

Sarajevo Economic Region Development Agency - SERDA -

Sarajevska regionalna
razvojna agencija



Sarajevo Economic Region
Development Agency

- **SERDA Mandate**
- **Vision, Mission**
- **Facts on Sarajevo
Macro Region**
- **Strategic
objectives and
sectors of
interventions**
- **Principles of
implementation**
- **Overview of
current activities**
- **SERDA
experience**
- **Future
perspectives**



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1. SERDA Mandate

The Sarajevo Economic Region Development Agency (SERDA) is a non-profit limited liability company governed by public law and owned by the Canton of Sarajevo, the City of Sarajevo, the City of East Sarajevo and 32 municipalities from the Sarajevo Macro Region (SMR).

SERDA was established in May 2003 by the Canton of Sarajevo, the City of East Sarajevo, and 20 municipalities from both entities. Subsequently, the City of Sarajevo and other 12 municipalities joined SERDA, so that there are currently 35 founders.

The role of SERDA is to encourage and strengthen the regional development through provision of financial support, education, tools for business infrastructure development and capacity building in various sectors, information services for foreign investors and the implementation of inter-regional and international projects.

Through the professional implementation of projects and the dynamic and innovative approach, SERDA has proven itself as the leading development agency of the regional economic development in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). SERDA strives to identify the needs of its founders and other relevant stakeholders in order to maximise effects for a balanced, integrated and harmonized development of the region.

SERDA has a highly qualified staff experienced in various projects implementation (on yearly basis between 60 and 70 small and large projects). Its headquarters are located in centre of Sarajevo on 900 square meters and are fully equipped for the purpose.

SERDA is an active associate member of the European Association of Development Agencies (EURADA) and South Eastern Europe Network of Regional Development Agencies (SEENORDA).

2. Vision, Mission

The vision of SERDA for the Sarajevo Macro Region is to provide better quality and a more prosperous life for all its citizens and to set an example for other developing regions regarding all aspects of business, education, cultural and sports life. These goals will be achieved through an integrated and appropriate approach to sustainable economic development. The Sarajevo Macro Region will be the leader in the process of integration of BiH into the European Union.

The mission of SERDA is to create a positive environment for a sustainable economic development in the region, and to advance, strengthen and promote the development of the Sarajevo Macro Region with all available resources, supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina approaching to EU integrations.

3. Facts on Sarajevo Macro Region

The Sarajevo Macro Region is one of the five economic regions in BiH spreading over the territory of 32 municipalities in both entities, out of which 19 municipalities belong to the Federation of BiH while 13 municipalities are from Republika Srpska. The total surface area is 8.701 km² representing 17% of the total surface area of BiH and the population is around 770.000 inhabitants (human population density is 88 per km²). The largest concentration of population is in the metropolitan area of the City of Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The territory of SMR is rich in forests, herbs, thermal springs as well as springs of mineral and drinking water. It has significant energetic potentials and potentials for industry development. SMR is distinguished by its tourist tradition and resources for the development of winter, health, sports, rehabilitation and congress tourism and has significant human and educational potentials as well.

Natural resources, the specific tradition and authenticity, the knowledge and experience as well as the existing capacities, the offer of financial and business services, the developing trade and light industry, the existence of national and foreign universities and new technologies, and the strong presence of international companies are reasons why this region

4. SERDA strategic objectives and sectors of interventions

All priorities, areas of intervention and individual activities are targeted to create a positive environment for sustainable economic development in the SMR, and to improve, strengthen and promote the development in the region using all internal capacities and through mobilization of available regional partner's and stakeholder's resources.

The harmonized dynamic economic development of SMR aimed to the strengthening of mechanisms of BiH accession to EU is the overall objective that SERDA strives to.

SERDA implements projects, and performs activities, which are directed towards the achievement of the following **strategic objectives**:

1. *Development of economic activity in region;*
2. *Creation of impetus – providing business framework in region;*
3. *Human resources development;*
4. *Strengthening the competitiveness of region.*

The main sectors/types of interventions include:

- *Supporting local communities and non-government organizations in strengthening absorption capacities;*
- *Supporting entrepreneurs through technical assistance in provision of favourable financing;*
- *Linking unemployed with entrepreneurs through labour market development;*
- *Supporting entrepreneurs through development of business infrastructure and innovative entrepreneurship;*
- *Providing relevant information to potential investors;*
- *Supporting creation and promotion of tourism products;*
- *Addressing environmental issues;*
- *Promoting resource efficiency and renewable energy;*
- *Providing technical assistance in implementation of infrastructure project;*
- *Supporting agriculture development;*
- *Providing access to information and promotion of European Integration process;*
- *Preparing studies and development strategies.*

5. Principles of implementation

SERDA's policy is a quality implementation of the projects with regional character, continuous strengthening of partnerships with the European Union, international organizations, the state actors and/or local communities, aimed at creation of a favourable business climate for a harmonized development of the SMR and BiH.

All our activities are harmonized with the standard of Quality Management System ISO 9001:2016 and other international standards. We also adhere to the following principles:

- *Transparency and visibility.* Compliance with this principle is of most importance. Dissemination of on time and detail information, promotion of success stories and best practices will strongly support all efforts in economic and social development.
- *Partnership.* This principle is directly connected to ownership and sustainability and is meant to facilitate the changes of economic conditions. Participation of all important development stakeholders ensures a more effective implementation, a better targeting of resources and the development of capacities of all partners involved. It is achieved by common interest for close collaboration in the design, implementation and monitoring of regional programmes.
- *Integration* of common local needs at regional level, in geographic terms and by the content. Integration is achieved through active participation of all regional actors.
- *Common good.* Projects, which are to be candidates, have to be designed for the purpose of common goods, and not exclusively to meet the needs of the founders/members.
- *Sustainability.* This principle is crucial in sense of long-term development activities. Its implementation is particularly important in BiH with regions, which are characterized by a low level of development. Therefore, all development activities must be focused on building sustainable economy within a local community or region, that will constitute sustainable national economy within the EU community for which BiH is potential candidate.

Constant institutional strengthening of SERDA, and self-capacity building measures resulted with the position of the leading development agency in BiH. SERDA has become an unavoidable factor in the economic development of the SMR and a significant development stakeholder in BiH.

6. Overview of SERDA current activities

SERDA's main activities are currently aimed at creating and supporting an environment that is primarily conducive to the economic development of the Sarajevo Macro-Region, and secondly the overall development of the country as a whole. The current activities are grouped within four core areas, namely:

1. *Implementation of projects financed by EU funds;*
2. *Implementation of projects funded through bilateral cooperation and support of international organizations;*
3. *Implementation of projects through a partnership between SERDA and its founders;*
4. *Implementation of projects in partnership with domestic institutions, non-governmental organizations and businesses.*

7. Completed and Current projects

In the past fifteen years SERDA developed and implemented over 300 projects/activities and conducted numerous regional and local development activities with relevant stakeholders and partners. Among them, specific importance has been given to the international projects through which SERDA increased its capacities regarding the implementation of such actions.

IPA CBC – SEE programme 2007-2013:

- Sustainable innovation for textile in SEE - TEX-EASTILE
- From army to entrepreneurship F.A.T.E
- Clusters Orientation towards Up-to-date technologies and models for common Development - CLOUD
- Integrated tourism action plans for SEE excellence - INTOURACT
- Transnational cooperation for the improvement of buildings energy performance and efficiency – TRACE
- South East Europe jointly developed common advanced virtual accessibility solutions to support public services - SECOVIA
- Joint Disaster Management risk assessment and preparedness in the Danube macro-region - SEERISK (SEE Strategic Call)
- Facilitating Responsible Innovation in SEE countries – FaRIInn

IPA Adriatic CBC programme 2007-2013:

- Boosting Research and Innovation Potential of the Adriatic Cross-border Area in a Joint Research Initiative led by Metris Research Centre - Metris plus
- Adriatic Route for Thematic Tourism – ADRIATIC ROUTE
- Traveller Information System for the Adriatic Region –TISAR
- Adriatic Health and Vitality Network – AHVN

MED Programme 2007-2013:

- Promoting Zero waste – ZEROWASTE PRO
- Energy Enterprise Generation in the Med Area – ENERGEIA
- Green groWing of SMEs: Innovation and Development in the energy sector in mEd aRea – WIDER

Specific EU Calls:

- Increasing competitiveness of metal industry through developing new occupations and technologies, EC Delegation to BiH Value chain mapping programme – EUMETAL (6th call)
- Development of new eco-touristic product – National park Sutjeska, EC Delegation to BiH Value chain mapping programme (6th call)
- Support to the development of the Fast Growing SMEs (FGSME) and local business environment (7th Call)

IPA CBC BiH-Montenegro:

- Year-round tourism in mountain destination of B&H and Montenegro- 365

IPA CBC BiH-Serbia:

- Support to cooperation, inclusion, education and promotion of Roma culture in B&H and Serbia "SA-ŠA"
- Increasing competitiveness of SMEs and enhancement of cross border links in metal industry - EUMETAL2
- Agriculture Forecast-Reporting System (AFRS) in the Cross Border Region
- Development and Promotion of Health Tourism Spas in Cross-border Area of B&H-Serbia – CROSS SPA
- Environment friendly, new and organic approach to agriculture in cross border region of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina – ENO AGRI

Bilateral cooperation:

- Development of mentoring system for SMEs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro – Japanese development governmental fund
- Making Markets For The New Generations, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) – Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation and Posao.ba
- Challenge to Change - Strengthening business development in Bosnia and Herzegovina through support to innovations - Swedish Agency for International Development (SIDA)
- Östsam Regional Development Council – Raising awareness of regional and local politicians about their role in development process – Swedish experience, joint project financed by ICLD (International Center for Local Democracy) Sweden (local partner)
- Waste management – as means to increase local democracy and citizen's influence. Exchange of experiences between Sarajevo Canton and East Sweden Region

Europe for Citizens 2007-2013:

- From YU to EU
- European Network of the Civil Resource Centers
- Capacity Building programme for municipality co-operation in the Adria-Balkan- CAP ABC

Europe for Citizens 2014-2020:

- Network for cooperation and democratic participation of citizens in the Adriatic-Balkan area CAPE-AB
- Solidarity and citizens involvement network for crisis prevention and management of municipalities and regions in a volatile and dynamic Europe SOLICRIS
- The Culture that unites us

Horizon 2020:

- COproduction with NaturE for City Transitioning, INnovation and Governance CONNECTING

Danube Transnational programme 2014-2020:

- Danube Framework for Responsible Research and Innovation using Socio-Technical Integrating D-STIR
- High-performance Computing for Effective Innovation in the Danube Region InnoHPC
- Fostering Innovation in the Danube Region through Knowledge Engineering and IPR Management KNOWING IPR
- Digital Transformation in the Danube Region DIGITRANS

Adriatic-Ionian Programme Transnational 2014-2020

- Building the ADRION Brand Name in Tourism: Indulging all Five Senses ADRION 5 SENSES
- SUstainability PERformance of LNG-based maritime mobility SUPER LNG

ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

- Next destination Balkans: agritourism landscapes development LANDS

SERDA STRATEGIC PROJECTS

- Loan Guarantee Fund (with Government of Canton Sarajevo)
- Centre for adult education SERDA
- Office for Energy efficiency

SERDA has a vast experience in implementing various scale projects funded by other international donors as well as those projects funded by founders for covering interventions in local communities of SMR.

8. Future perspectives

SERDAs business orientation will continue to focus on gaining practical experience on the basis of partnership participation in applications for various EU funds, and participation in project activities in the programs of cross border cooperation between BiH and Serbia/Montenegro, within the transnational EU programmes and other available funds and programmes.

Aware of the fact that only inter-institutional cooperation in domestic and international factors can lead to a new quality in the development and improvement of economic opportunity of the SMR, SERDA continues its cooperation with the regional and development agencies and other relevant institutions from the EU.