



Croatia

ESF project “Strengthening the Capacity of Public Authorities for the Implementation of the Act on the Right of Access to Information”

Key facts

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

‘Increase effectiveness and capacity in the public administration through improving service delivery and human resources management’

TARGET GROUPS



Key stakeholders in accessing information – public authorities and users (associations, media, citizens)

BENEFICIARY ORGANISATION

Information Commissioner (IC)

PROJECT DURATION

01/10/2017 – 30/09/2018

COORDINATOR

Anamarija Musa, former Information Commissioner of the Republic of Croatia, Associate Professor of the Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb



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PARTNERS

N/A

BUDGET

EUR 68,000

ESF contribution

EUR 12,000

National contribution



PROJECT/ORGANISATION WEBSITE



<https://www.pristupinfo.hr/projekti/europski-socijalni-fond/>
<https://www.pristupinfo.hr/?lang=en>



<https://twitter.com/pristupinfohr>

Activities implemented

PROJECT IN NUMBERS



Training
participants



Workshops and
webinars



Films
developed



Publications
prepared

MAIN PROJECT TASKS



Implementation of a training programme consisting of workshops and webinars on access to information officers and beneficiaries.



Preparation of educational and promotional online video and audio materials for public authorities and beneficiaries.



Launch of the new IC's Office website with additional features and functionalities.



Preparation of various publications (two manuals and three leaflets).



Organization of an international conference on the right of access to information in Croatia.

Project journey: from conception to delivery

INITIAL STAGE

CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

The IC's Office, established in 2013, tried to overcome bureaucracy reluctant to give timely information to beneficiaries and train citizens and representatives of organizations on effective use of their right to access to public sector information. The Act on Access to Public Sector Information introduced several important **improvements that required an active role of the IC's Office.**

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

The activities of the ESF-funded project aimed **to build the capacity of the IC's Office and those of stakeholders and beneficiaries of the right of access to public sector information.** The project planned to implement various activities, including workshops and webinars, preparation of online films, launch of the new website of the IC's Office, preparation of publications, and an international conference.

PROJECT PHASE

MAIN CHALLENGES FACED, AND DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

Public awareness of and the interest of citizens in the right to access information were not at the desired levels. Also, the majority of public authorities had **insufficient capacities** to implement effectively the 2013 Act on Access to Public Sector Information. The IC's Office, as a new organization, faced serious **personnel and budgetary limitations**, which prevented it from changing the situation more actively. Difficulties comprise the long time spent on evaluating the project's application and the need of beginning the project before it was officially contracted.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND EVENTS DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The project team decided to put educational activities first and to rely on internal expertise of the IC's Office to organize and implement educational events. An international conference and the creation of educational videos, publications and the IC's Office website were left for the period after the official launch of the project.

KEY RESULTS AND SUCCESS FACTORS

Educational activities (a total of 21 workshops and webinars) were carried out; nine educational and promotional videos were created; five publications were issued; a new website was launched for the Information Commissioner's Office; and an international conference was held. These activities have **strengthened the capacities of the IC's Office and other stakeholders** in relation to the implementation of the Right of Access to Information Act (increased number of public bodies having appointed information officers and having their internet sites, decreased number of resistant bodies, increased number of the IC's decisions confirmed by the High Administrative Court, in 2016-2018 period). **Critical factors for success** of this ESF project were the personal characteristics of the project leader and cohesive project team.

RESULTS, IMPACTS

(EXPECTED) IMPACT ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM IN GENERAL

This ESF funded project has contributed significantly to the affirming of policy on access to public sector information in Croatia, increasing the capacities for implementation of the right of access to public sector information, and ensuring **better transparency of public administration.**

REFLECTIONS

LESSONS LEARNT: THE ROLE OF ESF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The project team learnt that greater efforts are necessary to ensure projects of this kind to have a stronger impact on the people using public sector's information. The team also learnt that it would have been better to have implemented a larger ESF-funded project, in order to make a more significant impact. The project revealed certain weaknesses of the current systems used to manage and monitor ESF funding in Croatia. The project has turned the attention of the public towards the significance of policy related to the transparency of the public sector.



Personal experiences



"The project was a complete success and deserves excellent ratings. During the project we learnt a lot and then we became the masters. Continuation of educational activities and other efforts is necessary. The first task is to motivate and educate potential users, the media, associations, and citizens. Their inertia and inactivity is a particularly urgent problem."

— **Dr. Anamarija Musa**, former Information Commissioner of the Republic of Croatia

"All public authorities do not have the same themes, issues and problems while implementing the Access to Public Information Act. Diversified programmes of educational activities have to take into account their specific needs. Even more training, seminars, and workshops with active participation of the information officers from various sectors of public administration are needed."

— **Doris Šajn**, Head of the Public Relations and Protocol Service, the City of Rijeka, Croatia

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 <http://bit.ly/2Gfn35A> or scan the QR code using your smartphone camera.

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