma Velić, Mjesne Zajednice Project Coordinator

City of Banja Luka

Sanja Pavlović, Head of the Department of General Administration

Radovan Ilić, Mjesne Zajednice Project Coordinator

Members of the Project Board

Enver Išerić, Director of the Public Administration Institute of the Ministry of Justice of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Slavica Lukić, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Administration and Local Self-Governance of Republika Srpska

Tijana Borovčanin-Marić, Expert Associate at the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Aco Pantić, Secretary General of the Association of Municipalities and Cities of Republika Srpska

Sanja Krunić, Project Manager, Association of Municipalities and Cities of Republika Srpska

Selma Fišek, Legal Officer, Association of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Project Implementers

Bojana Omerović, 'Networks'

Dalibor Đerić, 'MDP Inicijative'

Igor Stojanović, 'Centri civilnih inicijativa'

Project Consultants

Elmedin Muratbegović, external consultant

Denisa Sarajlić, external consultant

Aleksandar Živanović, external consultant

UNDP Project Team

Majda Ganibegović, Project Manager

Jasmina Islambegović, Project Field Officer (Sarajevo region)

Diana Šilić, Project Field Officer (Banja Luka region)

Dejan Danilović, Project Field Officer (Doboj region)

Kerim Žujo, Project Field Officer (Mostar region)
Mersiha Ćurčić, Project Local Governance Officer
Mersad Beglerbegović, Project Officer
Nudžejma Salihagić, Project Associate
Nermina Klokić, Mjesne Zajednice Engineer

UNDP

Sukhrob Khoshmukhamedov, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative
Armin Sirčo, UNDP Sector Leader, Governance and Social Inclusion
Nera Monir Divan, UNDP Gender Advisor and ICT Specialist
Dženan Kapetanović, UNDP Sector Associate, Governance and Social Inclusion
Marina Dimova, UNDP Chief Technical Specialist, Governance
Amra Zorlak, UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation Analyst
Goran Štefatić, UNDP Project Manager, Municipal Environmental and Economic Governance (MEG)
Aida Laković-Hošo, UNDP Project Manager, Integrated Local Development (ILD)

Donor Representatives

Alma Zukorlić, Programme Officer, Governance and Municipal Services, Embassy of Switzerland in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Mario Vignjević, Programme Officer, Public Administration Reform, Local Governance Reform, Public Finance Management and Anticorruption, Embassy of Sweden in Bosnia and Herzegovina

8.4. Annex 4. Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Matrix							
Evaluation criteria	Key questions	Specific questions	sub-	data sources	Data collection methods/ tools	Indicators of success/ standard	Methods for data analysis
Relevance	Were the Project objectives and outputs relevant to the needs of BiH?	Which specific outputs and objectives were most relevant? What are the main weaknesses of the national/sub-national capacities that the Project addressed?		Qualitative data (E ⁷⁴ , P ⁷⁵)	- Individual interviews - Desk review of the Project documents - Desk review of the relevant programme/country documents		- Context analysis ⁷⁶
	How does the Project fit into the political, social and institutional country context?	Which aspects are relevant to the functioning of mjesne zajednice?		Qualitative data (E, P)	- Individual interviews - Desk review of project documents - Desk review of relevant programme/country documents	The Project was developed in consultation with government stakeholders.	- Context analysis - Thematic ⁷⁷ / framework ⁷⁸ analysis
	What is the potential to contribute adequately to	To which SDG or EU accession agenda		Qualitative data (E, P)	- Individual interviews - Desk review of project documents	Government stakeholders and IOs consulted during the	- Context analysis

⁷⁴ Data collected as part of Evaluation.

⁷⁵ Project Document, project annual and progress reports, monitoring results, other Project records.

⁷⁶ In order to identify the needs of Bosnia and Herzegovina and answer the questions of relevance, the evaluation used context analysis based on the World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) approach (2009). Available from <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/10537>. Accessed 8 November 2018.

⁷⁷ Attridge-Stirling J., 'Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research', *Qualitative Research*, vol. 1, no. 3, 2001, pp. 385–405. Available from <http://goo.gl/VpQeQJ>. Accessed 8 November 2018.

⁷⁸ Pope et al., 'Analysing qualitative data', *British Medical Journal*, no. 320, 2000, pp.114–116. Available from www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1117368/pdf/114.pdf (last Accessed 8 November 2018).

	the development processes in the future?	item will it contribute?		- Desk review of relevant programme/country documents	planning stages of the development agenda.	- Thematic analysis
Effectiveness	How effective were the Project interventions? Did they achieve the intended outcomes?	What were the most significant results per year?	Qualitative data (E, P) Quantitative data (P)	- Individual interviews - Focus groups - Observation - Desk review of project documents	Achievement of the Project outcomes measured against the targets.	- Thematic analysis
	Were the Project interventions used to achieve the intended results effective?	How were the intended results described in the Project strategy? Was effectiveness documented in the annual reports?	Quantitative data (P) Qualitative data (E)	Individual interviews - Desk review of project documents	- Governance Improved - Citizen participation increased - Voice and accountability of LG/ MZ strengthened - Transparency and the rule of law - Equity ⁸¹	- Thematic analysis - Quantitative data analysis: category ⁷⁹ and numerical ⁸⁰ variables - Thematic analysis
	What were the positive and negative and intended and unintended changes that the Project interventions brought about?	How are the changes manifested and documented?	Quantitative data (P) Qualitative data (E)	- Individual interviews - Focus groups Desk review of project documents	- Number of beneficiaries benefiting from improved service delivery, - Citizen participation at the MZ level and local government co-financing, etc.	- Quantitative data analysis: category and numerical variables - Thematic analysis

⁷⁹ 1) Sex, age, social groups (youth, persons with disabilities, returnees, internally displaced persons, and minorities); 2) value (e.g. good, bad, average) and quality of the training, intervention.

⁸⁰ Counts (The number of beneficiaries, mjesne zajednice, categories) and duration (of the interventions).

⁸¹ Local Governance Barometer.

<p>To what extent and through what mechanisms has the Project managed to promote inclusiveness of marginalised groups, gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment?</p>	<p>Specify pathways: - inclusion of marginalised groups - gender mainstreaming</p> <p>How did the Project and beneficiaries define women's empowerment?</p>	<p>Quantitative data (P) Qualitative data (E)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual interviews - Focus groups - Observation - Desk review of project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of marginalised citizens in the target MZs engaged in activities. - The number of marginalised citizens whose well-being has improved through access to services - MZs more receptive to the needs of marginalised groups and gender equity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quantitative data analysis: category and numerical - Thematic analysis
<p>What are the key lessons learned and best practice identified through the Project implementation that need to be built upon.</p>	<p>In the specific areas: planning, explaining the Project to the beneficiaries, project governance, partnerships, overcoming the ethnic divide, inclusiveness and working with CSOs.</p>	<p>Qualitative data (E)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual interviews - Focus groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local partnerships (MZs, LGs, CSO) strengthened to address citizens needs - Individual/MZ member capacities strengthened - The UNDP-beneficiaries partnership functioned well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thematic analysis
<p>Was the M&E function applied systematically and adequate for measuring performance and progress</p>	<p>Who was responsible for M&E reporting, analysis, application and feedback from the field?</p>	<p>Qualitative data (E, P)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual interviews - Focus groups - Observation 	<p>The degree to which monitoring input was used to adapt project activities and approaches.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thematic analysis

	toward the intended results?					
	How effective was the Project interaction with other local level programmes/projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina at triggering synergies to maximise the development results?	Which interactions were most useful at the LG, MZ and canton/state level?	Qualitative data (E, P)	- Individual interviews - Desk review of project documents	Concrete examples of synergy with projects such as ILDP, MEG, the Municipal Training System Project, and ReLOAD.	- Thematic analysis
Efficiency	Were Project resources (financial, human and technical) allocated strategically in order to achieve the intended results?	Who was responsible for resource allocation? How were the decisions made?	Qualitative data (E, P)	- Individual interviews - Focus groups	Resources were allocated in accordance with the situation analysis of local needs and in line with the overall Project purpose, goal and outcomes.	- Thematic analysis
	Are there any weaknesses in programme/project design, management, human resource skills, and resources?	How successful was communication, stakeholder involvement and planning (initial, continuous)?	Qualitative data (E, P)	- Individual interviews - Focus groups - Desk review of project documents	Feedback from the evaluation participants was consistently positive in regard to all possible weaknesses.	- Thematic analysis
Impact	What effect and impact did the Project have, in qualitative as well as	What has changed in the functioning of the MZs and in the	Qualitative data (E, P)	- Individual interviews - Focus groups	Increased access to services, improvement	- Thematic analysis

quantitative terms, on the overall improvement of the quality of life of citizens in the targeted areas?	lives of the beneficiaries?	Quantitative data (P)	- Desk review of project documents	in the provision of services, improved social inclusion and improved CSO and MZ capacities.	- Quantitative data analysis: category and numerical - Theory of Change
To what extent are the key stakeholders/final beneficiaries satisfied with the Project implementation, specifically in terms of the partnership support?	What partnership aspects worked the best and which were less successful?	Qualitative data (E, P)	- Individual interviews - Focus groups	The Project has addressed the key needs of MZ's in terms of the local projects implemented.	- Thematic analysis - Theory of Change
What are the specific expectations for the potential follow-up assistance?	Is the continuation of the Project expected? Who should provide follow-up assistance?	Qualitative data (E, P)	- Individual interviews - Focus groups	The next steps planned at the MZs and LG level. The expressed intention of the partners to continue their partnerships.	- Theory of Change - Thematic analysis
Which are the main benefits, in qualitative and quantitative terms, for each group of Project beneficiaries?	What benefits did individuals, categories/groups and the MZ report?	Quantitative data (P) Qualitative data (E, P)	- Individual interviews - Focus groups - Desk review of project documents	The number of citizens benefiting from improved access to/quality of infrastructure/services within the target MZs. The number of socially excluded/ benefiting in the target MZs.	- Thematic analysis - Quantitative data analysis: category and numerical - Theory of Change

Sustainability	To what extent are the Project results sustainable?	What are the key factors for sustainability?	Quantitative data (P) Qualitative data (E, P)	- Individual interviews - Focus groups - Desk review of project documents	MZ's have access to new financial resources from different sources. Improved service delivery built into the LG formal framework.	- Thematic analysis - Quantitative data analysis: category and numerical - Theory of Change
	How can the Project results be scaled- up and replicated sustainably?	Which of the main Project outputs, practices and approaches have the strongest potential for scaling-up and replication?	Quantitative data (P) Qualitative data (E, P)	- Individual interviews - Focus groups - Desk review of project documents	Level of satisfaction with services and infrastructure among citizens (disaggregated by sex and age) in the target MZs.	- Thematic analysis - Quantitative data analysis: category and numerical - Theory of Change
	To what extent has the Project approach/intervention strategy managed to create a sense of ownership among the key national stakeholders.	Which national/ government stakeholders expressed a sense of ownership?	Qualitative data (E, P)	- Individual interviews - Focus groups - Observation - Desk review of project documents	Pro (within their jurisdictions) provide the policy framework for implementation of the agreed vision of MZ.	- Thematic analysis - Quantitative data analysis: category and numerical - Theory of Change
	What are the directions for expanding the Project's contribution to social inclusion and gender equality in the future?		Qualitative data (E, P) Quantitative data (P)	- Individual interviews - Focus groups - Observation - Desk review of project documents	The number of women and socially excluded citizens benefitting from services in the target MZs and the level of the Social	- Framework analysis

		Inclusion Index in the target MZs.
Which of the priority interventions and mechanisms could ensure the long-term sustainability of the achievements of the Project?	Qualitative data (E, P)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual interviews - Focus groups - Desk review of project documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Framework analysis - Theory of Change

8.5. Annex 5. List of Reviewed Documents/UNDO and United Nations Evaluation Guides

- The Project Document *Strengthening the Role of Local Communities/Mjesne Zajednice in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015–2019*
- Annual progress reports for 2015, 2016 and 2017
- 2018 Six-month Progress Report for the Period 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2018-11-05
- Mid-Term Review Report *Strengthening the Role of Local Communities/Mjesne Zajednice in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015–2019*
- *New Vision of Local Communities (Mjesne Zajednice) in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 2018
- *Comparative Review of Community Governance Models and Practices in Croatia, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland and Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 2016
- Model for the Management of Community Hubs
- Plan for Enhancing the Roles of Mjesne Zajednice in the Decision-making process at the Local level and in the provision of Basic Public Services
- Success stories developed by the Project
- The Project database of projects under the Community Development Fund and Local Initiative Fund
- *Good Practices in the work of Mjesne Zajednice in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, September 2018
- Project monitoring questionnaires and results
- UNDP Country Programme Document for Bosnia and Herzegovina (2015–2019)
- UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina Country Office Gender Action Plan (2015–2019)
- Reform Agenda for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015–2018
- *A Short-Term Roadmap for UNDP Support to Bosnia and Herzegovina's Integration into the European Union*, January 2016

8.6. Annex 6. Extended Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation entailed multiple steps aimed at the collection and analysis of the information and data required for understanding the level of progress and achievements of the Project to date.

Desk review: The review was conducted in preparation for the Inception Report, including the Evaluation Matrix. A list of the documents reviewed can be found in Annex 5. The evaluators held two meetings with the UNDP Project staff as the initial briefing in order to clarify the tasks and expectations as well as to plan the field visits and agree on the preparation of the relevant evaluation documentation.

Fieldwork: The main purpose of the field visits was to collect data and visit locations where the Project is being implemented. It was conducted from 7– 20 November 2018.

The field visits encompassed the following:

1. Field visits were conducted in 16 local governments where the Project is being implemented. The aim was to collect data about different aspects of the Project experience, results, lessons learned, impact and sustainability. The team interviewed the mayors and the Local Government Project Coordinators and conducted focus groups meetings with relevant stakeholders, including mjesne zajednice and CSO representatives and end beneficiaries (of the priority projects implemented by mjesne zajednice).
2. Key informant interviews were conducted using the structured interview guide with UNDP partners to the Project, NGOs, consultants and ASM as well as local government representatives.
3. Meetings with the UNDP team included representatives from other UNDP projects focused on

local governance, such as the Integrated Local Development Project (ILDLP) and the Municipal Environmental and Economic Governance Project (MEG).

4. Interviews were conducted with interim Project contributors (e.g. the Mid-Term Evaluator, expert consultants and trainers).

8.6.1. The sampling strategy and the selection of the evaluation participants

The sampling strategy was based on the indicators developed through the desk review of the Project documentation. This applied in particular to the selection of the target municipalities and mjesne zajednice where the Project was being implemented.

In the first step, the evaluation team selected municipalities based on the following criteria:

1. geographical scope (local governments were selected in each of the four regions where the Project was being implemented);
2. start date for the Project activities (making sure that municipalities and mjesne zajednice from clusters I, II and III were to the greatest extent possible equally represented (although the majority of them were from the first two clusters));
3. feasibility of travel arrangements within the planned timeframe for the field visits;
4. the size of the municipalities and the need to achieve a rural-urban balance as well as the development status of the municipalities were also taken into account (in consultation with the UNDP team).

In total, 16 out of the 24 local governments participating in the Project were selected for the field visits: Banja Luka, Bijeljina, Brčko, Gradačac, Jablanica, Ključ, Kotor Varoš, Laktaši, Ljubinje, Nevesinje, Olovo, Pale Prača, Petrovo, Stari Grad Sarajevo, Tešanj and Zenica.

The evaluation team selected three out of the six participating mjesne zajednice in each local government to participate in the focus groups. This was done in line with the following criteria:⁸²

1. Mjesne zajednice with projects (all citizens) completed by June 2017 in clusters 1 and 2.
2. Mjesne zajednice with projects (focus on women, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups) completed by June 2017 in clusters 1 and 2.
3. Mjesne zajednice with projects (all citizens) completed after June 2017 in clusters 2 and 3.
4. Mjesne zajednice with projects (focus on women, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups) completed after June 2017 in clusters 2 and 3.
5. Mjesne zajednice with projects (with the most volunteers) completed after June 2017 in clusters 2 and 3.
6. Mjesne zajednice with projects (that received most media coverage) completed after June 2017.

The evaluators recommended that the focus group participants and interviewees be selected based on the requirements set forth under the TOR, with particular attention paid to including women and marginalised citizens⁸³ (e.g. youth, pensioners, the unemployed, vulnerable groups, national minorities and returnees). Upon review, it was clear that not all of the focus groups fulfilled all of the criteria, particularly when it came to national minorities and minority returnees (considered as socially

⁸² We selected mjesne zajednice based on the requirement to allow impact measurement. A calendar year has passed for those that completed their projects by June 2017 and therefore we should be able to assess the impact that the Project has had. The selection did not always strictly correspond to the clusters selection.

⁸³ In accordance with Norm 8 of the UNEG Norms and Standards of Evaluation, we followed the principle that 'no-one is left behind' in order to ensure respect for the principles and values of gender equality and human rights during the evaluation. Available from www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616.

excluded). This limited the amount of information collected directly from marginalised and vulnerable groups, including their testimonies on whether and to what extent they had benefited from the Project. Despite this, the focus group participants provided a wealth of information on the mechanisms used and the extent to which the Project managed to promote the inclusiveness of marginalised groups (i.e. youth, persons with disabilities, returnees, internally displaced persons and minority groups), gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment.

The confidentiality of focus groups respondents was observed throughout the process and no direct attribution was made to specific answers. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the United Nations Evaluation Group's *Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation*.⁸⁴ This included but was not limited to anonymity and confidentiality, responsibility,⁸⁵ integrity, independence, reporting incidents,⁸⁶ and the validation of information. Ethical considerations also included the following: respect for local customs, beliefs and practices; respect for a person's right to provide information in confidence and to ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source, informing interviewees in advance about the ground rules for the interview and obtaining their informed consent to participate, respecting their right to privacy and minimising the demands made on the participants in the evaluation in terms of time and assurance of the objectivity and validity of the information provided.

⁸⁴ United Nations Evaluation group, *Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation* (UNEG, 2008). Available from www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102.

⁸⁵ The report mentions any dispute or difference in opinion that may have arisen between the consultants or between the consultant and the UNDP in connection to the findings and/or recommendations.

⁸⁶ If problems arose, during the fieldwork or at any other stage of the evaluation, they were reported immediately to the UNDP Project Manager. If this was not done then the existence of such problems cannot be used to justify any failure to obtain the results indicated in the terms of reference.