



Czech Republic

ESF project "Improvement of administrative capacities of municipalities on the basis of municipal collaboration" (Centres of Intercommunal Services - the CSS project)

Key facts

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

'Investments into institutional capacity and efficiency of public administration and public services'

TARGET GROUPS



Municipalities and their mayors and employees, voluntary associations of municipalities and their employees, citizens

BENEFICIARY ORGANISATION

Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic (SMOČR)

PROJECT DURATION

01/02/2016 – 29/02/2020

COORDINATOR

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PARTNERS

83 voluntary associations of municipalities where Centres of Intercommunal Services ('CSSs') were established.

BUDGET

EUR 10,232,942.00

ESF contribution

EUR 2,421,723.00

Other contribution



PROJECT/ORGANISATION WEBSITE



<https://www.smocr.cz/cs/projekty/centra-spolecnych-sluzeb>
<http://smocr.cz>

Activities implemented

PROJECT IN NUMBERS



Centres of Intercommunal Services



Municipalities covered (out of 6,258)



Million CZK saved to municipalities in 2017

MAIN PROJECT TASKS



Improvement of the quality and efficiency of public administration of municipalities and their public services.



Ensuring more equal access of citizens to public services.



Better informing citizens about municipalities' public services.



Transferring knowledge among employees of voluntary associations of municipalities partnering in the project.

Project journey: from conception to delivery

INITIAL STAGE

CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

The CSS project arose as a **follow-up to the SMOČR's previous Intermunicipal Cooperation Project ('MOS')**, which was implemented by the SMOČR between May 2013 and the end of November 2015. The main aim of the former project was to establish the basis for long-term and systematic support to intermunicipal collaboration in Czechia within the territories of the special group of municipalities with extended powers (the so-called ORPs). Such cooperation attempts to overcome problems related to the **high number of small municipalities** (more than 6,250 municipalities exist, with the vast majority of them having fewer than 1,000 inhabitants).

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

The project focuses on the **establishment of the Centres of Intercommunal Services** that are supposed to contribute to capabilities and availability of services provided by small municipalities and increase awareness of their citizens about public services. The project aims at facilitating the **transfer of responsibilities** from (small) municipalities **to their voluntary associations (DSOs)**, with the intention of increasing the efficiency of services provided by participating municipalities through these DSOs.

PROJECT PHASE

MAIN CHALLENGES FACED, AND DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

The success of the project depends on **cooperation between CSSs and municipalities involved in their DSO**. **Experiences of employees of the CSS** are consequently of critical importance. Some DSOs include more than 30 municipalities and 2 or 3 **CSSs'** employees **may not always have enough time to serve** them. The project is also a **'soft' project**, focusing on improvement of capacities and competences. As pointed out by one CSS manager: 'Mayors usually do not like such projects, or at least in the beginning. At the beginning, there can be a silent scepticism about what will happen and what the project will actually contribute to.'

KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND EVENTS DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The managing authority (the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) anticipated that at least 76 voluntary associations of municipalities would join the project. CSSs have been established in **83 voluntary associations** of municipalities. The participating associations of municipalities cover **1,672 municipalities** in total. **More than 200 new positions** have been established at CSSs since the beginning of the project.

KEY RESULTS AND SUCCESS FACTORS

The project has **relieved mayors** of some small municipalities from certain **administrative burdens**. DSOs can now fulfil their tasks without larger funding from member municipalities. CSSs are perceived as places where mayors can share their experiences. They also provide services in a **more comfortable way** by people who are **not perceived as bureaucrats but rather as peers** that try to help and listen. Future sustainability is a key challenge. Recruitment of sufficient and experienced personnel to CSSs is considered as the key success factors.

(EXPECTED) IMPACT ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

The project anticipates that it will **increase the efficiency** of services provided by participating municipalities and that CSS will **save money for municipalities** in participating DSOs. It is also expected that the project will **facilitate implementation of a new strategy for the post 2020 period**.

LESSONS LEARNT: THE ROLE OF ESF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

ESF support helps carrying out activities that may contribute to addressing issues related to high number of small municipalities in Czechia. For individual CSSs, the support is essential to have **competent employees** and to **build trust of mayors** in 'soft' projects and the benefits they bring.



Logo for the 'Centres of intercommunal services'. Source: Project leaflet.

RESULTS, IMPACTS

REFLECTIONS

Personal experiences



'We liked the collaboration [within the former MOS project]. We, mayors, were meeting together, speaking about our practices... nothing like this existed before. Based on this we decided - yes, let's get into this and establish a CSS, let's go and attract other municipalities, let's discuss and agree on joint purchases of electricity, gas etc.'

Miroslav Boháček, Mayor of Bilovice nad Svitavou municipality

'Thanks to the MOS project and current CSS project, we proved to the mayors that we could prepare joint projects and get money for development of the territory. And this had increased their trust and intensified our cooperation. The CSS started mainly as an office for project administration and management. As the time flowed, we had become more specialised in public administration and at the present we helped them with preparation of contracts etc.'

CSS manager

The study "Progress Assessment of the ESF Support to Public Administration" (PAPA) aims to present specific cases of ESF-funded public administration reform and capacity building initiatives. The contractor prepared 30 case studies and factsheets on ESF supported projects funded in 17 beneficiary countries of Thematic Objective 11 during the programming period 2014-2020.

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PPMi

Find out more about the project by following the link bit.ly/PAPA-PPMI or scan the QR code using your smartphone camera.

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