

FLGR HAS ACCUMULATED EXPERTISE AND CAPACITY THAT WE COULD SUCCESSFULLY SHARE WITH ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES WORKING IN THE FIELD OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT, AS WELL AS BECOME PARTNERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMS CONSISTENT WITH OUR STRATEGIC GOALS. IF WE SUCCEEDED TO RAISE YOUR INTEREST, DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT US!

FOUNDATION FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

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FOUNDATION FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

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FLGR IS AN INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE CENTER, SUPPORTING LOCAL DEMOCRACY

FLGR's MISSION is to offer customized and need-based information, expertise and assistance, provoke innovations in local self-government, act as a mediator and build a broad network of domestic and international partners

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

In achieving its Mission the FLGR strives to:

1. Promote the dialogue and build public consensus for policy change and joint initiatives between local, regional and central governments and their civic partners 2
2. Provide professional development and consultations to local authorities and their civic partners for better governance 4
3. Provide needed and tailored information to local governments and other customers by using appropriate technology 6
4. Enhance its own capacity to support the implementation of projects of NGOs and municipalities 8
5. Assist local governments in establishing international partnerships based on professional interests 10
6. Ensure its sustainability as a non-profit organization 12

Dear Reader,



For seven years already the Foundation for Local Government Reform is successfully supporting itself as an **independent professional resource center, supporting local democracy.**

FLGR's rich experience includes: **successfully implemented public and inter-institutional mediation;**

research and analyses; training of municipal experts; delivery of expert consultations; dissemination of information and innovative practices in local self-government; networking: international cooperation of Bulgarian municipalities; funding and technical assistance to municipal and NGO projects that encourage local partnerships, improve municipal infrastructure and enhance the delivery of public services.

In order to meet local governments' needs, FLGR further strengthened its efforts in areas, such as: municipal property management; economic development and municipal marketing strategies; regional development; citizens participation; effective service delivery; and e-government, still new to our country. Through our international partners, we provide information on the international practices and trends in these areas that does not always give "the prescription" for overcoming problems but rather encourages creative thinking, discussion and change of attitudes and working style.

Our leading principles are teamwork and networking. More and more experts, municipal and regional specialists support FLGR's various initiatives by their ideas, knowledge and experience. This wide professional network of partners and friends is a guarantee for our common success - the improvement of local self-government in Bulgaria.

The Foundation works as a learning organization that constantly improves itself, responds to changes in the environment, focuses mainly on its customers and high performance for achieving tangible results. Thus, FLGR's vision, mission and strategic objectives are revised and updated annually. FLGR strives to achieve synergy between its different programs and projects, to replicate and build on the knowledge, practices and results generated by these programs.

FLGR focuses its efforts on: partnership between municipalities, between the different levels of government, between the organizations working in the field of local self-government; partnership between local governments, citizens and businesses; partnership with all international institutions and donors for effective and democratic: local self-government and sustainable development of local communities.

Ginka Kapitanova,
Executive Director

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1:

How in 2001 FLGR promoted dialogue and built public consensus for effective policy

Through various specific initiatives, five discussion fora and two topical publications, in 2001 FLGR increased its serious contribution to the development of new political culture based on cooperation and dialogue with local authorities and their organizations and with central legislative and executive authorities.



Signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation between FLGR and the Committee on Local Self-Government, Regional Policy and Public Works at the 38th National Assembly

Key achievement was a Memorandum of Cooperation between FLGR and the Parliamentary Committee on Local Self-Government, Regional Policy and Public Works. The Memorandum was officially signed in April, 2001, as a result of the mutually beneficial partnership between FLGR and the Parliamentary Committee and as a basis for successful future cooperation.

The two fora on the newly adopted Spatial Planning Act provided a detailed and multifaceted evaluation of the Act's practical implementation. The fora established a

successful mechanism for policy formulation and achieving public consensus. As a result of them, FLGR submitted 92 specific recommendations to the legislators.

The number of participants in the fora - 244 representatives of national, regional and local authorities, NGOs and business organizations - indicates the enormous interest generated by these discussions.

FLGR organized two discussion fora of the World Bank, attended by 120 participants and implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, on The Regional Initiatives Fund through the Perspective of its Beneficiaries and on The Regional Initiatives Fund Results and Lessons Learned. The fora provided valuable information from the users of the fund and all stakeholders about the achievements and results from the funded projects.

The fifth discussion forum for the year was held jointly by FLGR and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) on The North-Central Region Development Strategies and Funding Instruments. The forum provided all 80 attending experts with an opportunity to discuss the development planning process at national, regional and municipal level and the opportunities to finance the created strategies, programs and projects within the North-Central Region of Bulgaria.

FLGR's active media policy contributed to raising wide public awareness and understanding of local self-government's role and importance. Over 30 publications in the national press, 5 TV broadcasts and many radio interviews covered both important aspects of FLGR's activities and pressing issues, achievements and problems faced by Bulgarian municipalities.

In 2001, FLGR continued its tradition to assist municipalities with specialized publications regarding the practical implementation of legislative acts in the dynamically changing legislative framework. "The Commentary on the Territorial Development Act" by Savin Kovachev, published by FLGR, reached all municipal governments in the country and generated huge interest among specialist. The book

Policy forum on Evaluation of the Practical Implementation of the Spatial Planning Act, Sofia, 20 November, 2001



"Review of the Regional Policy in Bulgaria: Current Situation, Assessment and Perspectives" by Aleko Djildjov, Vassil Marinov and Florian Hauser, was also accepted with great enthusiasm by the experts in this field. The publication provided an objective overview of the regional policy and the European perspective on the country's preparation for using EU's structural funds and summarized the main recommendations on needed changes to Bulgaria's regional policy.

FLGR HAS A PROVEN REPUTATION OF A MEDIATOR BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT GOVERNMENT LEVELS FOR THE PROMOTION OF DIALOGUE AND BUILDING PUBLIC CONSENSUS ON ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES

"These discussion fora generate new ideas. I believe the result will be positive, especially for the members of Parliament. Here we receive many valuable recommendations."
Remzi Osman, Chair of the Committee on Local Self-Government, Regional Policy and Public Works, 39th National Assembly

"As representative of the central government, I highly appreciate FLGR's assistance in enabling us to raise real citizen participation in improving a particularly important legislative act."
Belin Mollov, Deputy-Minister of Regional Development and Public Works

"I have been involved in a series of meetings on the changes to spatial planning legislation. Those facilitated by FLGR are the most meaningful ones. The Foundation has proven that it continues to work for the implementation of the decisions made."
Tatyana Stoykova, Chief Architect, Municipality of Gabrovo

"Thank you for your great work and perseverance in organizing the Regional Initiatives Fund seminars on behalf of the World Bank. I would like to express our appreciation for your efforts and professionalism."
Peter Pjarski, Operations Officer, World Bank Office in Sofia

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3:

How in 2001 FLGR provided needed and tailored information to local governments and other users

Over the past one year, the Foundation significantly enriched the knowledge and increased networking opportunities of local authorities and their civic partners by means of its printed and electronic publications and databases, as well as in its capacity of a partner within the International Local Government Information Network (LOGIN).

'Commentary on the Spatial Planning Act'; 'Community Visioning and Strategic Planning'; 'Municipal Solid Waste Management Plans'; 'Review of the Regional Policy in Bulgaria'; 'Creating Municipal Customer Service Centers'; 'Introduction to Training for Adults'; 'Improving Service Delivery in Small Municipalities'; 'Organization of Visits'; 'Partners for Local Development: Successful Practices in Bulgaria'.

By the end of 2001, FLGR made an important addition to its traditional means for dissemination of information, the Electronic Weekly Magazine 'For Local Government'. This unique publication in Bulgaria immediately has attracted many users in a very short time (more than 1,000 subscribers). The E-weekly compiles comprehensive information in a convenient format, providing useful links to the online resources of FLGR and LOGIN.

In 2001, FLGR's website was enriched with new information and improved tools and options for user feedback and exchange. FLGR's virtual LOGIN library increased its online resources with over 400 new documents. The site continued to provide important news, legislative updates and information on new funding bids and grant programs, events, publications and projects implemented by FLGR or announced in cooperation with partner organizations and institutions. The registered 19,000 visits for the year indicate that the website is well-known, whereas over 50% of the visitors have been multiple users of FLGR's online information resources. A new tool, FLGR's electronic discussion forum, was test-launched at the end of 2001 as online space for professional exchange of opinions and ideas on local self-government hot issues.

In 2001, FLGR printed and disseminated over 30 publications. The Reform in Local Self-Government monthly newsletter and the Innovative Practices booklets preserved their role of constant sources of professional information and innovations to municipalities, NGOs and other interested institutions. The Foundation established a national Innovative Contribution Award and its first winner became the Municipality of Sliven.

New and most demanded titles among the books, manuals and brochures published by FLGR during the period were: 'How to Implement the Access to Information Act';



Annual and bi-annual digest publications in English of FLGR newsletter articles and best practices introduce international partners and donors to latest developments in Bulgarian local self-government and civil society

FLGR HAS A PROVEN CAPACITY TO PROVIDE NEEDED, UP-TO-DATE AND CUSTOMIZED INFORMATION TO A WIDE NETWORK OF PARTNERS AND USERS BY MEANS OF VARIOUS CHANNELS AND TOOLS OF COMMUNICATION

"We regularly receive your monthly newsletter and it keeps us on track with the news and novelties in local self-government and regional development."

Velichko Yordanov,
Regional Governor of Vidin

Your excellent publications make available to us the worldwide achievements of local self-government and I believe that this shared experience is helping our municipalities find the right way."

Bechet Kerim,
Regional Governor of Targovishte

"We thank you for your Electronic Weekly! I consider it a wonderful new initiative of FLGR, delivering useful information not only to municipalities, but also to non-governmental organizations in the sphere of economic development."

Todorika Dimitrova,
Executive Director of Varna Economic Development Agency

The bi-monthly Innovative Practices Booklets deliver leading Bulgarian case-studies to over 1800 readers in local, regional and central government institutions and civil organizations



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4:

How in 2001 FLGR enhanced its capacity to provide financial and expert assistance to local authorities and NGOs

In 2001, FLGR's team continued to successfully develop its own capacity in delivering financial and technical assistance to Bulgarian municipalities and NGOs. As a result of its focused efforts and by combining timely and comprehensive information, consultations and financial resources, FLGR has supported the partnership between local governments and citizens in improving public services and implementing important local initiatives, as well as the strengthening of the capacity of professional associations of municipal officers/councilors and regional associations of municipalities.

Svishtov, Kozloduy, Rousse and Silistra), the Foundation provided expert assistance to 14 small Danube region municipalities in drafting and publishing catalogues of municipal services. These municipalities also received computer equipment and software to improve the quality and efficiency of service delivery. As a result of the successful implementation of these initiatives, FLGR launched the first national bid for municipal project proposals within its new Improving Services to Citizens Program, funded by the USAID and aiming to create new customer service centers. Seven regional information meetings preceded the competition. They significantly increased local governments' understanding of this new, IT-based approach to public service delivery. Representatives of 132 municipalities attended the meetings. Nearly one half of all Bulgarian municipalities (110) submitted project proposals to FLGR and, finally, 33 were approved to receive funding. FLGR provided all Bulgarian local governments with specialized manuals with know-how on establishing customer service centers in big and small municipalities.

As a result of the effective management of USAID funding, FLGR managed to support the implementation of 4 additional infrastructure projects under the Danube River Initiative Program I and launched Danube River Initiative Program II. DRIP-II competition for project proposals was held in the end of 2001. 12 municipalities started implementing infrastructure projects with significant social impact and citizen participation. FLGR team provides expert assistance to the municipalities in the preparation of bidding and contractual documentation, as well as in the overall implementation of their projects.

Over the past year, the Foundation marked a significant growth of its activities in delivering financial and technical assistance to Bulgarian local governments and local NGOs with the support of the US Agency for International Development.

In addition to the already established five municipal customer service centers (in Vidin,

Children perform in the village of Alkiovo, Alkiovo municipality, with FLGR's support through a social project encouraging school attendance by providing extracurricular activities to children of low-income Bulgarian and Roma families



USAID/Bulgaria Mission Director, Debra McFarland, congratulates 33 citizens on their winning project proposals for the municipal customer service centers grants competition of FLGR

FLGR continued to support projects encouraging the interaction between local governments and civic organizations in the area of social activities. As part of the Improvement of the Social Environment Program, funded by Charles Stewart-Mott Foundation, FLGR supported the projects of 15 Bulgarian NGOs.

In September, 2001, FLGR started managing USAID's funding for the activities of the five leading regional associations of municipalities in Bulgaria. The Foundation continued its support to two smaller regional associations of municipalities and three professional associations of municipal officers/councilors.



FLGR INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY ITS CAPACITY TO MANAGE FUNDING PROGRAMS FOR MUNICIPALITIES AND NGOs, BASED ON TRANSPARENT AND COMPETITIVE PROCEDURES, AND TO PROVIDE INFORMATION AND EXPERT ASSISTANCE IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

"The municipal 'one-stop shop' services model has been widely recognized to be one of the best innovations in Bulgaria's public administration. The Foundation for Local Government Reform deserves a lot of credit for its enthusiasm in promoting, disseminating, replicating and implementing these innovations over the last four years."

Debra McFarland,
USAID/Bulgaria Mission Director

"We are extremely grateful to the FLGR for choosing us as a pilot municipality in the development of municipal marketing strategies."

The US expert that visited Rousse within the Danube River Initiative Program I saw that we are able to present objective and attractive information in order to bring investors to Bulgaria."

Jivko Denev, Deputy Mayor,
Rousse Municipality

"The Danube River Initiative Program I assistance was very timely. Through it we succeeded to involve our entire community in resolving environmental problems."

Ginka Ivanova, Secretary of the Novo Selo Community Center, Vidin Region

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5:

How in 2001 FLGR assisted local governments in establishing effective international partnerships

In 2001, FLGR's objective to assist local governments in establishing professional and sustainable international partnerships was achieved mainly by the implementation of Phase III of the Bulgarian Technical Twinning Program. Through the Program II partnerships of Bulgarian and US municipalities continued to exchange experience, know-how and best practices. At the same time new opportunities for direct replication of successful practices in 5 other Bulgarian municipalities, were created.

management techniques and approaches in the following spheres: park redevelopment and revitalization; financial mechanisms for infrastructure management and maintenance; urban development. Two partnerships were developing industrial park projects. Ten municipalities implemented municipal marketing and business recruitment programs. The successful projects developed by the individual Bulgarian-American partnerships proved to be a key source of innovative practices, experience and information. FLGR disseminated this information through topical seminars for municipalities from all over the country and within the Local Government Information Network. Thus, the Foundation expanded the circle of Bulgarian municipalities drawing on positive US local government experience.

FLGR and ICMA continued the implementation of the Serbia Resource Cities trilateral program, within which the cities of Sofia, Bulgaria, Nis, Serbia, and Columbus, Ohio, USA, cooperate on projects in local economic development, information services to citizens, water-supply and water treatment and preservation, focusing on the needs of the Serbian City of Nis.

In 2001, FLGR provided to interested Bulgarian municipalities competent consultations on effective international cooperation with partners from Europe and the United States. The Foundation started providing technical assistance in the development of twinning relations at regional level. Like in previous years, FLGR again disseminated timely information and provided consultations for the involvement of Bulgarian municipalities in the European



Eugenia Nichova, chief of the Vidin mayor's office, makes a presentation at a city council meeting in West Carrollton, OH

Funded by USAID and implemented jointly by FLGR and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), Washington D.C., the Bulgarian Technical Twinning Program supported the 13 Bulgarian partner municipalities in solving their common problems, as well as in new areas not addressed in the two preceding phases of the program. New practices were created in applying more effective



Diana Bohemova, International Program Coordinator of Silista municipality, poses with a promotional anniversary T-shirt of partner City of Kettering, OH, after working meetings with US colleagues on developing Silista's marketing profile kit



Commission's Town-Twinning Program. FLGR's website offers up-to-date and detailed Technical Twinning Database, containing useful practices, know-how and documents of the program, as well as a Twinning database, listing the international links and partnerships of Bulgarian municipalities.



"Veliko Turnovo is pleased with its excellent cooperation with FLGR and the implementation of the projects within the Technical Twinning Program. The Bulgarian and US municipal experts work extremely well together and the assistance from our American friends (Golden, CO) is invaluable."
Roumen Rashev,
Mayor of Veliko Turnovo

"Our mutual work with our American partners (West Bend, Wisconsin) is a compass for the development of Pazardzhik municipality."
Ivan Kolkachov, Mayor of Pazardzhik

"Our goal is to promote Vidin. The website of the Municipality of Vidin is being improved to allow investors find quickly demanded information."
David Humphreys,
Director of Planning and Economic Development,
City of West Carrollton, OH

"Thanks to the Bulgarian Technical Twinning Program and our Auburn partners, we are using new approaches, techniques, and mechanisms in the long-term and short-term planning process."
Gerazim Blagdanski,
Social Committee Member, Blagoevgrad

FLGR HAS A PROVEN CAPACITY TO ASSIST THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF MUNICIPALITIES AND REGIONS, BASED ON PROFESSIONAL EXCHANGE OF IDEAS, EXPERIENCE AND BEST PRACTICES BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND EXPERTS

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 6:

How did in 2001 FLGR ensure its sustainability as a non-profit organization

F LGR strives to diversify donor support to its initiatives and increase the share of funding from European programs. Efforts are made to also increase the share of paid services in the organization's consolidated budget.

The programs and activities of FLGR in 2001 were implemented mainly thanks to the assistance of the US Agency for International Development, as well as with support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, The Open Society Institute - Budapest and the Open Society Foundation - Sofia.

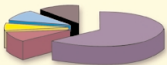
Joint FLGR Board and staff retreats once a year are a usual practice for the FLGR in order to update the Foundation's strategic plan, organizational values and leading principles of work. The 2001 meeting for that purpose was held in February and its outcome was new vision and mission statements and strategic objectives of the FLGR.

FLGR 2001 Programs in Terms of Total Budget Share



A major share of FLGR's program expenditures for 2001 belongs to subgrants (over 60%), delivered as direct financial support to other organizations and institutions in Bulgaria. For third consecutive year FLGR went through external financial audit that in 2001 was performed by Deloitte & Touche EOOD, Bulgaria.

Structure of Program Expenditures of the FLGR for 2001



- Support for the Local Self-Government Reform - 39.2%
- Danube River Initiative - 28.4%
- Technical Twinning - 12.7%
- LOGIN - 4.1%
- Social Environment Improvement - 12.4%
- Improving Public Administration by Training - 1.5%
- Other - 1.7%

FLGR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



(Top row from left to right) **Lachezar Roussev**, Chairman of the Board, Mayor of Dobrich Municipality; **Beñin Ataliev**, Deputy-Minister of Regional Development and Public Works; **Roumen Draganov**, Manager in Tourism

Savin Kovachev, Chief Expert Counselor to the Standing Committee on Local Self-Government, Regional Policy and Public Works at the National Assembly

(Second row from left to right) **Juĳa Watkins**, President of the American University in Bulgaria; **Ginka Kapilanova**, Executive Director of the FLGR, Mayor of Zlatograd Municipality from 1991 to 1995;

Emilia Panayotova, Ph.D., Senior Assistant at the Department of Law of Kliment Ohridski University in Sofia; **Zhefi Kamenov**, Vice-Chairman of the Board, Coordinator of the Danube 21 Euroregion, Mayor of Vidin Municipality from 1991 to 1995

In 2001, FLGR's Board of Directors increased by three new members. FLGR Board members are personalities with serious professional contribution and experience in various aspects of local government and civil society in Bulgaria. The board plays an active role in formulating FLGR's management policy and contributes expert knowledge and support for the successful implementation of activities.

The team of FLGR consists of 23 competent employees who have been working at the Foundation for the last 3 to 4 years. Team members are proactive and responsive in cooperating with FLGR's partners and customers/beneficiaries and constantly upgrade their knowledge and develop their capacities through short-term training in Bulgaria and internationally.

FLGR ENSURES ITS SUSTAINABILITY BY CONSTANTLY IMPROVING ITS TEAM'S PROFESSIONAL SKILLS, STRIVING TO DIVERSIFY FINANCIAL SUPPORT, LOOKING FOR NEW INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND INCREASING THE SHARE OF PAID SERVICES

"FLGR has become an important local government reform advocate and powerful think-tank promoting policy reform and public-private partnership. Through the Foundation for Local Government Reform, USAID works to improve the capabilities of non-government organizations to represent civil society on governance issues."
Partners in Transition,
USAID/Bulgaria publication, 2001