

Dijaspora Short Term Experts Missions Needs Assessment Form (screening) for Institutions/Organizations

1. General Information

Country:	Serbia
Date:	11.04.2022.

2. Institution / Organization

Name:	RARIS – Regional Development Agency Eastern Serbia
Address:	Trg oslobođenja bb, 19000 Zaječar
Registered as:	Regional Development Agency
No. of employees:	8

3. Contact person within Institution / Organization

Name:	Boban Kostandinović
Position:	Project Manager

4. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF INSTITUTION / ORGANIZATION (WHEN FOUNDED? ORGANIGRAMM)

Organizational background

The Regional Development Agency Eastern Serbia - RARIS has been found in 2007 by: Municipalities of Majdanpek, Kladovo, Bor, Knjaževac, Boljevac and Sokobanja and the City of Zaječar, Regional Chamber of Commerce from Zaječar, Compani Road Enterprise, NGO The Timok Club, Faculty of Management - Zajecar.

Objective of RARIS is to support development initiatives based on institutional networking and partnerships aiming at sustainable development of Eastern Serbia.

The main activities of RARIS in the present work are: Identification of regional projects, Activities on regional projects, Preparation and implementation of projects, promotion and networking, lobbying and representation of interests, training activities.

Since May 16th 2011 RARIS is the first officially Accredited RDA in Serbia according to the Law on Regional Development. Accredited RDA in Serbia are providing various services to SME in Serbia on behalf of Serbian Ministry for Economy.

5. SECTOR / AREA OF WORK (INCL. COOPERATION EXPERIENCE WITH CIM / GIZ OR OTHER INT. DONORS / ORG.)

RARIS is providing a number of services to the Region:

- Supporting capacity building of local administration;
- Provide support to SME in cooperation with Serbian Development Agency, Ministry for Economy, Business incubators and Serbian Development Fund;
- Leading a Regional project for communal waste management on behalf of 7 Municipalities from the region in close cooperation with Ministry of Environment;
- Leading a Regional EU Platform within the project „Active Eastern Serbia in the EU accession process“ with two working groups: Environment and Rural development.

- Leading development and implementation of Regional Development Strategy for Eastern Serbia;
- Facilitation of inter-municipal cooperation.
- Facilitates Cross-border cooperation of Eastern Serbia with Bulgaria and Romania. RARIS is a member of working groups for Programming CBC Program Romania – Serbia and Bulgaria – Serbia for the period 2014 – 2020 and leads project and partners identification process for both Programmes.

RARIS has extensive experience in managing regional, cross-border and transnational projects, implementing 27 projects with EU or bilateral (GIZ, USAID, SDC, CIDA, OSCE, UNDP...) founding and more than 30 ones with Serbian funding.

In the period 2008-2017 RARIS implemented the project Municipal Economic Development in East Serbia. The project was aimed at promotion of local development in Eastern Serbia, strengthening municipal capacities to boost local economy and deepening accountability relationship among the local authorities, private and civil sector. The project is funded by Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), having the German International Cooperation (GIZ) as implementing agency.

In 2011-2012 RARIS implemented the Standardization of LED offices project. The project was aimed to supporting regional and local actors to promote regional and local economic development and ensure the growth of the private sector through strengthening and standardization of services LED Office. The project is funded by German International Cooperation (GIZ)

In 2020. RARIS is implementing "Development of a Sustainable Bioenergy Market in Eastern Serbia" project. The project is aimed at increasing public awareness about the importance of using renewable energy in Eastern Serbia. The project is financed by GIZ-DKTI program.

6. GENERAL NEEDS AND CHALLENGES (KNOWLEDGE DEFICIT)

The characteristic of the region of Eastern Serbia is that a large number of our citizens are temporarily working abroad - in the Diaspora. Most of them live and work in German-speaking countries - Austria, Germany, Switzerland. Unfortunately, the business connection between Serbia and diaspora is not nearly in line with that fact. Institutions and businesses are only sporadically achieving business relations with the companies, organizations and institutions from abroad. Since there is a trend of forming association and implementing big projects with partners from several European countries through HORIZON 2020 it is clear that businesses and institutions from Eastern Serbia are absent from these processes. RARIS is investing efforts to support and help its partners from the region to find their place in the projects in HORIZON, COSME, ERASMUS, Knowing the capacities and needs of the region we believe that its participation is insufficient and that the possibilities are exploited to the fullest.

Accordingly, RARIS is of the view that further training of employees is needed, as well as networking and networking with organizations and institutions in Western Europe in order to increase the involvement and continued participation of the region in EU tenders for larger partnership projects. In this respect, there is a need to hire an external expert from the diaspora. In our opinion, this can contribute to strengthening the capacity of our organization in the form of additional training of employees, as well as in connecting with potential partners for project preparation and implementation.

7. INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE / UNIT THAT WOULD REQUIRE SUPPORT

RARIS is a regional agency which works in the region of Eastern Serbia (Bor and Zajecar regions). RARIS employs a director, 3 project managers and 4 task managers. They are a target group for education and support by the external expert from diaspora.

8. TRAINING AND CAPACITY NEEDS (FORMAL KNOWLEDGE SHARING NEEDS)

The needs of RARIS can be defined broadly.
The main need is to increase capacity of identifying and making partnerships with similar organizations or regions in the EU.

9. INFRASTRUCTURAL NEEDS (EQUIPEMENT, OFFICE SPACE ETC.)

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10. MOTIVATION FOR REQUESTING A / EXPECTATIONS REGARDING THE DIASPORA EXPERT

In recent years, RARIS has participated in several projects in which the support of external experts has enabled additional training and capacity building of employees. Past experience has shown that external expert support can open up space for new opportunities, ideas and contacts for better and better business and customer service.

As a regional development agency, RARIS strives to in tune of the trends of Europe and the world, and to be the leader in new ideas and initiator of activities aimed at sustainable development of the region.

11. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information please visit our web page www.raris.org

RARIS is member of:

- ALDA - European Association for Local Democracy. Established at the initiative of the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, since 1999 ALDA operates in the European Union and in its Neighborhood. <http://www.ald-europe.eu/newSite/>,
- South – East Development Network – an Association of Regional Development Agency from NUTS 2 region 2South-East Serbia

RARIS has ongoing partnerships with:

- Serbian office for European Integration - member of the Working Groups for Programming the CBC Program Romania – Serbia and Bulgaria 2014 – 2020
- Development Agency of Serbia – a member of Network for Regional Development
- Serbian national association of local authorities - Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities – SCTM
- NALED – National Association for Local Economic Development
- European Movement in Serbia Memorandum of cooperation signed