

Set-up and functioning of One-Stop Shops in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Case Study of One-Stop Shop in Doboj



Municipal Development Project in Bosnia –Herzegovina - MDP

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Abbreviations

BiH	Bosnia - Herzegovina
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
EDA	Enterprise Development Agency
EU	European Union
FBIH	Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina)
IT	Information Technology
KM	Konvertibilna Marka (Convertible Mark)
LSG	Local Self Governance
LSGS	Local Self Governance Strategy
MDP	Municipal Development Project
NGO	Non- governmental Organization
OSS	One-Stop Shop
PAR	Public Administration Reform
RPR	Reception-Process-Return
RR	Reception-Return
RS	Republika Srpska
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Executive Summary

This brochure aims to explore and illustrate the functioning of One-Stop Shops (OSS) in general and in more detail in Bosnia and Herzegovina, using Doboj municipality as a case study.

Special emphasis is therefore placed on the role of international cooperation projects in supporting the establishment of OSSs by examining the support of the Municipal Development Project (MDP) to the municipality of Doboj. The brochure targets development practitioners, and implementing and funding agencies of development cooperation engaged in local governance. It shall provide those who may one day be involved with initiating or supporting the establishment of OSSs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other transitional countries with basic information, and shall promote the sharing of good practices.

A One-Stop Shop can be described as a central place through which requests for different customer services are received, processed (further routed to follow the appropriate administrative procedures within the professional bureau of department concerned) and returned to the customer¹. The main concept of providing several administrative services at one central place in the municipality has already been practiced in BiH. Most municipalities like Doboj once worked with a central desk hall, although not all administrative procedures have been conducted internally.

Service provision in an OSS can be set up in two different ways: the OSS not only receives but also processes all service requests, or the OSS both receives and returns the service requests that are processed in the respective departments. In BiH, as the example of Doboj has shown, a combination of the two models is the most appropriate and logical option. The complexity and legal requirements of a certain service will usually determine whether it is feasible and suitable to provide a service directly in the OSS, or if it should be transferred to the department. This organizational setup influences both the internal management and supervising responsibilities for the OSS in a municipality.

One-Stop Shops lead to a more effective, efficient and transparent service provision that is equally accessible to larger parts of the population. This development has been seen in Doboj since its OSS has been functioning. The modern technological facilities have been one important way to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of service provision. Another significant factor is that citizens now have better information regarding the requirements, fees and procedures for obtaining a service – a central point addressed by OSS. The pleasant setup and furnishing of OSS facilities highlight the position of citizens as customers who are exercising their rights and showing increased satisfaction with the municipality's work.

International cooperation projects or donors that are planning to support the establishment of OSS in Bosnia and Herzegovina or the region should pay attention to the fact that their main work will lie in initiating and constantly supporting the change processes inside a municipality. In Doboj municipality, MDP promoted a modern OSS and convinced the municipal management and staff that the changes would be to both their advantage and those of local citizens. The commitment and leadership of municipal officials is crucial for the successful establishment of an OSS. All stakeholders should agree to every step, though this will prolong the duration of the activities. Change is a process that needs time, and newly introduced instruments in municipal work will only be sustainable on the long run if the attitude of municipal staff and management has changed.

¹ Evaluation of One-Stop Shops in Vietnam- Final Report, SDC, April 2002

1. Introduction

Local self-governance (LSG) has been a topic on the agendas of public institutions and the international donor community in BiH for the last 10 years. Entity laws on local self-governance provide the legal background for LSG and these laws have been increasingly in line with European standards.

The improvement of municipal services, the saving of time and money in daily administrative work and the functioning of municipalities along good governance criteria are common principles that are inherent in the entities' LSG laws. But these laws alone do not change the situation. What is crucial is their implementation, which not only calls for a strategy and a budget, but also for a favorable legal framework that complements LSG laws.

Two basic strategic documents on local governance are currently being discussed in BiH – the Public Administration Reform (PAR), an EU-led document, and the Local Self-Governance Development Strategy in BiH (LSGS), elaborated by the key national stakeholders.

The PAR is basically focused on institutional changes inside public administration in the management of public tasks and the capacities of staff and facilities. By contrast, the LSGS includes the demands of municipal and non-governmental stakeholders in the necessary reform of legal framework conditions, management reforms and capacity-building needs.

One of the main problems mentioned by both the PAR and the LSGS is the fact that public administration fails to address the needs and expectations of citizens. Administration works too slowly and is non-transparent. Poor service quality and low cost-effectiveness are widespread. Municipal staff often lack the skills to provide better services to citizens and to work effectively and efficiently. These problems are addressed by One-Stop Shops.

One-Stop Shops are a favored tool for achieving better quality in service delivery and, in the end, higher citizens' satisfaction. Public administration reforms all over the world include the introduction of One-Stop Shops, and there have been successful experiences.

Among these is the experience of the Municipal Development Project (MDP) in BiH. MDP is financed by the Swiss government and implemented by the Swiss Foundation Intercooperation in the Dobož region in BiH since 2001. Its main goal is to enhance local development and good governance on the municipal level by improving the performance of municipal governments and strengthening civil society.

The main topics, such as the operational, organizational and financial setup of One-Stop Shops, will be treated in depth, and the performance of OSS Dobož will be assessed by putting the emphasis on the greater effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of municipal service provision and the satisfaction of citizens.

2. The OSS Concept

It has often been proven true that one of the biggest obstacles for citizens wanting to obtain an administrative service from a municipality is finding the right departments or bureaus. The search for the right department is not only time consuming, but can also be a financial burden. The processing of one service request is divided into many different steps, each one provided separately in another office behind closed doors, and for every stamp one has to pay an extra fee. Reliable information on the conditions and procedures for obtaining a certain service is hard to obtain. Citizens therefore only learn which document they should have brought with them after their application failed and after they have stood in line for hours.

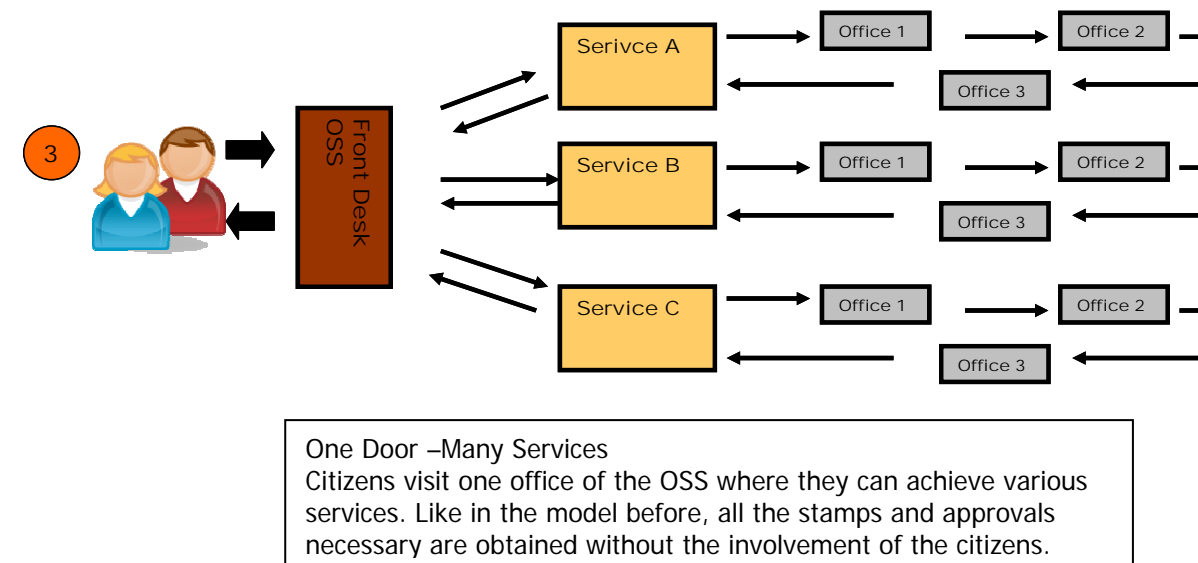
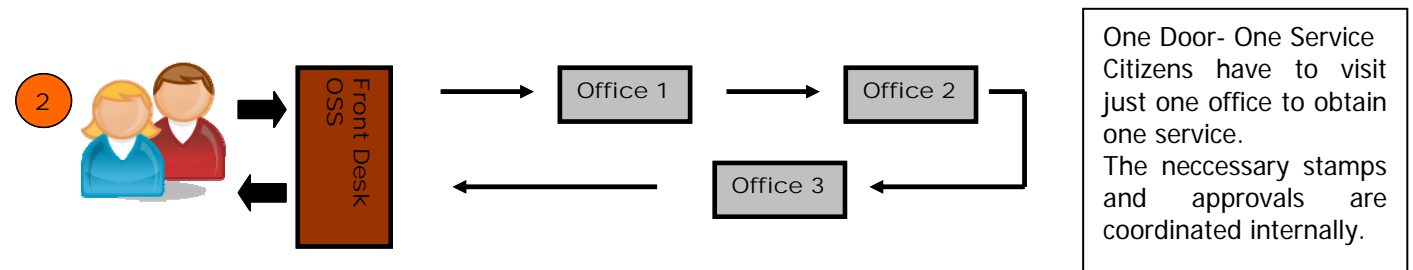
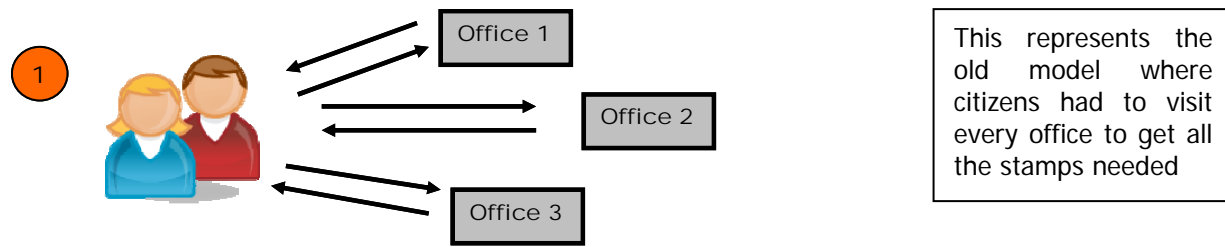
Services are therefore unnecessarily expensive and slow, and the risk of corruption as well as the staff's bureaucratic behavior often restrains citizens from applying for service provision. This also has negative financial effects on the municipalities. By using an extra staff member to provide each part of a service, the municipality has to pay high organizational costs. Furthermore, the fewer citizens that apply for administrative services, the less income through fees the municipalities have. And unsatisfied citizens lead to unsatisfied municipal staff. An ineffective, inefficient and corrupt service provision therefore has negative impacts on both sides – the municipality and the citizens.

The aim of OSS is to improve service delivery and life for citizens. A One-Stop Shop can make it possible for a public administration to take all necessary steps for reaching a certain goal at one single place.

The idea is as simple as it is effective. Citizens visit just one desk or office at the municipality where they can apply for one service (one door, one service). The citizen deals with one municipal clerk and is no longer obliged to visit different offices to get all the required stamps or documents needed. Instead, the front desk staff of the OSS is in charge of organizing all the steps for proceeding and providing the service request. Citizens just pick up the desired document at the same front desk where he or she applied, or receive it by mail. This setup is just the first concept of OSS. A typical example of an OSS would be one for entrepreneurs, at which they can apply for business permits in a simple way.

The second concept is the so-called "One door for many services." Citizens can apply at one office or desk for a number of different services. The installation of this type of OSS requires far more organizational and management efforts.

The following graphic illustrates the different models of service provision.



Source: based on "Evaluation of One-Stop Shops in Vietnam- Final Report", SDC, April 2002

As the model shows, citizens do not deal directly with all the involved staff members and thus opportunities for corruption are substantially reduced. Furthermore, the fees are fixed as citizens now pay all fees at once at one counter and not in different offices.

The purely internal handling of services forces the administration to revise and streamline their own procedures in service provision. This reduces the time and costs, and leads to faster, cheaper and less corrupt service provision. Because of the improvement of case management and the reduction of bureaucracy, the municipal administration can substantially reduce its workload. The municipality can therefore invest its energy and time in the further development of the municipality, which will benefit the citizens of the municipality.

Consequently, the functions and objectives of a OSS are:

- Serve as a clear entry point for all people to administrative services
- Simplify administrative processes and procedures
- Reduce time and costs of service provision by reorganizing administrative distribution of tasks, modernization of IT facilities and software and reducing and streamlining procedures (inclusive communication procedures)
- Improve quality of service provision for citizens
- Provide municipalities with direct citizens' feedback on their work
- Increase transparency and reduce corruption due to establishment of clear fees and procedures and open working environment
- Improve case management, reduce bureaucracy and administrative overburden of municipalities

Concept of the OSS in Dobož

The OSS in Dobož municipality consists of two core sections – the information desk and the front desk hall.

The information desk can be found in the entrance section of the municipal building. It provides citizens information about services, for example, which documents are needed to receive a certain service, the respective fees and the request forms for different services.

The main part of the OSS is the so-called “Šalter Sala” (the front desk hall) where citizens can request different services at different front desks. Because all of the administrative services that Dobož municipality offers can be requested in this one hall, this OSS is clearly set up as “One door, many services.” But not every service can be requested at each desk. The desks are rather divided by departments and groups of services as the following table illustrates:

Desk	Services	No of counters
Civil Registry Office	Birth certificates, changing of civil status register etc.	4 counters
Notarization	Verification of documents	2 counters
Voters' registration	Registration of voters for all elections	1 counter
General desk	Receiving all other service requests, such as business or construction permits	1 counter
Land registry office (an entity service, not a municipal service)	Land and property registration	1 counter
Bank office (private bank not belonging to the municipality)	Reception of all fees for services	1 counter

This division of service provision makes the OSS more operational. Citizens can find all municipal services at the desk hall and just have to select the right desks for their purposes. It is thus easier for the municipality to adjust the number of desks to the demand of citizens and provide, for example, four desks just for the citizens' registry office, which is a very common service with a high demand.

3. Stakeholders

The stakeholders are those people or groups that have a legitimate interest in the One-Stop Shop and can therefore construct and shape it. To understand the operational setup of the OSS it is important to know which stakeholders have which interest in it. These stakeholders build the framework and determine how the OSS will function. Their support is crucial if an OSS is to be successfully set up and become functional.

The basic stakeholders of the OSS in Dobož are first of all the **customers** – citizens and private enterprises. The customers have the biggest interest in the fast and honest provision of services. Equal access to services is also important to them. And they are interested in having accurate, publicly available information about the procedures, fees and requirements.

The second important stakeholders are municipal **heads of departments**. Service provision is among their tasks, and therefore improved service delivery is in their interest, especially if it includes a reduction in their departments' workload. If the burden of administrative work is lessened, they will have more time for strategic planning and management.

OSS staff works directly with customers and receives immediate feedback on the quality of service delivery. Because these employees are on the front line of customer reaction, their daily work satisfaction depends on satisfied customers. In this respect the quality of service delivery also becomes important to them.

The **mayor** is an important stakeholder, as his or her commitment to establish an OSS and to improve service delivery is crucial if the OSS is to work. The mayor leads the process of creating policies and strategies, and needs to put the topic on the municipal agenda. The mayor's support and commitment is also important to the dynamic of the process and the dedication of the municipal staff.

The **municipal council** is involved in the process of setting up the OSS, as it allocates the budgets for the OSS's construction, the purchase of computers and software and other budgets by formal council decisions.

Donors can play an important role in establishing and maintaining an OSS. Donor funds are most often needed for the construction phase, for a new office with counters for the OSS, furniture, computers, software and IT systems. Donors also often provide funds for staff training, technical expertise for software creation or the reengineering of processes. Donors are often engaged in various PAR projects in the region, and municipalities can benefit from their experiences. Donor support is not always a mandatory element, but it can facilitate processes in municipal governments and often ensure an OSS's greater success.

4. Operation and Organization

The setups of One-Stop Shops can be very different. Basically the three main tasks of administration in the provision of services with the help of an OSS are

- Receiving the service request
- Process the service request
- Return the service request (approval or rejection)

To fulfill these tasks, two basic models can be used.

1. The OSS employees are also professionals in the different areas of services. All steps of service provision are done in the OSS. The service request is received at the counter. The request will then be processed by the OSS staff, who also may have to make outside calls. The request is then returned to the customer at the same counter. In terms of management that means that each department has assigned at least one expert of its staff to the OSS. For more complicated requests, this special staff member will transfer them to his or her department for further procedure. This model is referred to as **Reception Processing and Return (RPR)**.

2. The second model is called **Reception and Return (RR)**.

In this model, OSS staff are not experts in special areas of administration, but are rather trained to receive, document, forward and return the service request. OSS staff members do not belong to another department, but are solely under the supervision of the OSS. After the reception of a request, the file is forwarded to the respective department. OSS documents all procedures to keep track of file. When the file is processed it is transferred back to the OSS, where it is returned to the customer.

Both models have advantages and disadvantages.

The biggest advantage of the RPR model is that trained staff are serving customers and can answer their questions on the spot. They are acquainted with the various procedures and need less training. Staff are assigned by the departments, which means they are already included in the municipal budget and no extra funds have to be allocated.

On the other hand, the workload in the OSS departments is usually distributed very differently. Social or housing department staff are often overloaded with customer requests while business administration has a relatively low number of clients. This model can lead to an unequal distribution of work among OSS staff members, and the overload of certain staff can lead to slower service delivery and thus poorer service quality.

The biggest advantage of the RR model is therefore that every staff member can do all tasks that need to be done and can react more flexibly to peak times of business. There will be always a competent staff member to attend to the citizens. Even though certain trainings are required for OSS staff and a special budget for salaries needs to be assigned to OSS, once the personnel are trained it is easier to introduce new services.

The setup of OSS often combines the two models, which can lead to more effective and efficient work, but on the other hand, combining the two models can increase confusion in the management structure.

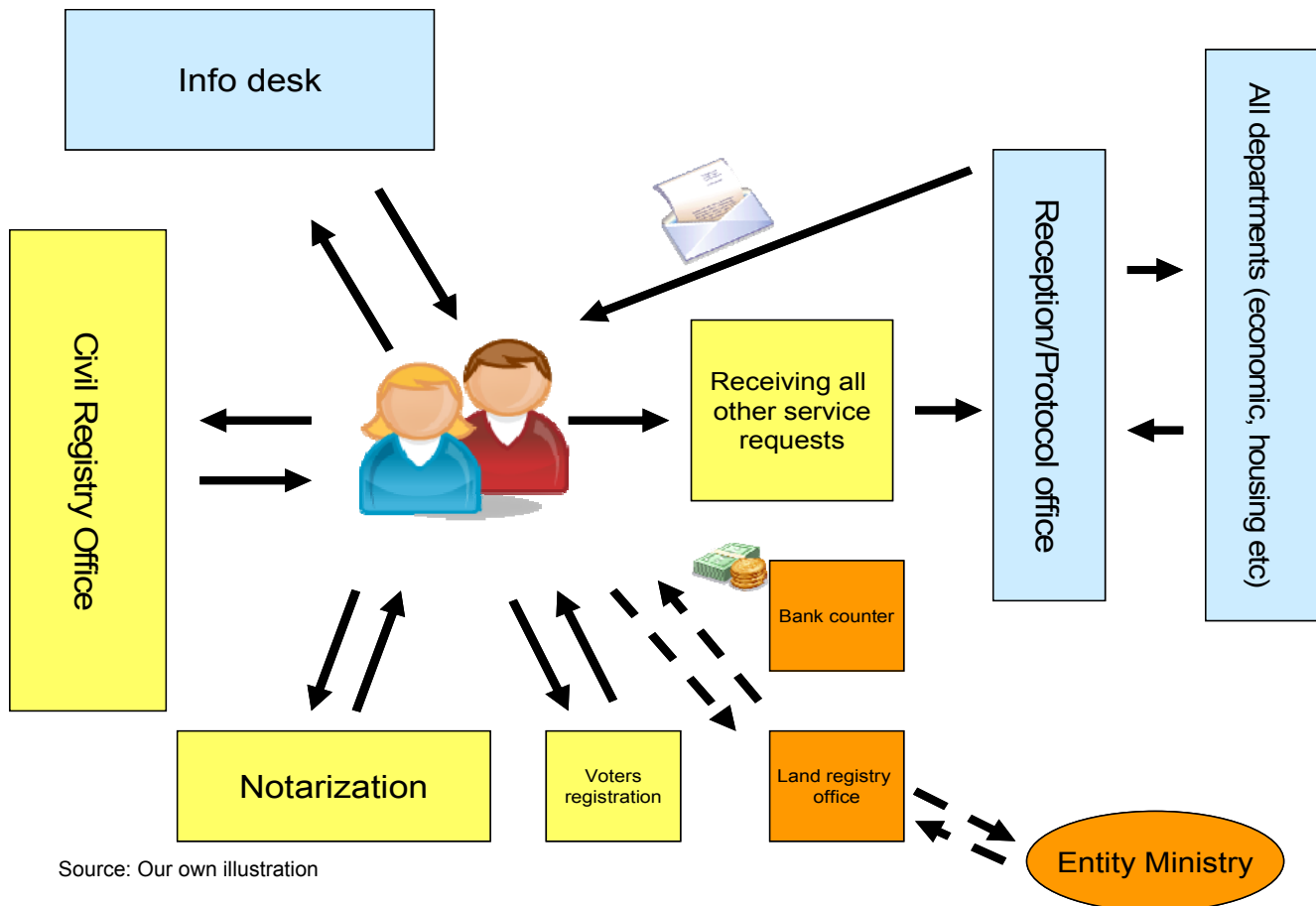
Operational setup of OSS in Dobož

In Dobož municipality we can find a combination of those two models, which seems to be the most common setup in BiH. The combination model is used in all of the other MDP partner municipalities that are using OSSs. This model is basically predetermined by the complexity of legal requirements for providing the different services and thus the natural lengths and difficulties of administrative processes.

Civil registry, notarization and voter-registration offices process all requested services by front desk staff and provide services immediately. The front desk staff are trained personnel belonging to the general administration department, which is responsible for the respective services and the OSS. All these desks therefore provide services according to the model Reception Processing and Return (RPR). This changes when it comes to business or construction permits, requests for connection to water and sewage systems and all other services. These requests are transferred to the respective department, and the front desk staff are only responsible for receiving and transferring the request. The decision is usually communicated to the citizen by sending the administrative act by mail. All this makes it a typical example for the operational model Reception and Return (RR).

The land registry office and the bank counter shall be left outside of this consideration, as neither desk provides municipal services.

The following graphic illustrates the functioning of the OSS in Dobož.



Source: Our own illustration

5. Management and Staff

The management of the OSS and its staff depends first of all on the above-described setup of the OSS as reception-return or reception-processing-return offices. Under the RPR model the heads of thematic departments share the supervision of staff with the head of the OSS. This can lead to conflicts and requires a very clear distribution of tasks and fields of supervision. On the other hand, the regular supervision by the respective head of department can improve the quality of the work and the quality of service delivery.

Under the RR model the head of the OSS is the only responsible manager for all staff, so no confusion about the management structure can occur. It has been noticed that OSS staff members are more satisfied working under this model and the sense of belonging to the OSS is higher. Employees also have easier access to their supervisor in case of a problem.

Apart from that, it is possible to assign a special head for the OSS or to let it be managed by the head of the department to which it administratively belongs. In the first case the advantage is clearly that the head of OSS is easily accessible to the staff. A clearly assigned head can take more care of the maintenance of facilities and the allocation of needed materials. He or she can spend more time in the office and monitor closely the activities of staff. This will not occur when a head of department takes on the role of head of OSS among his or her other functions.

In **Doboj** the OSS belongs to the department of General Administration.

A special head is assigned to the OSS's civil registry office, which forms the largest component in the desk hall. For the OSS as such the head of general administration department is responsible. Among his tasks is the supervision of OSS staff members in an administrative and technical sense. This only excludes the personnel at the bank counter and the land registry office, as they are not municipal employees.

All other staff members belong to the department of general administration. Large parts of service provision (the civil registry office, notarization, the reception/protocol office, voter registration) fall under the responsibility of the general administration department in any case. The other functions (the information desk and reception of service requests) are the original functions of the OSS and fall as such under the responsibility of the general administration and thus the supervision of the head of this department.

All in all the OSS in Doboj has the following staff members that are employed by the municipality

- 2 at the info desk
- 4 at civil registry office
- 1 to 2 at the back office of the registry office
- up to 4 at the reception/protocol office as back office staff
- 2 at the notarization office
- 1 at the desk for receiving service requests
- 1 for voters registration
- 2 at the info desk

and furthermore outside the responsibility of the municipality:

- 1 person at the front desk for land property issues
- 1 at the bank counter

Training in using computers and the special registration software was provided for all staff of the civil registry office. Further training is not foreseen. It is, however, planned to extend the IT system to all front desks of the OSS and the information desk. All service requests would therefore be digitalized and passed on to the respective departments for further

proceeding in electronic form. It would allow the staff of both the front desk and also the information desk to provide information about the status of a service request and would require additional software training.

6. Facilities

The quality of facilities plays an important role in how satisfied the municipal staff are with their workplace and in the satisfaction of citizens. Moreover, the OSS aims to improve the accessibility of administrative services, which makes the location, size, visibility and access for customers important. Computers and proper software enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the OSS.

It is therefore crucial that donors supporting an OSS pay attention to the technical equipment and furnishing. The technical facilities, particularly computers and software, are essential to providing good services.

In Dobož, the OSS is equipped with 10 computers for front and back office staff, printers, telephones and software that help issue all documents and conduct changes in the civil registry. New software that connects all departments and informs OSS staff, including the information desk staff, about the status of a service request or the reason for the delay will be purchased soon.

The OSS is located in the municipal building in the city center and can be accessed by disabled persons through a wheelchair ramp. The front desk hall is a friendly and open space with desks and a waiting area that is furnished with a sufficient number of chairs for citizens. Another important part of the facilities is the complaint box, where citizens can give negative or positive feedback.

To direct citizens to the right counter and to avoid long lines, there is a so-called “active waiting system” installed. It consists of a computer stand that contains all the different categories of offered services (civil status registry, notarization, land registry office, all other service requests). Customers press the respective button and the system gives the customer a number and registers a new citizen waiting to be served. The customer receives a printout telling him or her the number of the counter and his or her waiting number. On a screen above the respective counter, the number will appear when it is his or her turn. Citizens can therefore estimate when they will be served and can use the waiting time to study the wealth of informational material available on services and other municipal issues. They do not have to wait in line, but can rather sit in the waiting area until it is their turn. This system has clearly contributed to a more relaxed atmosphere in the OSS and enhances the satisfaction of citizens.

The following pictures illustrate the facilities of the OSS in Doboј before reconstruction.

Info desk and entrance to desk hall



Desk Hall

Facilities after reconstruction:



Info desk that is located at the entrance of the desk hall and provides citizens with all informations



Active Waiting System



Desk hall



Civil Registry Office



Different Desks

Complaint box

7. Finances

The initial investment costs for the setup of the OSS (the front desk hall and the information desk) in Dobož, including the cost for the IT system and software, were 438,918 KM.²

The overall financial participation of MDP was 181,773 KM. The municipality paid 257,145 KM, which corresponds to 59 percent of the total amount. The financial means were spent on 1) reconstruction and furnishing, 2) the IT system hardware and 3) software.

1) The costs for reconstruction and furnishing totaled 360,061 KM. MDP contributed 109,217 KM, while the municipality contributed 250,844 KM or 70 percent of the total.

In detail the financial means were used as follows:

Architectural Design	17,900 KM
Construction works	120,644 KM
Furniture for equipping of OSS	100,326 KM
Electro installations	50,030 KM
Air conditioning system	71,161 KM

2) In all, 60,757 KM were spent on the computer and network system. MDP contributed 54,456 KM, while the municipality contributed 6,301 KM, or around 10 percent of the total.

Computer, printers	45,456 KM
Network	15,301 KM

3) The total IT software costs for Dobož amounted to 18,100 KM covered by MDP in total. Out of this, 16,000 KM were spent on software development and purchase of books for IT officer³. Additionally, 2,100 KM were spent to train IT officers

The running costs of OSS regarding the maintenance of IT and other equipment, the active waiting system, office materials and staff salaries, including the amortization of initial costs, has yet to be calculated, and specific data is not available.

The 2007 municipal budget allocates 45,000 KM to maintain of the municipality's IT system. Dobož municipality has 70 computers, which means approximately 6,400 KM has been allocated for the 10 computers at OSS. No special maintenance or extra running costs have been allocated to the OSS, as it falls under the expenditures for the general administration and more determined costs are not available.

The revenues of the OSS in 2006 totaled approximately 500,000 KM.

² 1 KM = 0.51 €

³ MDP engaged experts to develop the software and to digitalize data for the civil registry office. This software was developed for three of MDP's partner municipalities. The cost of this project for all three municipalities was 48,000 KM. Dobož's share of this amounted to 16,000 KM, which included the purchase of books for IT officers.

8. Services

As explained above, the Doboj municipality provides different services. This table lists the services, including the fees charged for their provision.

Department	Service	Fee (in KM)
Economic and social activities		
	Permit to run/provide private services and handicraft services	50 KM
	Permit to provide private consulting or similar services	80 KM
	Permit to start a private shop – VHS club, fun games	80 KM
	Permit to start and run a private hosting facility (bar, restaurant, shop, hotel)	150-500 (depending on the type of facility)
	Permit to conduct transport for one's own services	80-160 (depending on the lifting power)
Urbanism		
	Request for urban permit	50-500 (depending on the type of the structure)
	Building permit/license	30 percent of the building cost + 3 KM for verification document
	Request for technical handover of a building structure	30-500 KM
Housing and communal issues		
	Request for leasing a public building or area	3 KM
	Request for leasing garages and business facilities	3 KM
General administration (including civil status register)		
	Request to make corrections in a registry	8 KM
	Issuing confirmation on sustenance	8 KM
	Verification of transcripts, signatures and manuscripts	3 KM,
	Issuing birth certificates	5-8 KM
Soldiers and invalid care		
	Confirming status of a war invalid	No fee
	Request to obtain status as a civilian victim of war	No fee
Construction, reconstruction and development		
	Registering a request for one-time aid	No fee
	Receipt of request for a donation	No fee
Inspection and communal police		
	Receipt and registering a request or complaint	No fee

The reception/protocol office as a back office of the OSS has the following tasks that are not extra charged:

- Reception of mail
- Opening, checking and transferring mail
- Protocol records in books and forwarding it to respective departments
- Signing and stamping official administrative acts
- Sending mail and administrative decisions to citizens
- Protocol and card registering the cases, keeping the record and making files/archives of cases

9. Performance of OSS in Dobož

The setup of an OSS can be deemed successful if it improves the effectiveness, efficiency, transparency and accessibility of administrative service delivery and thus improves the life of citizens and the municipal staff. Statistical data are hard to find, as no data on this existed before the OSS was set up. We therefore rely on estimations, perception or proxy indicators. A tendency can still be defined and a statement made regarding the performance of the Dobož OSS.

9.1. Effectiveness

Effectiveness has increased when more people have applied for services and more of them have received solutions to their requests.

In 2006, 110,000 service requests were processed at the civil registry office, out of which 73,000 required the issuing of documents. Furthermore, in the town of Dobož alone, 177,600 data sets were digitalized from the civil status book. The notarization office verified 150,000 documents. The reception/protocol office had 240,000 service requests. They sent back 120,000 processed service requests to citizens and 4,600 are still in the administrative process. The rest of the requests did not require sending documents to citizens.

As reliable data from previous years is nonexistent, it is not possible to make a statement as to whether the administration is now capable of handling more cases than before the OSS was opened. What is remarkable, however, is that the municipality had anticipated receiving some 280,000 KM in fees in 2006, but it received almost twice that sum – 500,000 KM, and fees for services have not gone up. Among the plausible causes for this could be that the administration was able to process more services and such therefore take in more fees. These numbers alone point to an increase in effectiveness.

More effective service provision is achieved if higher-quality services are provided. Any hints that the quality of service provision has improved indicate that more cases have been solved and the OSS has improved the effectiveness of service provision.

The OSS in Doboj provides customers the possibility to give their feedback on quality, with a complaints box in the front desk hall. As of this writing, the only feedback found in the box has been positive.

MDP polled citizens in all its partner municipalities in April 2007. This poll, among other questions, asked citizens how they felt about services provided. The answers are as follows, in percentages⁴.

How satisfied are you with the provision of administrative services?

	Not satisfied (%)	Acceptable (%)	Satisfied (%)
All	19	33	47
Men	16	33	49
Women	22	33	45

The poll indicated that only a small number of citizens were not satisfied with the service provision, and thus that the OSS helps provide services in an effective way.

What more strongly points to a more effective and improved-quality service provision since the OSS opened is the poll's following question:

Compared to the situation five years ago, are you now 1) less satisfied, 2) as satisfied as before, or 3) more satisfied with the administrative service provision?

	Less (%)	Same (%)	More (%)
All	8	33	58
Men	7	34	59
Women	12	32	56

The majority of citizens believe that the municipality has improved its performance and provides better services. This is strongly connected with the OSS, which opened in August 2004.

All in all, Doboj municipality provides improved quality services, which points to a higher effectiveness in service provision.

9.2. Efficiency

Efficiency means that fewer staff are now able to handle more services in less time.

In Doboj, the number of staff has stayed stable, but the time for providing services has decreased.

One of the most obvious time savers has been in the services provided by the civil registry office. Documents like birth certificates were once typed on manual typewriters. In peak times, such as in the late summer just before the new school year began, it would take two to three days to provide a birth certificate; in non-peak times it would take anywhere from several hours to one day. With the new software, a document can be printed out in seconds with a few clicks of the mouse. The information system has introduced new working methods and processes that lead to more efficient service provision. As for other services, in many cases the procedures have remained the same, as has the time needed to provide the service. The legal deadline for nearly all services outside the civil registry and notarization office is 16 days. What has

⁴ All figures are rounded which sometimes causes that the answers together sum up to only 99% or even to 101% in several categories. Besides this, the proportion of persons that refused to answer these questions is not taken into account in the presentation which can lead to an overall sum of less than 100% in several categories.

significantly decreased is the amount of time that citizens must spend in the desk hall for requesting a service.

The new OSS has made information about required documents for each service and request forms available, and staff clearly communicate which fee has to be paid and where. More citizens therefore arrive with the full set of required documents and filled out request forms to apply for a service. This keeps them not only from having to come back a second or third time, but it also reduces the amount of time they must spend at the desk. Their waiting time is tangibly reduced. In this case, better-informed citizens have increased efficiency.

9.3. Accessibility

The OSS should improve the accessibility of services for all parts of society, particularly accessibility for the rural population and for the disabled.

Doboj municipality's territory is about 700 km², with a population estimated at 90,000 people. Some 30,000 people live in Doboj proper, which means that two-thirds of the population lives in rural areas in various distances from the town.

The One-Stop Shop is located in the municipal building in Doboj's town center. The municipal building has a wheelchair ramp on the back side of the building, thus making it accessible to the disabled. The building's central location and the OSS's high visibility inside the municipal building makes the OSS easily accessible for both the town population and that of the surrounding towns and villages.

To better serve the rural population, there are 14 field registration offices. These offices provide only the services of the civil registry office and notarization, but the 2006 data shows that these two services are the most-requested services. All 14 field offices will be connected to the IT network and equipped with new computers and software in 2007.

The new facilities have also increased accessibility with an open and friendly atmosphere that makes it easier for citizens to approach the OSS for the first time. The high visibility of the different desks and the clear signs that show which desk belongs to which department are also helpful in this sense.

We can notice several things by looking at how the urban and rural populations answered questions in the above-mentioned opinion poll. The rural population may be using administrative services less than the urban population does (86 percent of the rural population has used administrative services in the last five years, as compared to 92 percent of the urban population), but the rural population is more satisfied with service provision than is the urban population. This indicates a satisfying service provision for rural population by the OSS.

The opinion of rural and urban population regarding the improvement of service provision is about the same. The results of the poll are as follows, in percentages.

How satisfied are you with the provision of administrative services?

	Not satisfied (%)	Acceptable (%)	Satisfied (%)
Urban area	21	38	40
Rural area	17	27	56

Compared to the situation five years ago, are you now 1) less satisfied, 2) as satisfied as before, or 3) more satisfied with the administrative service provision?

	Less satisfied (%)	Equally satisfied (%)	More satisfied (%)
Urban area	11	30	59
Rural area	8	32	60

9.4. Transparency

The transparency of service delivery first increased with the publishing of the procedures and costs of services. Dobož municipality has produced a number of leaflets that provide information regarding the services offered at different OSS counters (notarization, reception/protocol office and voter registration), as well as leaflets on registering businesses such as shops, agricultural businesses, services, restaurants and cafés, and handicraft shops. The leaflets explain what kind of documents are needed, how much they cost and how to proceed. Other leaflets explain the function and structure of the departments for housing and communal issues, inspection and communal police, and for construction, reconstruction and development. All these leaflets can be found at the information desk, along with additional information. The information desk also lets citizens know which request forms need to be filled out for whatever it is that they need. The information desk staff can answer questions and help fill out the request forms.

Once the network connection of all departments is completed, the information desk will also be able to provide information on the status of a citizen's request, including possible problems or missing documents.

Though much has been done to better inform citizens about service delivery, parts of the population still feel that they are poorly informed. Fifty-four percent of the citizens polled disagreed with the statement, "Procedures and fees of municipal administrative services are clear and changes are made public." Nevertheless, 38 percent stated that the situation has improved over the past five years and 46 percent of those polled stated that it had stayed the same. Any improvement can be the result of the OSS's information desk, as it provides the above-mentioned leaflets and service request forms. The information, however, does not reach all segments of the population, though no significant differences between urban and rural populations could be noticed. In fact, those polled from the rural population feel that they are better informed than do those from the urban population.

In terms of regularity in the payment of fees and corruption issues, the situation has improved since the OSS began functioning. Before, the municipal staff worked in closed offices that could not be observed from the outside. Corruption may therefore be eliminated by the open setup of the front desk hall, which allows staff and customers to control each other. Also, neither the OSS staff nor the departmental staff that provide the services deal with fees any longer. The customer now pays the fee at the bank counter and receives a receipt.

10. Support of MDP

10.1. Goal and main strategies of MDP

The Municipal Development Project (MDP) started its activities in the Doboj region in November 2001, with the goal to increase the development of municipalities within the framework of the "Good Local Governance" project in six partner municipalities. MDP is financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), as one of its central projects in BiH. The execution of the concept and the activities is commissioned to Intercooperation, a Swiss Foundation for Development and International Cooperation.

The project's goal is as follows: "Selected municipalities in BiH are functioning in an increasingly effective, efficient, transparent, accountable and participatory way, in conformity with the rule of law".

The project is now in its second phase. The setup of the Doboj OSS, which opened in August 2004, was part of MDP Phase 1, which lasted from November 2001 until August 2004.

Phase 1 had three activity lines, each with a specific objective under the mentioned purpose:

- 1) Supporting the development of a common vision on municipal development based on the principles of "good governance."
- 2) Fostering participatory governance through new mechanisms of co-operation within the municipality structures.
- 3) Supporting the elaboration and implementation of specific municipal projects.

MDP's general approach has been that of a facilitator, coordinator and capacity developer during the introduction and consolidation of transparent and participatory municipal management processes, and in bringing theoretical concepts into practice. The partners' demands play a determining role in deciding which actions to follow and which projects to support. All activities are implemented with the strong support of partners and the project always aims to find a balance between their interests and the internal strategies of MDP.

10.2. Support of MDP

MDP supported the establishment of the OSS financially, and by introducing the idea of such an organizational set-up and the use of special software for service provision to the mayor, council and administrative staff of Doboj municipality.

The setup of a new OSS and IT system was identified as a priority by Doboj municipality and MDP as an output of Vision and Mission of Doboj, which was developed by so-called Municipal Development Teams, including civil society and the private and public sectors. MDP has always been focused on improving the work of municipalities in a sustainable way, which means supporting strategy-making processes that will enable municipalities to improve the lives of citizens in the long run. Certain urgent demands of municipalities were responded to with direct project support.

Before the setup of the OSS, a type of front desk hall already existed, but no information was available on what kind of documents would be needed to request a certain service. People had to wait in line for hours for service provision, only to learn that they were missing a certain document. Service provision was ineffective, inefficient and provided behind closed doors. An IT system did not exist and all of the facilities were old, inconvenient and did not contribute to a nice and welcoming atmosphere. Therefore the renovation of the facilities, an open setup of the front desk hall and a modern, inclusive IT system were necessary.

First, MDP introduced the idea of an OSS, particularly of a modern IT and network system, and lobbied for it at the municipal level. A study tour to Sarajevo Center municipality, which was using such a system, was undertaken with MDP partner municipalities. Several municipalities including Dobož expressed their need for an IT system. MDP then engaged an expert team from Sarajevo Center municipality to develop special software for the civil registry office that would lead to far more efficient service provision. After the software was developed and staff were trained in Dobož, the RS ministry for Governance and Local Self Governance purchased similar software and gave it to the municipalities for free. Dobož municipality decided that this software would suit them more, installed it and had staff trained. MDP was aware of such a scenario, but because discussion of this issue had been long ongoing in the RS ministry and the decision had been delayed several times, it seemed to be the best option not to wait for a decision from the higher political levels and to ensure that both software were compatible.

MDP furthermore insisted on appointing an IT officer in Dobož, which included equipping a working place for him or her with a computer, Internet and server access. The IT system is the heart of the OSS and is essential for modern public management. Therefore it was crucial for the municipality to have an assigned IT officer that could manage and advance the IT installation. At the same time this was the biggest change for the municipality and for the working routine of the staff. It proved to be one of the most difficult tasks to both get the approval and support of the mayor and also the financial means allocated to put an IT officer into practice. The assigned person was trained in maintaining the network and server. The same applied for the installation of the OSS itself. MDP needed to convince the mayor to get a final commitment. The municipal council also needed to be persuaded as a basic stakeholder of OSS and the one responsible for allocating the budget. The council initially identified other priorities for the municipality, but changed its mind after a series of presentations showing the advantages of the new facilities and IT system. A study tour to Swiss municipalities which gave municipal officials the chance to experience well installed and functioning OSS was very effective in this respect. It finally brought the commitment needed to move on in the process.

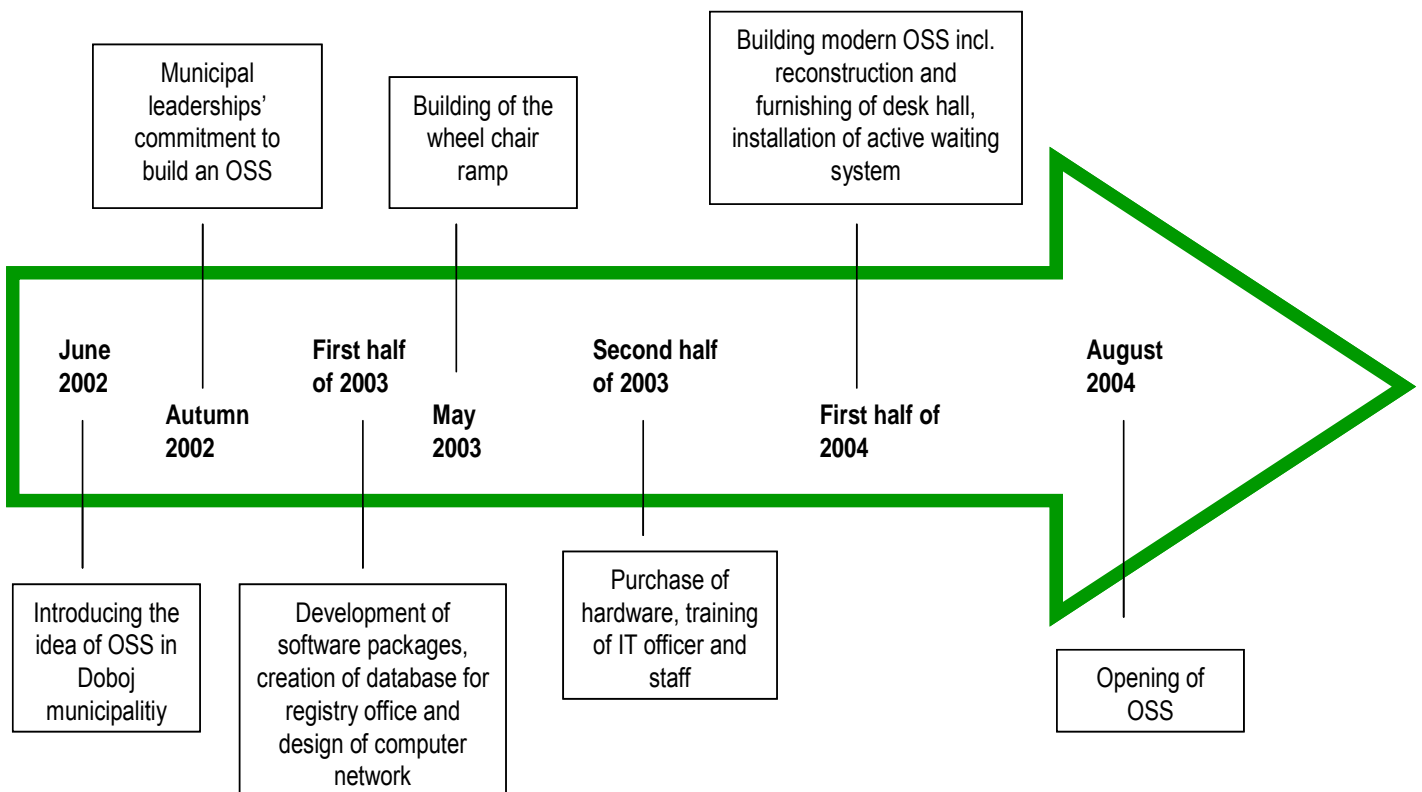
The staff members, particularly the staff of the general administration that would now have to work at the front desks, were quite skeptical at the beginning and even opposed the plan. They were worried that they might not get used to working with computers and lose their jobs because of it. They did not like the openness of the new front desk hall. They feared a noisy workspace and losing their work routine by being under social control of other staff members and customers, which would furthermore make taking bribes almost impossible. Their support for the OSS is essential, however, as the front desk staff are the ones that have direct contact with citizens and provide services. High-quality service provision therefore depends on their behavior. MDP showed them the advantages on several occasions, like the new equipment and the reconstruction of facilities that would provide them with a pleasant environment and computers that would ease their lives. This finally convinced them to agree to the project. The facilities of OSS are convenient and have improved the working environment and conditions for staff, so they have quickly adapted to the new situation and now have a more favorable attitude.

This contribution of MDP – introducing the idea and convincing the decision makers and employees – was seen by high-ranking municipal administrative staff as crucial and MDP’s most important support.

Furthermore, MDP contributed financially to the equipment and reconstruction of OSS. The financial contribution was welcomed, but the interviewed staff agreed that the installation of the OSS would not have been possible without MDP because it was necessary for an outside initiative to lobby for the idea. Even if municipalities can take and spend money, what is missing is a clear concept of how to best invest it, and strategies to improve citizens’ lives. This is exactly the point where the help of donors is needed.

MDP took its time to convince the mayor and the heads of department that an OSS was an appropriate instrument to improve the work of the municipality. The approach was clearly to cooperate with all partners and agree with them on all steps. The whole process required more time, but the partners appreciated the approach.

In summary, the main milestones of reconstructing the OSS and MDP support are as follows:



11. Conclusions and lessons learned

The concept of an OSS is no longer new in BiH, and more and more donors are supporting it within their good local governance projects. But even though both above-mentioned strategic documents on reforming local governance in BiH recognize the need to improve administrative services, OSSs are not mentioned explicitly as a possible instrument to do so, which means that implementing these strategies does not necessarily mean that OSSs will become common practices.

OSSs offer a simple concept that has advantages for all stakeholders and is as such convincing on its own. Still, there are conditions to be met and strategies to be followed to successfully introduce and operate an OSS in BiH. The experience of MDP revealed some of those conditions and strategies.

Lessons learned regarding the establishment and functioning of the OSS

- **No national guideline on OSS in BiH**, which means that its introduction will not become mandatory and it will be left to the international community to lobby for widespread OSSs.
- **Commitment and leadership of municipal management** is crucial to starting the process. The mayor is the first one that must favor an OSS project.
- **Good cooperation between the mayor and council** is important because the council allocates the budget. The commitment of both the mayor and the council is needed, and a bad relationship between the two can lead to delays or a serious hampering of the process.
- **Municipal staff directly concerned with service provision are important to the success of the OSS**, because without their support and acceptance of the OSS the process is blocked. The staff will not usually favor the OSS at the beginning, but practical successful examples of other municipalities will help win their approval.
- **Convenient setup of facilities and maintenance** is crucial for a good working environment and customers' and employees' satisfaction. This will help change the staff's attitude for the better. Regular maintenance is also needed.
- **The IT system** is the main part of setting up an OSS, including building a network. It brings the essential changes to the working methods, processes and internal organizations in municipal offices. It is a condition for OSS. The IT system also constitutes the biggest change, as it is something new in BiH, while the concept of the front desk hall is already familiar. Lack of political will for this change may cause problems with allocating budget funds for upgrading to the OSS or completing the IT system.
- **The organizational setup, a combination of both models for operating an OSS – RR (reception-return) and RPR (reception-processing-return) –** is the most appropriate choice in BiH as it corresponds to predetermination of lengths of service provision based on the type of service and assures a smooth functioning of the OSS without unnecessary waiting times for citizens.
- **Financial contributions of municipalities** are often available. The deciding factor is political will.

- **Running costs** are manageable and do not increase much, as no extra staff members need to be employed. Usually all OSS staff members remain in the jobs they had in the previous system. The combined-model organizational setup also contributes to this.
- **Maintenance costs** are basically for the IT system, and municipal officials need to keep this in mind when allocating the municipal budget.

Lessons learned regarding donor support

- **The main function is to promote the idea and initiate the change.** The process of change is unlikely to begin without the outside initiative and strong lobbying. The financial contribution was not seen as the most important component of the support. While this is true for larger municipalities that have larger budgets, it may not be the case in smaller municipalities. Financial support, however, is necessary to lobby and particularly to introduce the IT system.
- **The concept of a front desk hall for service provision** is already known and has been practiced for years, so the system itself does not need to be explained. On one hand, this makes it easier, as the main working processes are already familiar. On the other hand, it can make it more complicated to introduce sustainable changes. OSS staff also rejected working with modern software and computers at the beginning.
- **Quickly changing politics on higher levels** might double or hamper the efforts of donors. It is important to have the agreement of higher political levels for certain steps of the project that concern them as well, for example, the use of special software. But be aware that political issues can change quickly and agreements are not always followed.
- **Agreement of all stakeholders** needs to be achieved for the sustainable success of the project. It will be necessary to constantly lobby all municipal stakeholders (mayor, management, council and staff) for a new idea.
- **Good practices inside the country** or abroad are useful in persuading all of the stakeholders. Organize study tours and establish contacts to already successful working municipalities.
- **A step-by-step approach** based firmly on the agreement of partners may be slower, but it is more sustainable as attitudes change. Keep in mind that change is a process that needs a certain amount of time. Do not rush things, as this will be less successful in the long run.
- **Hindering factors** that frequently occur are the breaking of engagements by the municipality and changes of key staff that have already received education. Be aware that such things will probably slow down the process, and be prepared to find solutions for them.

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