

Together with Less Litter

Center for Development “Fokus”, Serbia and Montenegro (Municipality of Trstenik)

Project Background

While the Municipality of Trstenik has a communal waste disposal site with a high capacity to meet waste needs for some time, waste collectors don't usually visit rural communities. The Public Utility Company (PUC) – Komstan – and communal enterprises in Velika Drenova and Stopanja face technical problems, a lack of rural waste collection centers, and the high cost of transportation. Rural residents have taken to illegal dumping, and a number of wild dump sites have developed which are threatening Trstenik's drinking water supply, as well as its soil and air quality. With the passing of the Law on Local Self-Government, communal waste management has been down-serviced to municipal authorities, who are just now becoming aware of the necessity of cooperating with local citizens to enhance environmental protection in a situation of fiscal austerity. Fokus will undertake a number of activities to bring authorities, the public, and waste collecting stakeholders together to find a manageable solution – including selecting sites for temporary waste disposal. Through a combination of public awareness-raising, workshops, and forums, Fokus will help all stakeholders contribute to a plan on rural communal waste collection, targeting the villages of Pocekovina, Stopanja, Velika Drenova, Milutovac, and Grabovac. By engaging the public in decision-making, Fokus will promote the Aarhus Convention.

Goals and Overall Objectives

Raising Awareness on the Problems and the Need for Solutions

While authorities, service providers, and the public alike are aware of wild dumping sites, all stakeholders need to become aware of the environmental costs of maintaining the status quo, and the legal requirements of waste collection that should be addressed.

Engaging Stakeholders in a Dialogue

Fokus will conduct a series of roundtables and forums to solicit feedback from all parties, while encouraging stakeholders to work together now and in the future.

Drafting a Waste Collection Plan

With the active involvement of all parties in accordance with the Aarhus Convention, a plan for waste collection will be drafted, vetted, and formalized for implementation.

How to Get There – Specific Activities

- **Formulating a Draft Plan for Waste Collection**

After holding preliminary meetings with local authorities, municipal communal services, and NGOs, Fokus will initiate a dialogue between stakeholders. PUC will author the first draft of a plan on waste collection, selection, and proposed temporary disposal sites in the selected villages.

- **Raising Public Awareness/Media Campaign**

From the first plan to the last, the public will be regularly reminded and updated about the stages of the project itself, the current environmental situation, the status of each version of the plan, and ways they can get involved through leaflets and brochures, as well as through the media in the form of articles and radio jingles. Through a combination of a roundtable, a press conference, and other media activities, the public will be encouraged to participate in the project.

- **Establishing Current Legal Requirements for Waste**

Fokus will prepare information on current legal regulations in the area of communal waste management, hold a meeting with relevant authorities and services, and agree on the content of leaflets and brochures targeted to citizens. This will help citizens become aware of service requirements, and assist authorities and PUC in preparing for the enactment of such requirements.

- **Holding Public Forums in target Villages**

Under the title, “Communal Waste – How to Find Solutions Together,” Fokus will solicit public feedback on both PUC’s draft plan, and the legal requirements on communal waste management. Forums will take place in target communities and involve all stakeholders. At the end of the forums, Fokus will distill public input into a Citizens’ Proposal for Waste Collection which will be considered in the final plan. Moravksi Orasak – a partner NGO – will assist with the forum stage.

- **Creating and Formalizing the Plan for Waste Collection**

In cooperation with PUC, Fokus will facilitate a public roundtable entitled “Together with Less Litter” where the final plan for waste collection will be presented to the public and media. Any final input from the public on the plan will be collected before a final presentation is held, at which point the public will be informed of new waste collection timetables and how they can contact authorities about environmental issues.

Outcomes

Throughout the project, Fokus hopes to engage all Trstenik stakeholders in a dialogue about environmental waste issues, legal requirements regarding waste collection, and the need for public participation in the development of solutions. Through public participation, a plan will propose ways of addressing waste collection gaps. Both the proposed plan and lessons learned from the project will encourage other municipalities to pilot their own public participation projects.