

Standard Summary Project Fiche – IPA centralised programmes

Project number 6: Improvement of preschool education in Serbia (IMPRES project)

1. Basic information

- 1.1 CRIS Number: 2009/021-638**
- 1.2 Title: Improvement of preschool education in Serbia (IMPRES project)**
- 1.3 ELARG statistical code: 02.26**
- 1.4 Location: Republic of Serbia**

Implementing arrangements:

- 1.5 Contracting Authority: EC Delegation (ECD) to the Republic of Serbia**
- 1.6 Implementing Agency: EC Delegation to the Republic of Serbia**
- 1.7 Beneficiary**

The Senior Programming Officer is the State Secretary of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia.

Address: 22-26 Nemanjina St., 11000 Belgrade, Serbia.

A Project Team consisting of five people will coordinate project implementation.

Financing:

- 1.8 Overall cost: 5,000,000 EUR**
- 1.9 EU contribution: 3,750,000 EUR**
- 1.10 Final date for contracting: 2 years after the signature of the Financing Agreement (FA)**
- 1.11 Final date for execution of contracts: 4 years after the signature of the FA**
- 1.12 Final date for disbursements: 5 years after the signature of the FA**

2. Overall Objective and Project Purpose

2.1 Overall Objective:

To contribute to social inclusion and poverty reduction by improving preschool provision and broadening access for children, especially from disadvantaged groups.

2.2 Project purpose:

To strengthen the conditions of preschool education for children, especially those from vulnerable groups, through improvements in the quality of preschool programmes and expansion of the capacities of preschool institutions.

2.3 Link with AP/NPAA / EP/ SAA

The following are among the priorities relevant to this project which are included in the European Partnership with Serbia in the fields of Education and Research, as defined by the European Council Decision of 18 February, 2008:

1. Continue efforts to improve the education system, establish better links between vocational and higher education and the labour market and economic needs, strengthen administrative capacity and improve coordination among relevant bodies (L 80/54).
2. Strengthen mechanisms for quality assurance in the education sector (L 80/68).

The project is linked to the short term priority in the field of minority rights, cultural rights and protection of minorities to continue efforts to promote good inter-ethnic relations, including measures in the field of education (L 80/52).

The medium term priority in the field of human rights and protection of minorities to ensure the viable existence of minority communities and their non-discriminatory participation in society, including access to public services (L80/67), also is relevant to the proposed project.

In accordance with Article 102 of the **Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA)**, the broad aim is to raise the level of general education and vocational education and training in Serbia as well as youth policy and youth work, including non-formal education.

The project will help to meet the overall objective as stated above and therefore comply with the broad aims of the European Partnership in the Education sector. The project's expected impact is for the education system to be more inclusive and free of discrimination on the grounds of gender, colour, ethnic origin, disability or religion (as emphasized in Article 102, Education and Training, of the SAA).

2.4 Link with MIPD

Establishing a more inclusive preschool institutions network, in accordance with the needs of children, families and local communities, would contribute to achieving strategic priorities defined in the MIPD 2009-2011 for the Republic of Serbia. A key objective as defined in Socio-economic Criteria (section 2.3.1.2.) is to - *Support preschool and basic education, with a special focus on poor and excluded children. This should be specifically addressed by the government as a pre-condition of other expected results such as employment, social inclusion and poverty reduction, developing adult education and a lifelong learning strategy.*

One of the major cross cutting issues to be reflected as horizontal objectives in all activities programmed under IPA in Serbia is: **“Minority and vulnerable groups' concerns** (including the rights of the child¹, disabled persons and elderly people) **and social inclusion** will be reflected when relevant in the activities programmed under IPA, in particular when it concerns public services, legislative matters and socio-economic development, and also to foster social tolerance and conditions to reconciliation” (Annex 4).

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve access to quality preschool education, through better early learning opportunities - expansion of the preschool network and the introduction of new preschool programmes. This will increase the number of all children and especially children from vulnerable populations that attend preschool and elementary school, support their integration and participation in social life and enhance a society-wide culture of tolerance towards national minorities.

The project has a direct impact on increasing social inclusion. Project activities aim to improve early learning opportunities, remove the obstacles to raising the educational level and strengthen the competences of poor and marginalised populations which will later influence school attainment and completion, and in the long run, will improve their position in the labour market. The strategic framework for the proposed project is based on MIPD priorities, particularly those concerning systemic support for marginalised and vulnerable social groups. The project puts special emphasis on the integration and inclusion of socially excluded groups (children from deprived areas, rural remote areas, Roma children and children with disabilities).

2.5 Link with National Development Plan

N/A

¹Communication from the Commission: Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child [COM(2006)367 of 4.7.2006] and Serbian National Plan of Action for Children.

2.6 Link with national / sectoral investment plans

The purpose of this project is to improve access to quality preschool education for all children, especially for children from vulnerable groups, and to increase the offer of quality preschool programmes and services in accordance to the needs of children, families and the local community. The project's specific and overall objectives are directly linked to Serbian policy and also stated in the National Investment Plan (NIP) for the Republic of Serbia. Article 2 of the Decision on the strategic priorities of the NIP for 2008 focuses specifically on improved access to quality preschool education for all children. Moreover, the need for greater inclusion of children in preschool institutions, especially children from vulnerable groups, has been recognized in various multisectoral and sectoral strategies.

The National Programme for Integration with the European Union - NPI (Government of RS, 2008, section 3.26.1.1) gives an analysis of the situation in preschool education. The programme indicates, the lack of capacities and optimisation of existing capacities as a policy area that has to be addressed, particularly with regard to the need to establish mechanisms for identifying and including children from vulnerable groups into the system and using experience from specific projects implemented in cooperation with preschool institutions and local community partners (page 688). Short term priorities of the NPI include work which will support the aim of building human capacities and social capital by:

- further development of special measures to increase the number of children from vulnerable groups (Roma children, children from socio-economic high risk environments, children with developmental disabilities) by designing quality preparatory preschool programmes,
- further development of inclusive models in education and strengthening capacities for implementation of inclusive education (material-technical, financial, human resources, programmatic),
- development of new educational programmes and improvement of existing programmes in the aim of achieving quality results and higher education standards (page 695, section 3.26.1.4).

The Mid-term NPI priorities include work in following areas:

- expand and optimise the network of preschool institutions and functional optimisation of the elementary school network,
- increase the number of children with quality preschool education (page 696, section 3.26.1.5).

The **Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper** (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2003), recommendations from the Second Report on implementation of the PRSP (Government of RS, 2007), the **Millennium Development Goals** (Government of RS) and the **National Action Plan for Children** (Government of RS, 2004) indicate as a priority the doubling of preschool institutions' capacities and equal broadening of preschool institutions with the purpose of increasing the overall inclusion of children in preschool education.

The project directly contributes to the realisation of Millennium Development Goal 2, "Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling by 2015". In this way, the project contributes to fulfilling the following tasks from the **National Millennium Development Goals**, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia in 2006 (pages 18-19):

- By 2015, ensure that 70% of all children aged 3 to 7 years are attending preschool, with particular emphasis on children from vulnerable populations (children living in rural areas, Roma children, children with disabilities, etc.);
- Ensure that 100% boys and girls enrol in elementary education;

- Ensure that 98% boys and girls complete elementary education; and
- Reduce the dropout rate of children entering 5th grade to under 1%.

The need to expand inclusion of children in preschool institutions has been explicitly recognized in the **Action Plan for Roma Education Improvement** (2005) and the **Strategy for Economic Development** (2006).

3. Description of project

3.1 Background and justification:

Serbia faces problems in providing good quality education and is failing to equip young people with the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in the labour market. International research and analysis as well as national experience show that investing in quality preschool education has a critical impact on greater school enrolment and attainment, reduces drop out rates, supports learning opportunities and language learning of children from disadvantaged and minority groups (especially for Roma children), increases school success at all levels of education and contributes to social inclusion, employment and poverty reduction. UNICEF research in Serbia demonstrates that the greatest problem with weak preschool education coverage is that marginalised children are most affected including 14.4% of children from rural regions; 4% of Roma children from slums and 7% of children whose mothers did not complete primary school.²

For the European Commission preschool teaching is an important component of lifelong learning which comprises learning at all ages (from pre-primary/school to post-retirement) and in all contexts, i.e. including formal, non-formal or informal settings. Member States agreed to put in place by 2006 coherent and comprehensive national lifelong learning strategies. The Commission believes that educational disadvantage can be addressed by high quality pre-primary education and targeted support, which must be combined with properly-managed inclusion in mainstream education and training. The Commission recommends that Member States should develop policies that improve equitable access, reinforce quality of pre-school provision and provide preschool teacher support.³

Quality preschool education is particularly important for children from vulnerable groups who typically remain out of the system of educational support. Investing in preschool education is beneficial from the economic development perspective as well, since it promotes the lifelong learning process and creates better opportunities for future employment and labour market participation. This is verified by evaluations of preschool support programmes in member states. For example, in the UK evaluations have identified that:

- Determined and sustained attention to facilitating access to services is needed, including provision of transport, flexible opening hours and provision of child care.
- Interagency collaboration was found to be essential for good preschool service delivery.
- Further opportunities are needed to enhance interagency collaboration, as services need permeable rather than fixed boundaries.

² Serbia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2005 – Monitoring the Situation of Children and Women. Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Strategic Marketing and UNICEF.

³ An updated strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training, Brussels, 16.12.2008 COM(2008) 865 final COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

- Preschool children had better cognitive and social-behavioural outcomes than those who stayed at home.
- The beneficial effects of preschool persist through to primary school. Preschool can reduce the effects of disadvantage- for disadvantaged groups, high quality childcare boosts development and the relative influence of social class and poverty is reduced at entry to school as a result of preschool experience.⁴

Access to preschool education in Serbia, is generally hindered by the following problems: inadequate distribution of preschool institutions across the country, particularly for preschool aged children from poor and rural regions, children from marginalised and ethnic minority groups and children with developmental disabilities; outdated infrastructure; and lack of variety in the offer of preschool teaching programmes and services which would allow for differentiation according to the needs and backgrounds of children and their families.

Preschool education at present covers approximately 170.000 children, aged one to six and a half, or 35.4% percent of eligible children according to data from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia⁵ (one cohort is about 76,000 of children).

In order to improve early learning provision and to link preschool and elementary education, six months of the preschool programme became mandatory and free of charge for all Serbian children in September 2006 through the Preparatory Preschool Programme (PPP). This programme is implemented in the year preceding enrolment into primary school (i.e. for children aged 5½ to 6½ years), and lasts for a minimum of 6 months /4 hours per day. The programme has been organised by preschool institutions as well as elementary schools, in cases where the capacities of the preschool institutions were insufficient.

In the academic year 2007/2008, according to the Ministry of Education data, **PPP** covered **79,352** children, including **3,195** children from vulnerable groups which could account for about a 99% enrolment rate according to official statistical data. Introduction of mandatory and free PPP has resulted in a significantly higher coverage of children in this age group, although the data about children from vulnerable groups is not reliable.

The Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System regulates the financing of the education system, including preschool. Preschool education is financed through the budget of the local self-government (LSG), except the PPP, the preschool programme for children with special needs and the preschool programme for children undergoing hospital treatment, for which financial support is provided from the state budget.

While the state budget generally covers the salaries of employees working in public preschools, the budget of a LSG provides funds for the activities of preschool institutions, the professional development of employees, the construction and regular maintenance of facilities, the equipping of preschools (and schools) and other regular expenditures.

Since the LSG is responsible for the preschool institutions network within its geographic territory, the capacities, quality and number of children in preschool institutions depends on the respective LSG's resources and on its readiness to recognize the importance of preschool education and include this among the priorities in its annual budget. Local level planning and prioritisation are therefore essential to enhancing a community's ability to improve access to preschool education for all children, especially for those from vulnerable groups.

The Republic of Serbia has a network of 159 preschool institutions. Each preschool institution has a central building and a preschool network which comprises the buildings within the

⁴ **Early years program evaluations: The UK evidence base 2006** Effective Provision of Preschool Education program www.ioe.ac.uk/projects/eppe

⁵ According to the 2007 Living Standards Measurement Survey, 38.1% of the children (39% of boys and 37% of girls) aged 3-5 attend preschool. More than 96% attend state-run preschools.

territory of a given municipality. There is a total of about 2160 buildings and other spaces for work with children at the preschool level across Serbia.

Each LSG adopts its own Act on the Preschool Institutions Network in accordance with the criteria defined by the corresponding Act of the Government., as the LSG must track the demographics of children that are ready to attend preschool and organise its own network to meet anticipated needs. This LSG Act should determine the number and distribution of preschool institutions within the LSG's jurisdiction. Among the criteria included in the state-level Act are the following:

- Needs for the preparatory preschool programme and the number of children in that age group;
- Needs of children for the all-day preschool preparatory programme;
- Defined needs for half-day preschool attendance;
- Defined needs for other accredited preschool programmes and other ways of working with young children which are in accordance with the Law;
- Provision that at least 30% of preschool children be included in the entire preschool programme.

These criteria were defined before the PPP became compulsory for all children in the year before entering primary school. The high PPP enrolment rate now influences the total statistics on preschool aged children (so that it is difficult to show that attendance rates for younger children which are generally much lower than the required 30%), it is now necessary to update these criteria to reflect the current situation in the preschool education system.

Clearly, due to the scale of demand, the capacity of the country's preschool institutions network is insufficient and it does not fulfil the needs of children and families across the country. A large number of children are waiting to be included in the preschool education system (in 2008, 18.747 children were waitlisted for enrolment and 14.969 were enrolled above the recommended capacity). Discrepancies in preschool education capacity are evident among different regions throughout Serbia (in terms of facilities, overall quality, didactic materials, salaries, etc.). There is a clear link between the level of regional development and the relative competence of the respective preschool institutions' networks. Alternative models of preschool education are needed to boost access in various parts of the country, particularly in rural areas.

Provision of preschool education is particularly difficult and inadequate in rural areas where school premises, often in very poor conditions, are used for both primary education and preschool education. The cost of preschool education in rural areas is higher, since children are disseminated across a broader area, so preschool is often too expensive for rural municipalities. Adaptation and equipping of the available school capacities, sharing capacities among several municipalities (where appropriate) and introducing new models of preschool education will contribute to improving the accessibility and quality of preschool education.

To realise the strategic objectives of educational reform it is necessary to increase preschool capacities by 2015, with a balanced geographical distribution and assistance to local governments in poor municipalities to build institutions or to use and rehabilitate existing local capacities for this purpose.

The legislative framework related to preschool education comprises:

- *The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia*⁶
- *Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System*⁷

⁶ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, 98/06,

- *The Law on Education of Children with Developmental Disabilities*⁸
- *The Law Establishing Particular Competencies of the Autonomous Province*⁹

The draft *Law on Preschool Education* is under preparation. It is foreseen that the new law will include measures which will support greater inclusiveness in preschool education. However, the adoption of the new law is **not** a precondition for this project because the existing laws encompass all the provisions necessary for implementation of the project.

The preschool offer of the existing programmes and services is not diversified enough (by type and duration) to fulfill the needs of children and families. Most of the programmes are designed to accommodate employed parents, and they last all day (in some areas, because of insufficient capacities, priority is given to the children from families where both parents work). Over 60% of programmes are all-day programmes. For children of up to 3 years of age, only all-day programs are offered. During the year before primary school, through the PPP, half-day programmes are only offered as part of public preschool education. For certain families from marginalised populations, all-day preschool programmes are not practical as children are often expected to help out on the farm or around the house.

The PPP has also been organised by primary schools, in the situations where the capacities of the preschool institutions were insufficient and this has been the case for 134 primary schools in the Republic of Serbia. Introduction of the PPP has forced preschool institutions to provide space for its implementation and it has become a priority in comparison to the other preschool programmes for other age groups, even though there is a need and an interest among families for the other programme models (according to type and duration), and for children younger than 5½ years. Availability of certain types of the half-day programmes and services (baby service, evening groups, children's club) is lacking and exist only in developed areas, while alternative programmes for children from rural and less accessible areas do not exist. As such this project aims to have a direct impact on improving the quality and the diversification of preschool programmes.

The Activities of the project will focus on piloting:

1. Improvement of the quality and diversification of preschool programmes
2. Equity-improved access to preschool education for all children, especially for children from vulnerable groups (particularly reaching those children in rural areas, Roma children, disabled children)
3. Expansion of the preschool institutions' capacities and improvement of conditions in preschool education

This project will contribute to improving preschool institutions' capacities in targeted municipalities, selected in cooperation with the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM) according to relevant criteria. Mapping of existing preschool institutions, elementary schools and other local institutions' capacities which could be used (after adaptation, rehabilitation, reconstruction) for preschool education, will be undertaken with the purpose of identifying the needs for expansion of preschool networks, including the building of different types of facilities and provision of new alternative programmes, etc. It is expected that through the World Bank project, Delivery of Improved Local Services (DILS), an analysis of the preschool network will be initiated with mapping of the preschool education capacities in undeveloped regions, prior to the start of the IMPRES project's implementation. The two projects will coordinate their activities, for example in terms of geographic division of the territory, to avoid any overlap.

⁷ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia 62/03, 64/03 – correction, 58/04 and 62/04 - correction, 79/05 – other law and 101/05 – other law);

⁸ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, 43/84

⁹ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, 6/02

In the cases when the building of new preschool institutions is not cost beneficial (rural areas, low number of children in area), alternative models of preschool education should be developed. Activities of this project would contribute to gaining insight into the real capacities of institutions for inclusion of children, taking into consideration the number of children in the territory, the number of children which are above the existing preschools' capacities and the number of children on waiting lists, with a special focus on inclusion of children from vulnerable groups. Moreover, the project's activities will also encourage inter-municipal cooperation because the aim is to best utilise existing capacities. In other cases there will be a need to gather children from two or more municipalities into a common preschool institution. In these instances, the requested mini school buses will enable safe and reliable transportation of these children so that they can attend a quality preschool on a regular basis. As preschool education is envisaged as a significant step toward future employment, it is important for LSG authorities to dedicate efforts to investing in this first step.

With a view to longer-term impact, the project is justified as it will address the need to provide a systematic modality for gathering, storing and updating information to help decision makers optimise capacities for preschool education at the local and regional level. Over the longer term, this will provide for a process which aims to enable incentive-based, targeted financing centred on need, prioritisation and a clear and transparent mechanism for funding a broader and more inclusive scope of preschool education.

This project will support LSGs' abilities to better understand, plan and manage pre-school resources in their jurisdiction in order to comply with legislation. Support under this project to track child demographics will allow LSGs to better anticipate future demand and take greater ownership of pre-school education services rather than reacting to events as they happen. In this regard the Tool Kit that will be developed under this project will encourage LSGs to take greater ownership of pre-school policy and service delivery by allowing them to systematically organise and plan the development of their pre-school networks.

3.2 Assessment of project impact, catalytic effect, sustainability and cross border impact

The strengthening of local capacities to collect, organise and update data for prioritising and optimising preschool networks will contribute to the project's sustainability over the longer term. The pilot activities in target municipalities will further elaborate the possibilities of using alternative models for improving the quality of and access to preschool education.

With LSGs' improved capacities to systematically assess and organise their community's needs for preschool education, inter-municipal collaboration, particularly with regard to the common use of preschool spaces thanks to the provision of joint transportation, will further contribute to better financial planning and utilisation of resources.

Moreover, alternative models such as mobile teaching units will help to meet the preschool education needs of children living in remote areas. Increasing access to preschool facilities will support the vibrancy of peripheral rural communities in border areas. By piloting such programmes, a catalytic effect is envisaged once LSGs become more competent to optimally plan their preschool institution networks through the utilisation of the tool kit which will serve as a tool for better planning over the longer term.

3.3 Results and measurable indicators

1. Tool kit developed for local self-governments (LSGs) to systematically organise their preschool networks, to optimise preschool capacity and increase access for vulnerable groups.

Measurable indicators:

- Number of Organisational Guidelines developed for LSGs to optimise their respective preschool network capacities by the 6th month of project implementation.

- Number of short and medium term student number forecasts per School area
- Number of Stakeholder consultations and their views incorporated into the tool kit design after completion of the consultation process.
- Number of Training programme modules designed and delivered to LSG stakeholders

2. Improved access to preschool education for children, especially those from vulnerable groups.

Measurable indicators:

- Number of Teams (minimum 15) within targeted municipalities established by the end of the 3rd month of project implementation to enable systematic gathering of data which will be used to plan and optimise preschool education networks at the local community level.
- A proposal for optimisation of teaching spaces for preschools in targeted municipalities is completed, including an overview of the existing and unused preschool and primary school capacities as well as other spaces which may be developed or adapted (such as mobile teaching units and other alternative models), by the end of the 8th month of project implementation.(minimum 15)
- Number of new (prefabricated), reconstructed and equipped Teaching spaces , and alternative preschool models introduced, by the end of the 2nd year of project implementation. (at least 7 new and reconstructed spaces)
- Number of children in targeted municipalities attending preschool (to be increased by 10% overall among targeted municipalities by project completion.)

3. Quality of preschool programmes in targeted municipalities improved to better respond to the needs of children, families and the local communities, with particular attention to vulnerable groups.

Measurable indicators:

- Number of analytical reports on the needs of children, families and local communities for preschool programmes, with particular attention to the needs of vulnerable groups, completed in targeted municipalities by the end of the 6th month of project implementation.(minimum 15 municipalities)
- At least 95 staff members from preschools in each of the targeted municipalities trained for the development of different special programmes for children from vulnerable groups by the end of the 12th month of project implementation.
- Number of models of new preschool programmes responding to the identified needs of children from vulnerable groups, developed by the end of 24th month of project implementation.(minimum 15)
- Minimum 15 evaluations and monitoring reports of the implementation of various models of preschool programmes with respect to the needs of marginalised groups completed by the end of the 30th month of project implementation.
- At least 2 manuals for implementation of various new preschool programme models produced and published by the end of project implementation.

3.4 Activities:

1. Tool kit developed for local self-governments (LSGs) to use in systematically organising their preschool networks, to optimise preschool capacity and increase access for vulnerable groups.

1.1. Guidelines developed for LSGs to gather, store and regularly update information relevant for making decisions about how best to meet constituents' needs within their respective preschool network.

1.2. Participative consultations organised with relevant stakeholders to collect their inputs regarding the organisation and optimisation of preschool networks.

1.3. Stakeholders' inputs from the consultation process analysed and incorporated into the tool kit's guidelines, as appropriate.

1.4. Development of training programme modules for LSG teams on the systematic collection and analysis of relevant data to enable the optimal planning and organisation of preschool education at the local community level.

1.5. Training delivery on the systematic collection and analysis of relevant data to LSG teams in target municipalities.

2. Improved access to preschool education for children, especially those from vulnerable groups.

2.1. In cooperation with the SCTM, at least 15 target municipalities selected to participate directly in the project based upon priority criteria such as relevant child demographic data, community needs and motivation/commitment.

2.2. Analysis of the existing and unused capacities of preschool institutions, potential spaces within primary schools and other possible spaces that may be adapted in targeted local communities in order to optimise the space capacities there.

2.3. Procurement of prefabricated structures, vehicles equipped to be used as the mobile teaching units, vehicles to be used for transporting children to preschool locations in remote areas (mini school buses), toys and didactic equipment and other materials relevant for facilitating the inclusion of children with disabilities

2.4. Renovation, adaptation and development of new preschool programme spaces in targeted communities based upon the completed assessments and in accordance to works contract regulations.

3. Quality of preschool programmes offer in targeted municipalities improved to better respond to the needs of children, families and the local communities, with particular attention to vulnerable groups.

3.1. Analysis of existing preschool programmes' offer in the target communities with a focus on inclusion of children from vulnerable groups (such as children with special needs and Roma children) to specify the key factors which support or prevent children from attending preschool.

3.2. Development and implementation of the training programme for preschool staff in targeted communities on the various special programmes for children from vulnerable groups (mobile teaching units, half-day programmes, models that are designed specifically for various target groups such as disabled or minority children, etc.).

3.3. Monitoring of implementation of the various models of preschool programmes in targeted communities with respect to the needs of children from marginalised groups.

3.4. Preparation and publication of the Manual for implementation of various models of preschool programmes.

This project will be implemented through 1 service contract, 1 supply contract and 1 works contract.

3.5 Conditionality and sequencing

Due to the major socio-economic and community based implications of this project A Steering Committee will be set up with representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation, the Institute for the Improvement of Education, the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM), DACU and the EC Delegation, and will have regular meetings every six months, or as needed. The Steering Committee will be chaired by the Senior Programming Officer. Non-voting members from bodies such as the National Council of the Rights of the Child, Secretariat for Roma National Strategy other NGOs will also be invited to participate on the steering committee.

Participating LSGs are committed to making all resources available in order to support project success. This translates into a commitment by various departments to address emerging problems and to develop solutions for preschool provision.

In terms of sequencing the service contract for this project will be signed before any supplies or works contract. Re-habilitation and equipping preschool institutions will only begin after the analysis of preschool institutions, primary schools capacities, the needs of children, families and local communities.

Because of historical problems with construction permits at the local levels, for LSGs to receive prefabricated structures and/or to be eligible for renovation of existing structures, the targeted LSGs must prepare the necessary infrastructure required at designated sites to enable the installation of prefabricated structures and/or the renovation of existing structures. The LSGs must have all relevant building permits and associated documents in order prior to works.

The LSGs are responsible for the maintenance, up-keep, running costs, insurance and storage in good order of rehabilitated buildings, pre-fab buildings and teaching support supplies (Mobile Teaching Units/ Mini buses). Participating LSGs are required to make the necessary budgets available for these purposes.

3.6 Linked activities

The project “Expanding Access to Preschool Education of Roma Children,” carried out in cooperation with the National Council of the Roma National Minority with funding from the Roma Education Fund (REF). In this project the following specific goals were set:

- Increase availability of quality preschool education to Roma children,
- Increase inclusion of Roma children in quality elementary education,
- Improvement of their achievement in schools and lowering of their drop-out rate, instigation of active participation by parents of the Roma children in the educational process,
- Establish better communication between Roma local communities and local institutions,
- Increased motivation, sensitivity and professional competence of educational staff for work with the Roma children, and
- Overcome stereotypes and prejudices and develop an environment of tolerance towards differences.

The project was carried out in the period between December 2005 and January 2007, and has encompassed 24 educational institutions from underdeveloped parts of the Republic of Serbia, with total coverage of 600 children from Roma families.

With the aim of establishing working mechanisms for identifying children from vulnerable groups (particularly Roma children) and their enrolment in the compulsory preschool educational programme (PPP), the Ministry has made efforts during autumn 2008 to establish better links among preschool institutions, elementary schools, representatives of relevant institutions and associations at the local level (such as municipal social activity services, educational inspectorates, social work centers, health centers, Roma associations, NGOs engaged in the promotion of Roma education). Such links are important to enhancing information flow to parents of Roma children on the enrolment procedures for preschool educational; recording Roma children of preschool age; choice of the place for the enrolment of Roma children from where they will be assigned to various preschool institutions and elementary schools. The Ministry has created the list of places (112 preschool institutions and 35 elementary schools) in areas with the highest concentration of Roma population, and requested from them that a priority goal in their annual programmes should be the recording and enrolment of Roma children in the PPP.

In 2009/10, The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia will begin the implementation of the project “Education for All – Accessible and Quality Education for Children from Marginalized Groups”, through IPA 2008, which has the objective of increasing the number of children from marginalized groups and children with special needs in the primary education system.

The World Bank project, “Delivery of Integrated Local Services (DILS)”, is designed to promote the delivery of local services in social protection, health, education and fiscal management in a decentralized environment. The project will include the following activities in relation to preschool education:

- analysis of the current situation and needs regarding the overall inclusion of children in preschool education, capacity building at the local level and support to vulnerable groups is needed to achieve improved access to preschool education
- quality of services at the local level should be enhanced through defining of regulations and standards for service delivery and mechanisms for quality improvement monitoring.

In the component regarding improvement of service delivery efficiency, the following activities are also envisaged: analysis of existing preschool institutions network, development of criteria for preschool institutions network rationalization, development of local plans for network rationalization (introduction of preschool education to the integrated education information system).

Results achieved through DILS and the other projects will be incorporated into this project. It is expected that analysis of the preschool network will to some extent be done via mapping of the undeveloped regions through DILS ,supported by adoption of a new Government proposal for preschool network criteria.

3.7 Lessons learned

The outputs to date of education reform , and education delivery at the local level from projects such as the Evaluation of the Roma Education Fund project, “Expanding Access to Preschool Education of Roma Children”, has demonstrated the following key lessons:

- Institutional collaboration is crucial due to the multi-faceted nature of education provision, this means that central government and local authorities need to work closely and include non state actors such as the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities and NGOs due to the major social and community implications of education reform and provision.

- Access is key, even in Urban areas with relatively developed public transport systems, pre-school provision has to be aware of the time limitations on parents, this requires more innovative thinking in terms of choice of teaching locations, timing of classes and training of teachers.
- For Children in marginalized groups out-reach programmes have to be developed which are specifically tailored to win the confidence of the families and their commitment to ensure that their children can attend class.
- Education reform in Serbia is resource intensive due to the historical lack on investment as such collaboration with the other actors such as the World Bank's "Delivery of Integrated Local Services (DILS) is crucial in order that available technical support and investment is maximized.

4. Indicative Budget (amounts in EUR)

			TOTAL EXP.RE	SOURCES OF FUNDING								
				IPA COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION		NATIONAL CONTRIBUTION					PRIVATE CONTRIBUTION	
ACTIVITIES	IB (1)	INV (1)	EUR (a)=(b)+(c)+(d)	EUR (b)	% (2)	Total EUR (c)=(x)+(y)+(z)	% (2)	Central EUR (x)	Regional/ Local EUR (y)	IFIs EUR (z)	EUR (d)	% (2)
Activity 1												
contract 1.1 Service contract	x		2,000,000	2,000,000	100							-
Activity 2												
contract 2.1 Supplies contract		x	1,750,000	1,750,000	100							-
Activity 3												
contract 3.1 Works contract		x	1,250,000			1,250,000	100					
TOTAL IB			2,000,000	2,000,000	100							
TOTAL INV			3,000,000	1,750,000	58	1,250,000	42					
TOTAL PROJECT			5,000,000	3,750,000	75	1,250,000	25					

Amounts net of VAT(1)

In the Activity row use "X" to identify whether IB or INV(2)

Expressed in % of the **Total** Expenditure (column (a))

5. Indicative Implementation Schedule (periods broken down per quarter)

Contracts	Start of Tendering	Signature of contract	Project Completion
Contract 1.1 Service	N+1Q	N+4Q	N+14Q
Contract 2.1 Supplies	N+6Q	N+8Q	N+10Q
Contract 3.1 Works	N+7Q	N+9Q	N+13Q

6. Cross Cutting Issues

Cross-cutting issues will be addressed in the project so as to comply with the best EU standards and practices in the area of inclusive education. The beneficiary will make sure its objectives, policies and interventions have a positive impact on, and are in line with, the main principles of gender equality, social inclusion of marginalised groups and environmental sustainability.

6.1 Equal Opportunity

The project directly contributes to improving the access to preschool education for all children in Serbia. As it has been shown that enrolment rates are lower among girls in rural settings as well as among marginalised groups, the project will strive to offer girls from these target populations an equal chance at attaining preschool education.

This, in the long run, will enable young women from marginalised groups to continue their education and to have enhanced employment opportunities.

The project will contribute to the greater social inclusion and poverty reduction of socially excluded by ensuring their participation in preschool education and later, to the education system in Serbia.

6.2 Environment

The project has no negative effect on the environment. The project will also support the implementation of environmental-friendly practices such as using recycled paper.

6.3 Minorities

The project aims at improving inclusive education practices in Serbia, with particular emphasis on minority groups such as the Roma. The project results are expected to improve access to early education for Roma children, promote their non-segregated inclusion in the education system and encourage their continued schooling while decreasing their dropout rates. Overall, the project aims to help develop an environment of tolerance towards differences.

ANNEX I: LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX FOR Project Fiche		Programme name and number:	
IMPROVEMENT OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN SERBIA (IMPRES PROJECT)		Contracting period expires: 2 years after the signature of the Financing Agreement	Disbursement period expires: 5 years after the signature of the Financing Agreement
		Total budget: 5,000,000€	IPA budget: 3,750,000 €
Overall objective	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	
To contribute to social inclusion and poverty reduction by improving preschool provision and broadening access for children, especially for those from disadvantaged groups.	-Number of children in preschool institutions, especially from disadvantage groups increased by at least 10% among this target group by project completion.	Official data of the Republic Institute of Statistics Official data of municipalities Data of the preschool institutions Reports on monitoring of the MoE advisers and pedagogical advisers of the MoE Regional School Authorities Evaluations from education experts	

Project purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
<p>To strengthen the conditions of preschool education for children, especially those from vulnerable groups, through improvements in the quality of preschool programmes' and expansion of the capacities of preschool institutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of children from vulnerable groups attending preschool institutions increased by at least 10% by project completion (to comprise 15% of the total number of children from targeted preschool institutions). - Number of new structures (prefabricated buildings) is increased by at least 5 by project completion. - Number of renovated places for preschool education is increased by at least 10 by project completion. - Alternative models of preschool program operational by project completion: 5 mobile preschool units in targeted communities and 5 vehicles provided that transport children from distant locations to preschools. - Number of places where preschool programmes for children from vulnerable groups are implemented increased by at least 20 by project completion. 	<p>Official data of the Republic Institute of Statistics</p> <p>Official data of municipalities</p> <p>Data of the preschool institutions</p> <p>Project reports, monitoring reports, Evaluation Reports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequate cooperation with the selected local self-governments, families and local communities - Adequate cooperation with other institutions, especially educational institutions -Active and ongoing collaboration with DILS and other relevant donor-funded initiatives is maintained to ensure complementarities and prevent overlap or duplication of efforts.

Results	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
<p>1. Tool kit developed for local self-governments (LSGs) to systematically organise their preschool networks, to optimise preschool capacity and increase access for vulnerable groups.</p> <p>2. Improved access to preschool education for children, especially those from vulnerable groups.</p> <p>3. Quality of preschool programmes offer in targeted municipalities improved to better respond to the needs of children, families and the local communities, with particular attention to vulnerable groups.</p>	<p>1.1. Number of organizational Guidelines developed for LSGs to optimise their respective preschool network capacities by the 6th month of project implementation.</p> <p>1.2. Number of short and medium term student number forecasts per school area</p> <p>1.3. Number of stakeholder consultations and their views incorporated into the tool kit design after completion of the consultation process.</p> <p>1.4. Number of training programme modules designed and delivered to LSG stakeholders.</p> <p>2.1 Number of teams (minimum 15) within targeted municipalities established by the end of the 3rd month of project implementation to enable systematic gathering of data which will be used to plan and optimise preschool education networks at the local community level.</p> <p>2.2 A proposal for optimisation of teaching spaces for preschools in targeted municipalities is completed, including an overview of the existing and unused preschool and primary school capacities as well as other spaces which may be developed or adapted (such as mobile teaching units and other alternative models), by the end of the 8th month of project implementation (minimum 15)</p> <p>2.3 Number of new (prefabricated), reconstructed and equipped teaching spaces and alternative preschool models introduced, by the end of the 2nd year of project implementation (at least 7 new and reconstructed spaces)</p> <p>2.4 Number of children in targeted municipalities attending preschool (to e increased by 10% overall among targeted municipalities by project completion).</p> <p>3.1. Number of analytical reports on the needs of children, families and local communities for preschool programmes, with particular attention to the needs of vulnerable groups, completed in targeted municipalities by the end of the 6th month of project implementation (minimum 15 municipalities)</p> <p>3.2. At least 95 staff members from preschools in each of the targeted municipalities trained for the development of different special programmes for children from vulnerable groups by the end of the 12th month of project implementation.</p> <p>3.3 Number of models of new preschool programmes responding to the identified needs of children from vulnerable groups, developed by the end of 24th month of project implementation (minimum 15)</p> <p>3.4. Minimum 15 evaluations and monitoring reports of the implementation of various models of preschool programmes, with respect to the needs of marginalised groups, completed by the end of the 30th month of project implementation.</p> <p>3.5. At least 2 manuals for implementation of various new preschool programme models (best practice examples) produced and published by the end of project implementation.</p>	<p>Official data of the Republic Institute of Statistics</p> <p>Official data of municipalities</p> <p>Data of the preschool institutions, annually</p> <p>Reports of the MoE advisers and pedagogical advisers of the MoE Regional School Authorities, annually</p> <p>Project reports (Inception, Quarterly, Final), Monitoring and Evaluation reports</p> <p>Manual for implementation of the new preschool programme models</p> <p>Tool kit for organising and optimizing preschool networks</p>	<p>- Various alternative preschool education models upheld by the existing legal framework as well as by the new draft law on Preschool Education.</p> <p>-A minimum of 15 LSGs selected as targets at project start according to a transparent process which uses priority criteria and relevant demographic data.</p> <p>-Target LSGs prepare the necessary infrastructure required at designated sites to enable the installation of prefabricated structures and/or the renovation of existing structures.</p>

Activities	Means & Costs	Assumptions
<p>1. Tool kit developed for local self-governments (LSGs) to use in systematically organising their preschool networks, bearing in mind the need to optimise preschool capacity and increase access for vulnerable groups.</p> <p>1.1. Guidelines developed for LSGs to gather, store and regularly update information relevant for making decisions about how best to meet constituents' needs within their respective preschool network. 1.2. Participative consultations organised with relevant stakeholders to collect their inputs regarding the organisation and optimisation of preschool networks.</p> <p>1.3. Stakeholders' inputs from the consultation process analysed and incorporated into the tool kit's guidelines, as appropriate.</p> <p>1.4. Development of training programme modules for LSG teams on the systematic collection and analysis of relevant data to enable the optimal planning and organisation of preschool education at the local community level.</p> <p>1.5. Training delivery on the systematic collection and analysis of relevant data to LSG teams in target municipalities.</p> <p>2. Improved access to preschool education for children, especially those from vulnerable groups.</p> <p>2.1. In cooperation with the SCTM, at least 15 target municipalities selected to participate directly in the project based upon priority criteria such as relevant child demographic data, community needs and motivation/commitment to participation in the project.</p> <p>2.2. Analysis of the existing and unused capacities of preschool institutions, potential spaces within primary schools and other possible spaces that may be adapted in targeted local communities in order to optimise the space capacities there.</p> <p>2.3. Procurement of prefabricated structures, vehicles equipped to be used as the mobile teaching units, vehicles to be used for transporting children to preschool locations in remote areas (mini school buses), toys and didactic equipment and other materials relevant for facilitating the inclusion of children with disabilities</p> <p>2.4. Renovation, adaptation and development of new preschool programme spaces in targeted communities based upon the completed assessments and in accordance to works contract regulations.</p> <p>3. Quality of preschool programmes offer in targeted municipalities improved to better respond to the needs of children, families and the local communities, with particular attention to vulnerable groups.</p> <p>3.1. Analysis of existing preschool programmes' offer in the target communities with a focus on inclusion of children from vulnerable groups (such as children with special needs and Roma children) to specify the key factors which support or prevent children from attending preschool.</p> <p>3.2. Development and implementation of training modules on various special preschool programmes, with a focus on children from vulnerable groups (mobile teaching units, half-day programmes, models that are designed specifically for various target groups such as disabled or minority children, etc.).</p> <p>3.3. Monitoring of implementation of the various models of special preschool programmes in targeted communities with respect to the needs of children from marginalised groups.</p> <p>3.4. Preparation and publication of the Manual for implementation of various models of special preschool programmes.</p>	<p>Means: Service contract (Technical Assistance including analyses, trainings, etc.)</p> <p>Supplies contract (procurement of prefabricated structures, vehicles equipped to be used as the mobile teaching units, toys and didactic equipment, furniture, as well as relevant supplies needed for facilitating inclusion of children with disabilities)</p> <p>Works contract (renovation, adaptation of spaces to be used to increase preschool programme capacity, preparation of grounds for installation of prefabricated structures)</p> <p>Costs: Service Contract - Technical Assistance - 2.000.000 €</p> <p>Supplies Contract – 1.750.000 €</p> <p>Works Contract – 1.250.000 €- National Co-financing</p>	<p>-Full and active cooperation on the part of the targeted local self-governments and local communities</p> <p>- Cooperation with other institutions, especially educational institutions</p>

Pre-condition:

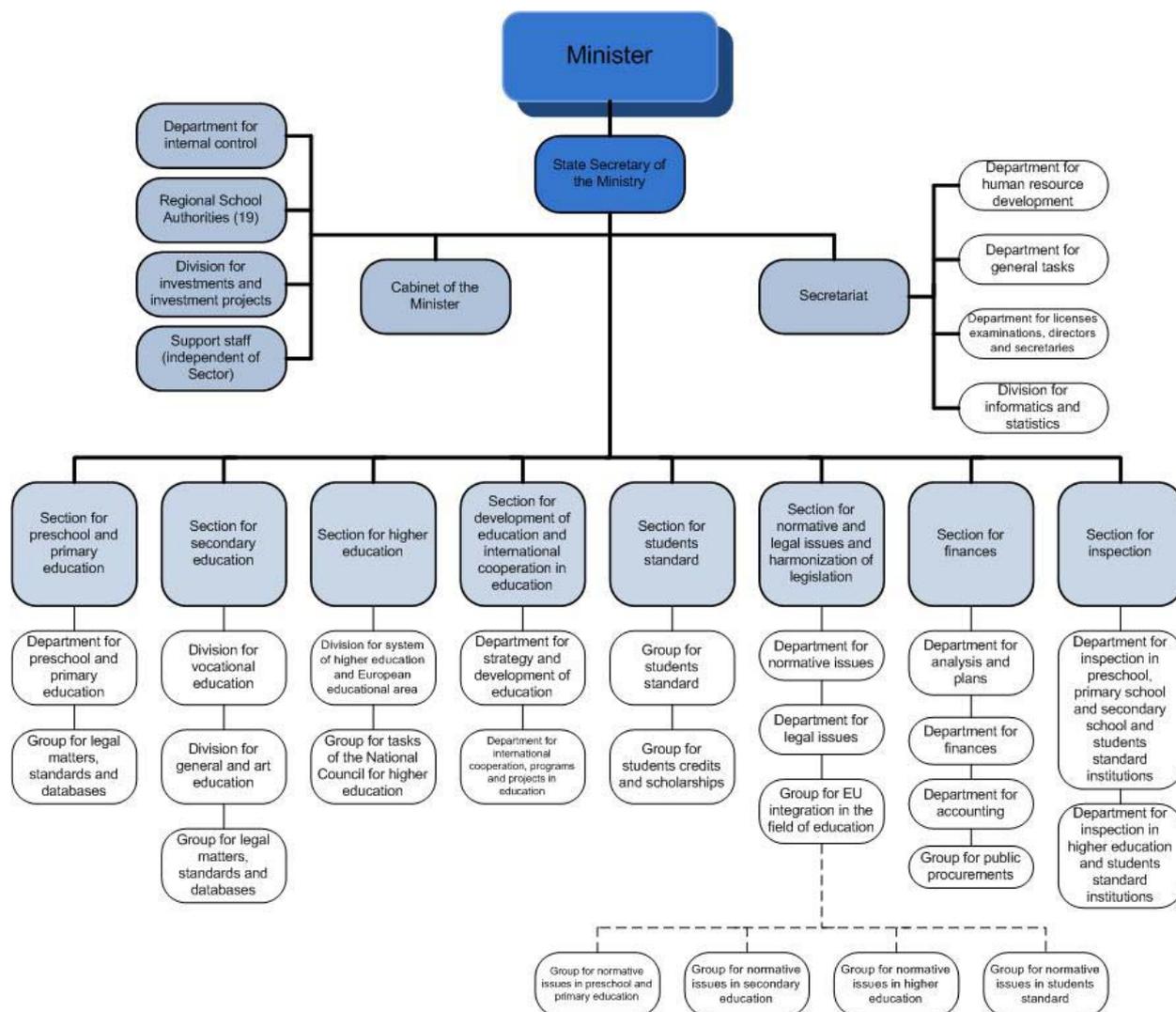
Adequate cooperation of competent individuals, organizations and institutions (Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation, Institute for the Improvement of Education, National Council of the Right of the Child, Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, Secretariat for the Roma National Strategy, relevant and expert NGOs etc.)

ANNEX II: amounts (in million €) contracted and disbursed by quarter for the project

Contracted	N+4Q	N+5Q	N+6Q	N+7Q	N+8Q	N+9Q	N+10Q	N+11Q	N+12Q	N+13Q	N+14Q	N+15Q	TOTAL
Contract 1.1	2.00												2.00
Contract 2.1					1.75								1.75
Cumulated	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75
Disbursed													TOTAL
Contract 1.1	0.40		0.28		0.28		0.28		0.28		0.28	0.20	2.00
Contract 2.1					1.05			0.70					1.75
Cumulated	0.40	0.40	0.68	0.68	2.01	2.01	2.29	2.99	3.27	3.27	3.55	3.75	3.75

ANNEX III: Description of Institutional Framework

Ministry of Education



ANNEX IV - Reference list of laws, regulations and strategic documents:

1. Law on basis of the system of education (2003)
2. Law on the Prevention of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities
3. The Decision 2008/213/EC on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Serbia including Kosovo as defined by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999 and repealing Decision 2006/56/EC (2008)
4. National Strategy of Republic of Serbia for Serbia and Montenegro Accession to the EU (2005)
5. Stabilisation and association agreement (2007)
6. National Millennium Development Goals (2005, 2006)
7. Poverty Reduction Strategy for Serbia (2003) and Second Progress Report on PRS Implementation (2007)
8. National Plan of Action for Children (2004)
9. Common Action Plan for the Advancement of Roma Education in Serbia – Decade of Roma Integration (2005)
10. Strategy for the Advancement of the Position of Persons with Disabilities (2006)
11. Strategy for development of social welfare
12. National Strategy of Economic Development (2006)
13. National Strategy of Serbia's Accession to EU (2005)
14. National plan of integration to the EU (2008)
15. Strategy for birth promotion
16. National strategy for sustainable development
17. Strategy of the Ministry of Education (and Sports) for 2005-2010
18. Instrument for pre-accession, Multi-annual indicative planning document for the Republic of Serbia for 2007-2009

ANNEX V Details per EU funded contract where applicable:

Service Contract

The team of experts contracted to provide Technical Assistance will be responsible for completing the following tasks, grouped according to the results specified in the project fiche:

Result 1

Development of a Tool Kit for LSGs to use in systematically organising their preschool networks

Formulate Guidelines for the gathering, storage and regular updating of relevant information at the local government level so that the targeted LSGs will be able to make decisions about how best to organise and optimise their respective preschool networks.

Organise consultations with relevant stakeholders to collect their inputs on the key elements to be included in the Guidelines.

Incorporate relevant inputs from the consultation process into the final Tool Kit Guidelines.

Design a set of training programme modules to build LSG teams' capacities to collect and analyse relevant data which will enable them to optimally plan and organise preschool education at the local community level.

Deliver trainings to LSG teams in target municipalities on the systematic collection and analysis of relevant data.

Result 2

Improved access to preschool education for children, especially those from vulnerable groups

In close cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the SCTM, and based upon priority criteria such as relevant demographic data, community needs and motivation/commitment, select at least 15 target municipalities to participate directly in the project.

In close cooperation with the target municipalities, analyse their existing and unused capacities of preschool institutions, potential spaces within primary schools and other possible spaces that may be adapted to optimise the space capacities within these municipalities.

Assist the Ministry of Education and the target municipalities to develop a plan for optimisation of their preschool capacities, taking into account the need to prioritise inclusion of children from vulnerable groups and utilising all the potential means available (mobile teaching units, sharing capacities between municipalities, installation of prefabricated structures, utilisation of primary school spaces, etc.).

Result 3

Improve quality of preschool programmes to better respond to the needs of children, families and the local communities, with particular attention to vulnerable groups

Conduct an analysis of existing preschool programmes' offer in the target communities to specify the key factors which support or prevent children from attending preschool. This should explicitly emphasize inclusion of children from vulnerable groups, such as children with special needs and Roma children.

Develop a training programme for preschool staff in targeted communities on the best practice utilisation of various special programmes for children from vulnerable groups, including mobile teaching units, half-day programmes and other models designed specifically for the target groups.

Delivery of the training programme to preschool staff in the target communities.

Monitor the implementation of the various models of new preschool programmes.

Preparation and publication of the Manual for implementation of the various new preschool programme models.

Supplies Contract

A range of equipment is foreseen under the Supplies Contract. For the larger-scale items to be procured, costs have been estimated at present market value, based upon availability within the Republic of Serbia, as follows:

Prefabricated structures

Estimated costs of materials is 350€/sq. meter, so the basic cost for an average structure of 100 sq. meters would be approximately 35,000 €

Mobile teaching units

This is a small bus adapted to accommodate teaching of preschool-aged children. Five mobile teaching units are foreseen within the Service Contract. These buses would typically be based in a rural community and would be available for use as teaching units for children from a number of remote communities, as scheduled throughout a given school week. Although such vehicles are presently not produced in Serbia, more than 20 years ago a number of these were used as part of the regular, state-funded educational system. The estimated cost for one of these adapted mobiles teaching units today is approximately 120,000€- 150,000€

Mini buses

Five mini buses, or vans with the necessary safety features for transporting small children, are also foreseen within the Service Contract. These will enable communities to share resources by enabling children from neighbouring communities (and municipalities) to attend common preschool institutions.

Teaching materials

Various didactic materials needed for preschool teaching will be procured to support the development of the new models of teaching as well as the increased capacity for preschool programmes, especially those from vulnerable groups. A full list of such equipment will be specified once the analyses of the target LSGs' capacities have been made.