



**Evaluation of the IPA 2007 Project Implemented by UNHCR
in Cooperation with Housing Center**



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and Housing Center**

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List of abbreviations

CC	Collective Center
CHA	City Housing Agency
CoC	Contract on Cooperation, signed between 4 parties: Serbian Commissioner for Refugees, Municipality, UNHCR, Center for Social Work
CSW	Center for the Social Work
EAR	European Agency for Reconstruction
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
HC	Housing Center
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
JC	Joint Committee for Selection of Beneficiaries
LAP	Local Action Plan for Refugees and IDPs
MESP	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning
MHA	Municipal Housing Agency
MLSP	Ministry of Labor and Social Policy
MOP	Family Financial Support (Assistance)
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding signed between 4 parties: Serbian Commissioner for Refugees, Municipality, UNHCR, Center for Social Work
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PA	Private Accommodation
RS	Republic of Serbia
RSD	Republic of Serbia Dinar
SCR	Serbian Commissioner for Refugees
SHSE	Social Housing in Supportive Environment
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USD	United States Dollar

1. Introduction

Terms of reference - Evaluation of the IPA 2007 project Implemented by UNHCR and Housing Center

1.1 Background

The Republic of Serbia is the country with the highest number of refugees and internally displaced persons in Europe and one of the countries that host the persons with the longest refugee status in the world.

As of 31 December 2010 there were about 73,364¹ persons with refugee status in Serbia. The number of refugees has been reduced from 800.000 persons in the period 1996 – 2009 by about 80%. This drop in the number of refugees mainly resulted from their integration in Serbia (more than 200.000 persons have obtained the Serbian citizenship), which also represents the largest integration process in Europe. As per the data of the Commissariat for Refugees for 2009, Serbia also hosts 209.722 internally displaced persons from the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija and on the territory of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija there are additional 20.000 internally displaced persons. A big number of extremely vulnerable refugees and internally displaced persons have been sheltered in collective centers, in which 5.386 persons are presently living in inadequate conditions.¹²

1.2 Refugees and IDPs in Serbia

Refugees and IDPs are among the most vulnerable, poor and socially excluded groups of citizens in Serbia today. The poverty index of refugees is almost aligned with the one of the general population (7.4 % versus 6.6 %) while the poverty index of IDPs compared to the general population is considerably higher (14.5% to 6.6%).³

It is assumed that the most vulnerable among the displaced populations are those accommodated in the collective centers (CCs). The living conditions in almost all CCs are far from appropriate; some structures have been improved thanks to interventions carried out by international organizations, but daily life remains hard and precarious, particularly for families with children, elderly people and disable persons; over 40% of CC residents are extremely vulnerable individuals (EVIs)⁴. Long-term accommodation in CCs (some refugees have been living in CCs for more than 15 years) has left a strong impact on some of these families who have become extremely dependant on humanitarian aid and whose capacities to actively search for

¹ UNHCR, unofficial data of 27 January 2011

² The Commissariat for Refugees of the Republic of the Republic of Serbia, October 2009

³ IDP LSMS, UNHCR/UNDP, 2007

⁴ Analysis of Extremely Vulnerable Individuals in CCs, June 2008, UNHCR

durable solutions outside of CCs have been undermined. A large portion of displaced accommodated in private accommodation are similarly vulnerable.

An initial assessment of residents of CCs carried out by UNHCR and the SCR shows that in order to provide durable solutions to this category, the most needed action is Social Housing in Supportive Environment. While some effort has been made by the international community to support this particular type of project, the needs are still very important and tangible.

1.3 Social Housing in Supportive Environment (SHSE)

In its endeavour to create the conditions for integration of the most vulnerable categories of refugees living in collective centers who opted for staying in Serbia, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Serbia, in the period 2003 - 2005, in cooperation with the local self-governments, Centers for Social Work, Commissariat for Refugees of the Republic of Serbia and UNHCR, developed the project Social Housing in Supportive Environment as a new form of social protection in 17 municipalities.

In the course of time Social Housing in Supportive Environment has been recognized as a sustainable programme for solving the social integration of the vulnerable refugees and internally displaced persons in the local environment, but also for providing for the local vulnerable population. Nowadays this form of social protection exists in 21 municipalities.

SHSE is an attempt at providing a sustainable housing solution for the vulnerable people who – mostly in combination with economic problems – do not have the necessary social skills and living competence to organize a self-reliant independent life. What they have in common is the lack of ability to solve their housing problem on their own. The role of SHSE is not only providing housing, it is also an important instrument for facilitating social inclusion.

The SHSE aims at responding to the needs of the most vulnerable segment of displaced population. Special attention is given to the most vulnerable – children, elderly, people with disabilities, women headed households, victims of SGBV, to provide them with normal living conditions out of the CCs or from inadequate private accommodations.

Apart from helping the socially disadvantaged to meet their housing needs, SHSE contributes to the creation of an inclusive and integrated society by creating an environment that assists specific target groups in improving their opportunities in life.

The project has two components:

- construction of social housing units and
- creation of supportive environment.

The project reflects the idea that social integration of vulnerable people in a local context is possible through independent organization of their life, by living in community and recognizing vulnerable people as dynamic personalities.

Local community is the key guarantee for the project sustainability. It has numerous roles in this project. Being the owner of the apartments and buildings, the municipality is responsible for the regular building maintenance. By issuing the Decision on the SHSE as one of the extended social rights in the municipality, the long-term financial sustainability is achieved.

1.4 Project IPA 2007

Within the IPA 2007 project UNHCR and its partner Housing Center built 80 apartment units in Social Housing in Supportive Environment for the most vulnerable in four selected municipalities (Negotin, Vranje, Leskovac and Smederevo). All four municipalities host a large number of refugees and IDPs in Collective Centres (CCs) and/or in unsatisfactory private accommodation. Among them there are many people with special needs, single parents, women headed households, victims of Sex and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) elderly and other vulnerable categories of the displaced. The local economy is very poor and there are also many social cases among the local population.

The overall objective of the proposed action was to provide support to the Government of Serbia in achieving durable solutions for refugees from Croatia and BiH, and dignified solutions for internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Kosovo. Focus was placed on refugees and IDPs from CCs or inadequate private accommodation, with a special attention to the EVI population. In order to keep a balanced approach that may facilitate social integration, a number of vulnerable domicile families was included.

1.5 Evaluation

1.5.1 Objective of the evaluation

As described in the project proposal approved by the EU, an external evaluation will be contracted towards the end of the implementation phase of the IPA 2007 project.

The purpose of this evaluation would be to assess success of the past activities and develop proposals (guidelines) for improvement of activities in future implementation. Namely, the purpose of this assessment would be to assess satisfaction of both service providers – stakeholders on the local level and beneficiaries, to identify weaknesses in the implementation as well as to identify possible courses of action to improve activities. The analysis will be based on the results of qualitative and quantitative assessment of service providers – local stakeholders and beneficiaries of the SHSE project.

Beneficiaries will be asked to express their opinions on a number of issues, i.e. on their perception of provided services with particular attention to level of satisfaction with the new form of housing assistance, gaps identified and their perception to what extent the solution met their actual needs. In addition to this it is very important to find out what is the real impact of the SHSE on their lives and social inclusion.

Evaluation of service providers – Center for Social Work, Host Family and the local community will consist of assessment of: cooperation with UNHCR and Housing

Center, technical, operational and management capacities, financial aspect of their involvement and methods of work. Finally, particular attention will be given to outreach of service provided.

The evaluation should also take into account other relevant researches and policy solutions that may provide broader perspective in the context of the housing and social housing in Serbia, specially housing for the vulnerable groups, including refugees and IDPs.

Objectives of the evaluation are to strengthen the SHSE concept and to present the conclusions which might be useful for all the partners in the future development of this project. The evaluation findings will be a kind of Lessons Learned and will be shared among the project stakeholders. This will be used as a specific knowledge management instrument for institutional learning.

The results will be shared with the donor and would be part of the final report.

1.5.2 Tasks

The main focus of the evaluation is the assessment of the implementation process itself:

1. Selection of municipalities

The experts will be involved in analyzing the principles for the selection of the municipalities, to confirm the needs in the selected municipalities and the relevance of the action i.e. to:

- evaluate the appropriateness of the project intervention and
- evaluate the capacity of the local structures to manage the future work of the SHSE.

2. Relations among the project partners

- MoU
- Contract on Cooperation

3. Constructions process

- transparency in the selection of contractor,
- cooperation with the local authorities during the construction process,
- problems stated during the process,
- effectiveness of the selected procedures,
- involvement of the municipality and its roles in the process

4. Selection of beneficiaries

The focus is will be placed on the effectiveness of the intervention, i.e. beneficiary selection process, especially:

- procedures
- selection criteria
- transparency

- documentation and protocols
- composition of the Joint Commission,
- roles and responsibilities of the members of the Commission
- manner of work
- decision process
- function of the local CSW,
- support of the municipal authorities, etc.

5. Roles and responsibilities of all stake-holders in the project

1.5.3 Duties and Responsibilities

- Establish and maintain contacts with UNHCR and Housing Center
- Establish and maintain contacts with the project institutional partners – SRC, local communities, local centers for social work
- Establish and maintain contacts with local stakeholders – Center for Social Work and Host Family
- Analyze existing documentation
- Propose Methodology for collection of information and agree on tools and timeline
- Develop performance Indicators for evaluation of results.
- Conduct visits to the four municipalities
- Conduct interviews and/or survey with key actors and beneficiaries
- Produce evaluation report (qualitative and quantitative information) with recommendations for improvement in liaison with UNHCR
- Present report to interested public upon request from UNHCR

1.5.4 Expected outputs

An evaluation report which contains:

1. Presentation of findings and analysis
2. Analysis of programme success factors
3. Actionable recommendations on aspects of the programme

1.5.5 Skills and Competencies

- Excellent communication and organizational skills;
- Data analysis, presentation and reporting skills;
- Ability to work as a part of a team, as well as independently;
- Computer skills (MS Office, Internet);

- Excellent knowledge of written and spoken English language.

1.5.6 Qualifications and Experience

- University degree level in social sciences; advanced degree will be an asset;
- At least five years of working experience in the area in vocational education and training and/or monitoring/evaluation.
- Experience in working in international organisations, civil society or governmental institution on vocational training issue;
- Advanced analytical and excellent writing skills;
- Well organized, methodical, able to set priorities and pay attention to detail.

2. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation represents situation analysis of all the activities and achieved results of the Project. The analysis were primarily qualitative while some of the important quantitative analysis, that would be further statistically processed were not possible since at the time of the evaluation, the SHSE buildings were only partially occupied by beneficiaries. In fact, the evaluation has analyzed the following elements of the Project:

- selection of municipalities,
- roles and responsibilities of the partners and other stakeholders,
- design and construction,
- selection of beneficiaries and
- exploitation.

The final element, exploitation, in fact meant the issues related to sustainability of the Project and of the SHSE program itself. During the work on evaluation, we have concluded that the task is about systemic improvement of SHSE program and therefore all the analysis, hypothesis and questions were conducted by our impressions on its priority improvement goals. This corresponds to the empirical nature of the evaluation.

The following methods were used:

- descriptive analysis of all the Project documentation including comparative analysis of some of the documents that were particular for every municipality
- all the respective laws and other regulations are collected and analyzed
- interviews with all partners and key stakeholders in all municipalities
- setup of number of hypothesis for each part of the process and adjusting questions accordingly
- descriptive analysis of the performed activities, based on reports and interviews
- quantitative analysis of limited number of the Project results

The evaluation is done through the following steps:

- identification of all the relevant institutions and stakeholders and the relevant Project documentation
- collection of contacts with all relevant stakeholders and all the relevant Project documents
- performing initial general and detailed interviews with the employer, representatives of UNHCR and HC
- analyzing all agreements and contracts

- drafting the first set of questions for interviews
- interviewing all local stakeholder, visiting present (SHSE) and former living conditions (CC) in the municipality, where the project is most advanced and testing the initial questions
- adjusting questions according to relevance and stakeholders' perception of priorities and setting working hypothesis and preparing the guiding interviews
- performing interviews in the other three municipalities with all stakeholders
- systematizing issues, grouping answers and structuring contents of the evaluation
- drafting the evaluation and additional information and document collection via telephone, telefax and e-mail, from all key stakeholders.
- drafting the evaluation report

3. Analysis of programme objectives and processes

3.1 Selection of municipalities

In 2007 UNHCR established an internal database of 25 municipalities with the highest concentration of refugees and IDPs, carefully monitoring the changes. This was possible mostly due to UNHCR's constant field presence in these municipalities while continuous monitoring provided excellent input for the mentioned database. Besides the first criteria regarding presence of vulnerable households in CCs, the pre-selected municipalities had been identified based on their commitment to participate and contribute to this project, but also due to the general underdevelopment of the regions in which they were located. The four selected municipalities (Vranje, Leskovac, Negotin, Smederevo) are municipalities with CCs that host a large number of refugees and IDPs, many of which are extremely vulnerable individuals (over 40% of CC residents). The living conditions in almost all CCs are far from adequate; some structures have been improved due to donations and interventions of international organizations, but daily lives remained hard and precarious, particularly for families with children, elderly people and disable persons. This project targeted the most vulnerable and those with special needs primarily.

All of the selected municipalities have adopted the Local Action Plan for Refugees and IDPs (LAP) before concluding the Memorandum of Understanding between the SCR, UNHCR, CSW and the municipality and the following Contract on Cooperation, which is the operational document of the MoU. Except in Negotin, where LAP is adopted in 2008, in all other municipalities LAPs were adopted at the beginning of 2009 and they all included the Project, since it was already approved by the EC.

Smederevo

Smederevo, with 850 refugees and 8,181 IDPs, is among seven Municipalities with the highest number of displaced in Serbia and also a host to the largest CC in Serbia (70 refugees and 503 IDPs).

Vranje

In Vranje, some eleven CCs have been closed since 2000 due to various durable solutions projects funded by EAR and UNHCR. Vranje is currently hosting 132 refugees and 6,035 IDPs out of which 5 refugees and 205 IDPs are accommodated in five remaining CCs. Presently, Vranje has two SHSE buildings and has a good experience with the program.

Leskovac

Leskovac hosts one remaining CC (five CCs have been closed since 2000) which is providing shelter to 3 refugees and 94 IDPs (of 242 refugees and 5,191 IDPs in total in Leskovac). Previous CCs closures clearly showed the municipalities' willingness to deal with these issues and to participate in such projects.

Negotin

Negotin hosts 1 CC (Hotel Inex), sheltering 19 refugees and 187 IDPs, where living conditions are very sub-standard – the rooms are overcrowded and many residents belong to the vulnerable category. Based on the above, it is understandable where the initiatives and the need for intervention in these municipalities come.

3.1.2 Appropriateness of selection

UNHCR made selection of four municipalities (Negotin, Vranje, Leskovac and Smederevo), while making a reserve in other pre-selected municipalities in case some of the selected gives up or has problems in fulfilling agreed responsibilities, thus reducing the risk of non-performance in the project. The criteria of selecting municipalities are in accordance with the National Strategy for Solving Problems of Refugees and IDPs of 2002, UNHCR's and SCR's plan of closing collective centers, and most importantly, based on the agreement, signed between SCR and EU Delegation, on financing and implementation of IPA 2007 program *Support to Refugees and IDPs in Serbia*.

In the selected municipalities, all collective centers are in bad conditions with very low living standards and with high concentration of the most vulnerable households needing a special social protection.

	No. of inhabitants	Total no. of refugees / in CC	Total no. of IDPs / in CC	No. of CCs
Negotin	44,000	160 / 19	512 / 187	1
Vranje	87,288	132 / 5	6,035 / 205	5
Leskovac	162,000	242 / 3	5,191 / 94	1
Smederevo	110,000	850 / 70	8,181 / 503	1

Table 1. Selected municipalities. Main population indicators before the project action

In parallel with the project action, UNHCR has provided support in other housing and income-generation solutions to help the closure of CCs, taking care of significant differences in vulnerability and capacity of self-sustainability of the targeted population. This comprehensive approach was especially noted in Leskovac where it brought to closure of the last CC.

All four municipalities have confirmed their commitment to this action and demonstrated great enthusiasm in cooperation and resource mobilization, which proved that starting assumptions were correct and the selection appropriate.

3.1.3 Motivation of municipalities to participate

The highest officials of the four municipalities (mayors and members of the councils) expressed high appreciation of the Project and of the SHSE program itself. The best proof, which also confirms adequate selection, is that the three municipalities still having CCs (Smederevo, Negotin and Vranje) express their readiness to repeat this kind of project. In fact, Negotin is applying for new financing to construct additional

two floors on the existing building (!), while Smederevo and Vranje plan to go with another SHSE building. In addition, during the interview, the mayor of Vranje was so convinced in qualities of SHSE that he even considered the hypothetical option of taking a favorable loan for new social housing construction in order to solve the housing problems of poor and vulnerable.

3.1.4 Municipal perception of Project beneficiaries

In our interviews, the officials in municipal governments expressed a general remark on giving priority to CC dwellers over the similarly vulnerable refugees and IDPs renting housing on the market and local vulnerable population living in sub-standard conditions. This attitude is generally well known and the Project strongly confirmed this situation in Leskovac. There, the local authorities insisted on setting a quota at 40% of housing units for displaced living in private accommodation. It turned out at the end that, by applying the same selection criteria, these beneficiaries appeared as more vulnerable than those from CCs.

This issue is probably regularly raised by local authorities, but fixed conditions of the Call for proposals are agreed at national level and seem difficult to change. On the other hand, municipal authorities are exposed to problems of displaced persons in a very long period and after 10 or 15 years they accept them as their local problems. That is why they are eager to close CCs and this objective might be higher priority for them than it is for the State or UNHCR. However, in Negotin, the mayor and the local trustee suggested that raising the ratio of local population to 50% would be fair⁵. Raising the ratio of local population would be a strong additional motivation for reluctant municipalities still having CCs.

3.1.5 Municipal perception of Project costs

A common observation coming out from the interviews with local authorities is a general misperception of the Project costing, in particular for the part to be borne by the municipality. It appears mainly in estimation of resources needed for the local construction contribution (land, planning and property issues, infrastructure services, permits). Excluding the value of land (not relevant since it remains public property), the expected costs in almost all municipalities increased significantly. For example, in Smederevo these costs amounted to more than 10 million RSD (approx. 100.000 EUR) and it is still not known how much funds it is needed to finish the project. Similarly, in Negotin it amounted to 10 million, in Vranje 8,5 million and in Leskovac 10 million dinars.

Another wrong perception of costs refers to the exploitation phase. In all municipalities, our interlocutors were not aware, or not considering as the future problem items such as: continual existence of a) ***maintenance costs***, b) ***common and individual utility costs***.

⁵ 20% of the dwellings are distributed to domicile population with the aim of strengthening the integration process and additionally motivate municipalities to accept the integration programs.

3.1.6 Municipal perception of the capacities needed for management of the Project

In general, municipalities seem not to be efficient in implementing such projects, simply because not many of them have qualified bodies and professionals within the local government to do it. None of the four municipalities tasked such a department and management of their responsibilities was usually assigned to people without any technical knowledge (trustees, heads of social service departments, municipal PR officer). In two separate cases, focal points have experienced big problems in performing their tasks related to land preparation, property, planning issues etc. Impression of the project implementer, HC, is that none of the municipalities have smoothly fulfilled their tasks.

3.1.7 Perception of the capacities needed to manage and maintain the SHSE building

The SHSE general concept presumes that CSW is the competent institution to manage not only the social problems of the tenants, but also the property they use. All municipal authorities accept this concept, since it is given as part of the package, not arguing with the implementing agency. Based on discussions with all interviewees from CSW and municipal authorities, as shown in the practice, this institutional setting is not appropriate.

As all the interlocutors stated, the municipal authorities are willingly accepting the Project. However, it is advisable that municipalities are better informed about their responsibilities. It would be good that they know what are their inputs in detail (land, human and financial resources) and how the SHSE will be used in future (tenants management, operation and maintenance costs, subsidies). This would lead to more efficient project implementation, but even more, to future sustainability. The project needs to develop some kind of guidelines including all necessary details, i.e. those related to rents and rent subsidies.

3.2 Roles and responsibilities and relations between the partners and stakeholders in the project

The Project stems from the agreement signed between the Government of Serbia, which was represented by SCR and EC delegation on EC IPA 2007 Programme 07SER01/09/11. Based on this document after application and selection, the implementing agencies, including UNHCR have signed a joint MoU with SCR in May 2009. The summary of the Project with the four municipalities listed is annexed to this MoU.

The SHSE concept is based on partnership and has been developed on the ground of good cooperation between the parties involved. The MoU and the CoC are signed between the project partners where roles and responsibilities are defined in general. The two documents are concluded between five parties: Serbian Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR, the municipality, Housing Centre and the Municipal Center for Social Work, while rental contracts are concluded between CSW and the selected beneficiaries, including the Host Family.

The general impression is that communication and cooperation between the partners on each of the four projects were at satisfactory level.

Main project partners

3.2.1 Serbian Commissioner for Refugees

With the previously mentioned agreement on implementation of EC IPA 2007 the SCR has agreed with the EC an overall framework of financial support to refugees and IDPs, based on the National Strategy for Solving Problems of Refugees and IDPs of 2002 as well as on best practice of various housing and livelihood assistance programs implemented so far in Serbia.

As for the other parties involved, the role of SCR is participation in preparation of rules for selection of beneficiaries and work in Joint Commission for Selection of Beneficiaries. Presence of SCR in all phases has ensured that Project has been implemented according to interests formulated at central level. SCR keeps track of all projects assisting refugees and IDPs and maintains a database of refugees and IDPs that have received that assistance. The purpose of managing this information is to avoid possible irregularities in multiple assistances.

3.2.2 UNHCR

UNHCR was responsible for the overall management and coordination of the project. Financial control was led by UNHCR Programme and Finance staff, while a very important role was played by UNHCR field staff as well as social workers, especially during the initial negotiation with municipalities, but also during pre-screening of CC residents and follow up with the stakeholders during Project implementation. UNHCR also ensured visibility of the project, both through its TV shows, as well as through the very attractive and informative visibility material produced specifically for the project.

UNHCR initially obtained Letters of Support from the four selected municipalities, afterwards confirmed by the MoU on cooperation and implementation of the project was signed with each municipality and other main partners at the inception of the project. The MoU specified foremost principles of future cooperation, but the final responsibilities and obligations were defined by signing of the Contract on Cooperation.

UNHCR was represented in the Joint Commission for Selection of Beneficiaries with two members –one was the responsible Field Officer and the other, the representative of its implementing partner Housing Center, delegated by UNHCR.

A very important factor of adequate selection of municipalities and highly expressed interest among targeted beneficiaries, as well as of their final selection, was the field presence of UNHCR from the very beginning of the refugee and IDP problem. UNHCR field officers in fact have had deep insight in situation of CC dwellers in each of the four cities and they know the majority of the most vulnerable families through individual contacts.

Information received from UNHCR field officers, merged with data on joint UNHCR / SCR 2009 CC residents' needs assessment survey, brought to optimal decisions and justified feasibility of proposed solutions. Field officers played an important role in explaining the program to the applicants and helped them to complete their

applications. In the joint selection committees, field officers were able to testify actual situation of majority of the household that applied, having already a constructive opinion on best solution for particular households.

As per UNHCR's good practice, also proven in this project, whenever the objective is to close CCs, it is recommendable that SHSE is offered in combination with other housing options which proved to be the most efficient approach.

3.2.3 The Municipalities

According to the Contract on Cooperation (as previously indicated in the MoU), municipalities had to provide construction land that is equipped with adequate communal infrastructure (water line, sewerage, electricity and access road) and suitable for construction of the building. In accordance with contract requirements, the municipalities also had to prepare and finance production of the site plan for the building plot, necessary planning documentation for production of design documentation, planning permit and necessary conditions and approvals of all the relevant public utility companies; and technical inspection of the main project design, the building permit, registration of works, supervision of works and all other permits and inspection certificates. As the new buildings are owned by the municipalities they appear as developers in all statutory documents related to construction.

All the municipalities have completed their obligations. They were very collaborative with HC and all other partners.

Regarding financial obligations, besides the substantial financial inputs during construction, which represented around 30% of the total development costs (see table 4. in chapter 3.3), the CoC in the Article 8 *Running Costs* defines the running costs of SHSE. According to the CoC these are 1) funds to support living of the beneficiaries eligible for MOP⁶ and 2) funds for covering utility bills. The CoC than leaves this issue open by stipulating that *The City shall regulate payment of running*

⁶ MOP ,means "Materijalno obezbedjenje porodice" and it is the social security transfer. The art. 11 of the Social Welfare and Citizens Social Security Law (Official Gazette of RS No. 36/91... 115/05) explains conditions to receive:

The minimum level of social security for the month of September 2004 is determined as a percentage amount of the base which is consisted of the average earnings per employee in the Republic of Serbia in the second quarter of 2004 and its value is, for:

- 1) individuals 16%;
- 2) a family of two members by 22%;
- 3) a family of three members by 28%;
- 4) a family of four members by 30%;
- 5) a family of five or more members of 32%.

(2) The minimum level of social security specified in paragraph 2. of this Article shall be adjusted each month to the cost of living index.

(3) The nominal amount of the monthly minimum social security, circled in dinars, in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article are established by the Minister of Social Affairs.

costs by its Decision on Social Protection of Citizens, without defining when should this decision be adopted. On the other hand, the costs of item 1) are in fact regulated by national transfers (MOP) and only the costs under 2) can be funded through the local budget. In addition, the same article doesn't mention management and maintenance costs, equally existing and that are also likely to be subsidized, such as utility costs.

In Article 7. *Selection of Beneficiaries*, The CoC foresees that the same decision also defines rental conditions and further selection of beneficiaries. It is important to stress that all rental conditions must be well known to the Project beneficiaries before they conclude the tenancy contract (which will be seen in the next chapters that it is not the case) and even before application.

Recommendation would be to reformulate Article 8 of the CoC, according to the real situation and requirements. Costs of management and maintenance should be added either under the item 2), or as a new item. The mentioned Decision, which correct formal name is *Decision on Extended Rights of Citizens in Social Protection*, should encompass items 2) and 3) only. Very important is that the Decision is adopted timely by the local assembly to ensure right information for all the applicants having doubts on their ability to pay bills, prior to conclusion of tenancy contract. Preferably, the Decision should be brought by the Assembly before the CoC is signed and its elements should be referred to and/or copied into the CoC. The same applies for rental conditions.

3.2.4 Centers for Social Work

The role of CSW is defined in the MoU and the CoC as the institution that will manage the building and ensure that it is used for the intended purpose and for these functions the CSW *shall provide professional services (social worker, psychologist and administration)*. The same article (3) *Ownership and Management of the Building* foresees that municipality will adopt the already mentioned Decision, based on which, the CSW will act.

Further more, the CoC assigns to CSW numerous activities of the Project, majority of them in the selection process. CSW participates with one member in the work of the Joint Committee for selection of beneficiaries, advertises the call for applications, receives applications and assess potential Host Families.

After the final selection is done, CSW prepares and concludes tenancy contracts with the selected beneficiaries and takes over the social care of their new clients. It also trains the Host Family and deals with building management to a certain extent. Consequently, CSW is the first responsible for exploitation of SHSE.

The assigned responsibility of managing the building is somehow in contradiction with responsibilities of the municipality. In Article 9. *Obligations of the Contracting Parties*, in the 1st chapter *The City Agrees*, in line 7, *To assume the responsibility for regular maintenance of the building*. In the same article, in the 3rd chapter *The Center agrees* in line 10 *To resolve issues and make decisions pertaining to the Building management, as well as Building functioning and maintenance*.

Building management is not about *resolving issues* but rather a regular permanent activity which final part is organization of the maintenance. The assigned task means making decisions on how the building will be managed and maintained, in fact, on

behalf of the owner, the municipality. This situation is likely not sustainable for two reasons: a) the CSW is not competent for building management, because of completely different nature of it's job and lack of qualified staff and b) in the case CSW employs a specialized staff, his/her cost will unjustifiably raise running costs. On the other hand, every municipality has its own real estate property and organizes their maintenance. All interlocutors from CSW have expressed their deep concern with this issue and they all think that a proper institutional solution should be developed. This element is vital for sustainability and will be more elaborated in the chapter 3.5.

In any case, the CoC will have to be revised to address the issue of building management and maintenance in a sustainable way, which was also recommended in conclusions of the Conference on SHSE organized by Housing Center and UNHCR in December 2009. An appropriate existing specialized local institution should be identified as responsible for building management and maintenance, still in close cooperation with CSW. This is, in fact, the usual framework of cooperation in social housing (municipal authority, social welfare institution and social housing institution). This arrangement should be institutionalized by local decisions and adequate formal agreements.

Other project partners and stakeholders

3.2.5 Housing Center

Housing Center, NGO dealing with construction of SHSE has been in charge of implementation of housing construction, under a standard contract (sub-agreement) with UNHCR, complying with the Project Proposal. In the CoC HC is mentioned as UNHCR sub-contractor that will implement construction part of the Project. Further, UNHCR assigned one representative of HC in the Joint Committee for selection of beneficiaries. HC was particularly active in the past in developing SHSE model, from the first projects conducted by Swiss Development Cooperation, since 2004 and is the most experienced NGO in SHSE projects in Serbia. This was probably of utmost importance for successful implementation of the Project and the fact that HC is managed by architects explains high quality of design and construction works with SHSE. HC was in charge of managing the housing construction from tendering, contracting and financing to supervising and handover of conceptual and project main design, construction works and equipment supply. During the project implementation, HC has been cooperating with municipal authorities. HC has also participated in secretarial work of the selection of beneficiaries process.

The work and enthusiasm of HC in the construction process was unanimously appreciated by all interlocutors in the four municipalities.

3.2.6 The beneficiaries

The MoU signed between SCR and all IPA 2007 implementing agencies has clearly defined who can be potential beneficiaries of SHSE. Annexes to this agreement define conditions and selection criteria and a matrix of a ranking list with all required data. In general, conditions are wide with limitations concerning ownership, temporary

residence. People included are all displaced, IDPs, refugees or even former refugees. Detailed evaluation of conditions and selection criteria will be given in Chapter 3.4.

Based on the information received from the main Project partners, the beneficiaries have made a choice and applied for SHSE, agreeing to accept new living conditions and to participate in living costs. It seems that majority of interviewed beneficiaries, who already moved in, are very satisfied with obvious significant improvement in their lives. They are more or less aware of the new financial burden in paying utility bills. For most of them, SHSE will crucially help them to restore basic human dignity and will enable them to integrate in local community. Mixture of age, compositions of households, different levels of vulnerability and previous mutual acquaintance seem to ensure certain level of solidarity and a desired behavior within and outside their new small SHSE community.

Some main figures on the households that applied are given below, while details on selection are elaborated in the Chapter 3.4.

Municipality	CC		PA		Local Population	Total
	Refugees	IDPs	Refugees	IDPs		
Negotin	2	54	1	0	8	65
Vranje	2	47	0	0	13	63
Leskovac	0	23	0	19	12	51
Smederevo	4	49	0	0	15	68
						247

Table 2. Received applications: household status per type of accommodation

Given the fact that beneficiaries have moved-in recently, there is no significant record on their satisfaction with services received from CSWs, but from what we have seen and understood in Negotin and Vranje, all the families are screened and some of them are already receiving assistance from CSW. Furthermore, we learned that in Vranje, CSW have already ensured solid wood for heating, for all the beneficiaries and in Negotin, CSW distributed onetime financial assistance for that purpose.

During the interviews with the selected beneficiaries, it has arisen that several issues need improvement. In general, those refer to better informing of beneficiaries prior to the application procedure. The selected beneficiaries claimed that they were not aware of the amounts in bills they will have to pay, who was going to receive subsidies or be fully exempted from paying utilities and under what conditions/circumstances. Vital problem for all of them was also unknown terms/conditions/duration of their staying in the apartment. These issues will be elaborated in detail in the Chapter 3.4.

At the time of visit, it was not possible to check whether the beneficiaries are fulfilling their contractual obligations respecting payments of utility bills (nobody had yet received any of the bills, even in Vranje, where moving-in took place two months before our visit). On the other hand, we have noticed that there are already troubles with improper use of apartments. In Vranje, there, some beneficiaries made physical interventions on the facades and roof of the building and provoked floods by unsuitable use of washing machines.

Based on the present findings, it is advisable that not only the Host Family, as the Project foresees, but also all the SHSE beneficiaries have to be educated for

condominium life including for their organization in an assembly, in accordance with the Law⁷.

3.2.7 The Host Family

The SHSE concept makes a key difference with standard social housing in introducing the Host Family, also socially vulnerable household, but with working capacity, which role is to provide other beneficiaries in need with daily assistance of a good neighbor. The CoC introduce the notion of a Host of Social Housing, stating in the Article 6 *Host of Social Housing*, that it is a person with working ability, member of a socially vulnerable refugee or internally displaced family or a domicile family of the same category, while giving priority to displaced living in CC. In this project, it occurred that selected host families were found in local population (Vranje, Leskovac) and the displaced families from CC were in Neogtin and Smederevo.

The obligations of the Host are defined in the tenancy contract concluded with CSW. The numerous responsibilities are connected to relations with other SHSE dwellers, property management and general supervision of life in the building. In fact, the omitted fact is that this family doesn't pay rent because it provides some social services on behalf of CSW. In other terms, the host is paid for his work with at level appropriate to the adequate market rent. No one from the interviewed heads of host families in the four municipalities was aware of that fact clearly.

It is advisable that in the future the Hosts are acquainted timely with their responsibilities and benefits and the tenancy contract is reformulated respectively. This would certainly raise his/her accountancy in performing the contracted tasks.

Details on the Host's responsibilities will be evaluated in the chapter 3.5.

3.2.8 Trustee for refugees

Depending on his/her position in local government, the trustee for refugees can play a very important role in preliminary selection of potential beneficiaries and in providing information on their social and economic vulnerability. His / her personal knowledge of beneficiaries, in particular those living in CCs may be of a great importance in preliminary phase of recognition of potential applicants and further in assessing their application and final selection.

In some cases, the trustee is a manager of the CC (Smederevo) and being daily in contact with potential beneficiaries, he can help a lot with appropriate information and psychical preparation of beneficiaries to step out from the CC. However, if the trustee is not well informed and acquainted with all details of the future program, he/she can mislead the potential beneficiary to give up or to raise wrong expectations.

From the perspective of the Project, where building construction is the most difficult part, it seems that appointing a trustee for refugees as coordinator of municipal

⁷ Condominium Maintenance Law (Official Gazette of RS 44/95, 46/98, 1/01) stipulates organization of tenants assembly in the multi-apartment block and all relevant issues of management and maintenance of housing blocks

activities may not be the best solution, since majority of municipal responsibilities are linked with property, planning and construction issues and at the end with asset taking-over and registering. On the other hand, in Vranje and Negotin the trustees were assigned as coordinators, but these were the persons highly ranked in local government's hierarchy. In Negotin, the trustee was also a member of the local council (government) and in Vranje, head of the social welfare department.

3.2.9 Municipal focal point / project coordinator

Efficiency, enthusiasm, but most of all, adequate knowledge of this appointed person is crucial for implementation of numerous activities under the municipal responsibility, like regulating the use of appropriate construction land, connecting it to necessary infrastructure and ensuring the takeover of all statutory documents and assets. Since these are commonly performed activities in all local investments, the only logic would be that the local government appoints someone from its existing public company usually dealing with all municipal developments.

However, the focal points coordinate role of all the local project partners and have to closely cooperate with the CSW and local secretariats for social welfare, general administration, planning and property in the local government.

3.2.10 Local construction supervisors

Supervision of the construction is stipulated in CoC as a municipal obligation. This is generally organized through a contract with the appropriate municipal company for public works, or with independent engineers. Their daily presence during construction is of vital importance. In general, it could be expected that certain dysfunctions may occur because they are paid for supervision by the municipality, while the works are contracted by another employer. In fact, they are not officially responsible to the implementing agency and their accountability may not always be at desired level. However, on all the four project sites, supervision of works has functioned correctly and in close cooperation with supervision provided by the buildings designer from the HC. Therefore the construction works performed are of good quality, which also is a proof of good supervision.

3.2.11 Ministry of Labor and Social Policy

The SHSE concept is supported by this ministry as a form of *extended rights in social protection*, i.e. social services that are provided from local budgets, under local regulations, but usually through existing CSWs, that are institutions responsible to the Ministry. A representative of the MLSP has been present on several meeting of JC as an observer. Being a direct supporter of the inception and development of the SHSE program, it is advisable that the MLSP is engaged further in developing guidelines on SHSE for local governments. The guidelines will have to solve all unclear and opened issues affecting sustainability and offer respective template documents.

3.2.12 Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning

This ministry is in charge of housing in the Serbian government and it has adopted the Social Housing Law in 2009, at the time the Project was ongoing. The SHSE hasn't been developed in consultation with MESP, but only with MLSP and SCR. MESP has supported establishment of local housing policy instruments, aimed primarily at supporting people having problems in accessing housing on the market. In that respect, there are already 10 local housing agencies and 4 to be established in the coming months in bigger municipalities, district centers. Some of them have already adopted the local housing strategies, but none of them included SHSE in the action plan. One of the Project municipalities, Smederevo, has founded the City Housing Agency (CHA) and it is expected that the local government will assign building management and maintenance to the CHA. The new phase in development of CHAs⁸ is institutional cooperation with CSWs and this is already agreed within the ongoing SHSE project in Kragujevac, by another implementing agency under EC IPA 2008 project.

In this moment MESP is drafting the National Strategy for Social Housing. It would be highly advisable that SHSE program is included in this strategy and in the overall national housing policies. Respectively at local level future SHSE projects should be included in the local housing strategies wherever the municipalities decides on it's formulation. The Housing Department in charge of developing overall social housing policy and legislation, as well as particular housing programs should be involved in developing the mentioned guidelines, jointly with MLSP.

3.3 Constructions process

The specific objective of the Project is formulated as provision of well-proven sustainable housing solutions (SHSE) to the final beneficiaries. This entails construction of new multi-apartment block with 20 housing units in each municipality. These social housing buildings are public, that is owned by the municipalities⁹ and they are not considered as being part of social institutions. On the other hand, the difference with standard public housing is that the households can in addition to renting an apartment obtain different types of social assistance. This care also aims at encouraging them to actively participate in everyday life and when possible, it is expected that SHSE will enable certain beneficiaries to improve their socio-economic situation and then move into better housing option. By the time of the evaluation, three buildings were built and occupied (in Vranje, Negotin and Leskovac) and the last, in Smederevo, was completed during evaluation, with a total of 80 apartments.

⁸ First local housing agency is established in Kragujevac in 2003.

⁹ The whole public ownership de iure is titled to the State since 1995 (Law on Means in the Property of Republic of Serbia, Off. Gazette No 53/1995, 3/1996, 54/1996 and 32/1997) and the permanent attempts to divide public property by administration units have not yet materialized. Specific contradiction concerns the construction land, that was all public since 1945, which as of 2009, must be ownership of the developer . (Planning and Construction Law Official Gazette of RS No. 72/09) Therefore the municipalities, as developers, have to be registered in the Cadastre as land owners of the particular building plot.

3.3.1 Selection of locations for construction

Selection of locations for construction SHSE buildings has been carefully done in all four municipalities. The criteria comprised: macro location of the building in vicinity of daily supply, public transport, school and kindergarten, medical institution. Selected locations in all municipalities are not far from city center, which will positively influence future social integration. All the buildings are located in residential areas, fitting the planning conditions by their size and capacity. As far as micro location of the building, it was important to efficiently use the land, i.e. comply fully with planning parameters and to diminish costs of connections to infrastructure. This means short connections with main services lines, existence of access roads etc. Good example is in Vranje, where the location was fully equipped with “secondary infrastructure”, in fact remaining from the previous SHSE project. What was also important for selection is the lot size and the effect of achieving cost effectiveness by enabling further development. Main remark, which is valid for all four locations is that the buildings are not connected to district heating networks. Except in Negotin, it was practically impossible since the locations were not in neighborhoods with district heating.

The interviewees in the municipality of Leskovac and in the HC have expressed great content with the selection of location in Leskovac. More than one location was offered, as it was usual in other municipalities. The selected one is situated in a better off Roma settlement. The selection of this location provoked disapproval from both potential beneficiaries and local neighbors at the beginning. Neither wanted to live together. The final result turned to be favorable for all. Thanks to the newcomers, the settlement was improved by asphalt road and a sewage line. The newcomers understood that it is in fact a highly urbanized and desirable neighborhood. This example shows that the appropriate physical intervention, where a new attractive building is built, when followed by improvement of local infrastructure, significantly contributes to integration of newcomers and social cohesion in the community.

However, some inconsistency between design and construction works aroused due to some shortages of the locations. The foundations were designed inappropriately which was then further rectified during construction. The problem was high groundwater level in Negotin and Leskovac and low soil quality (filled up ground) in Smederevo.

Given the fact that spare good locations in municipal ownership usually bear some deficiency (otherwise, they would have built upon them already), it is advisable that the foundation conditions are always inspected thoroughly before starting with the design.

General conclusion is that all the buildings are very well located, incorporated in residential neighborhoods, well serviced (except for heating), respecting planning conditions and rational use of land and at the end, ensure good conditions of social integration of their inhabitants.

The forthcoming projects should respect all parameters that were successfully applied in these projects and whenever possible, pay attention that future development is located in a neighborhood where it will be possible to connect the

building to district heating or gas installation. It is advisable that all these parameters are clearly listed in guidelines for future SHSE projects.

3.3.2 Design

Despite the fact that Social Housing Law was adopted in 2009, design standards for social housing do not yet exist. However, adequate care was taken so that design is developed fully according to the city planning strategy and planning parameters. Spatial and technical standards are similar to the average in the country. Some international recommendations, such as the *EU Lifetime Building Standards*, securing the adaptability of the buildings to the needs of the ageing population. UNECE (Economic Commission for Europe) Guidelines on Social Housing were followed as well.

The apartments are of different size around 20 m², 30 m², 40 m² and 50 m². They accommodate one to six persons. Spatial conditions and apartments sizes are mostly following experiences of previous projects of this kind. The design brief was created after the Project and budget approval, during the process of preliminary selection of beneficiaries. As a result, spatial standards are lower than the existing ones, remaining from socialist times (1980s), that are not mandatory today. The smallest apartments for one or two persons are 22 m² in surface and they make up 16% of the total number. Apartments of 30-35 m² with one bedroom, and of 40-45 m² with two bedrooms for 2, 3, or 4 persons represent the major bulk of 64% while the remaining 20% are 45-50 m² accommodating 4 to 6 persons. Average area per person in all projects is around 11 m², (10 m² in Smederevo, or 13 m² in Leskovac), while the minimal area is 7.5 m² per person in one six-member family in Smederevo. This minimum space per person is seen as below than usual absolute minimum in public housing (8 m²).

Members in household	1-2		2-3		3-4		4-6	
	m2	No of units	m2	No of units	m2	No of units	m2	No of units
Negotin	21-24	5	28	8	39-41	5	45-48	2
Vranje	22	2	28-33	10	41-44	4	47-48	4
Leskovac	22-28	4	32	6	34-38	4	42-48	6
Smederevo	22	2	27-34	7	35-40	7	43-45	4
Share in total no of units	16.25%		38.75%		25%		20%	

Table 3. Size of the apartments

All main accesses to the building are pedestrian, and for disabled persons there is always an access ramp with prescribed inclination. Most of the buildings have two entrances (except Vranje that was difficult to achieve because of the shape of the lot), and further, two separate communication stairways. This concept, despite raising the cost, allows the residents, living in smaller number of apartment to create more intimate community and facilitate further integration. Safety is ensured by intercoms at all entrances and with the host family. The solid strong entrance doors

of apartments are avoided because of elderly or ill beneficiaries. Some of the beneficiaries expressed their fear of being exposed to potential aggression, especially at the ground floor level. Reviewing security issue, especially in the ground floor is advised.

Each apartment has a bathroom, a kitchenette or a kitchen, a terrace and an auxiliary room, and is furnished with basic equipment and electricity, water and sewerage installed. In the basement, all buildings have storage rooms, one per each apartment, primarily intended for storing the heating fuel (wood or charcoal).

Each of the four completed buildings has the common living room of approximate area of 25m² with small kitchenette and access from both inside and outside. This space is considered essential for cohesion of the dwellers, important place for contacts and joint activities and also a space for family festivities. Common spaces are also intended for tenants' entertainment and their rapid integration, meetings, gathering and solving eventual problems, further organizing and socializing; and the room is therefore appropriately furnished (tables, chairs and kitchenette).

At the time of evaluation in three municipalities (Negotin, Vranje and Leskovac) moving-in was done very recently and there is no record or regular use of the common space.

SHSE concept is always built as multi-apartment blocks (condominiums) and the standard heating system for such structures is common hot-water central heating, either connected to district heating, where it exists, or with a boiler within or outside the building. Since connection to the district heating system was not feasible in none of the municipalities, a compromise was made in all four buildings, by deciding to install stove heating in each apartment. This solution is not adequate for many reasons and designers were very aware of it. The future projects should bear in mind that selection of adequate heating system will be a major technical challenge in the majority of smaller towns and they have to look for a general optimal heating solution in cases, where there is no district heating system. This, obviously, is an issue to be dealt with by heating experts in future projects.

3.3.3 Functional and aesthetic aspects of the design

Judging by the statements of the interviewed beneficiaries, internal disposition of rooms in dwellings and furniture, provided by the Project are fully satisfactory. A good concrete example is one 48 m² apartment in Negotin occupied by a family of six members. Our impression was that this flat was surprisingly spacious enough and it seemed that all basic functions were fulfilled, despite extreme density.

A problem that occurs everywhere is lack of adequate space for drying laundry. A common laundry is not foreseen and the balconies (open, in case of Leskovac) are not a suitable solution, given the practice and complaints of the families that moved-in (in Vranje and Negotin). In Vranje dwellers in few apartments welded additional bars on the terrace fence and windows to stretch rope for drying laundry, two months after moving-in. Having in mind very scarce space in the apartments, future projects should look for more functional options for drying laundry (common room in the basement or in the attic).

Design of all four buildings, their form and appearance represent very distinctive concept of urban architecture which fits in the given residential environments and with the existing surrounding buildings. The special significance of this project is the setup outside the building. Outdoor decoration is just up to measure and unobtrusive, very neat and useful. The exterior is treated as an extension of the internal community spaces.

One especially important aspect of design of SHSE is maintenance. It concerns construction details, material selection and accessibility for maintenance operations. Some complaints have already appeared in Negotin and Vranje regarding the shape of the roof and balconies. In some cases, leakages already occurred due to wrong execution of hydro insulation (Leskovac) while in others the architecture of the building implies higher standards in finishing works and regular cleaning (snow, dirt). Therefore it is very important that SHSE projects are designed and built respecting durability and maximum reduction of maintenance costs.

Here we can especially underline the fact that the design concept of all four buildings is done by the architect from HC, who has been involved in the whole process of developing SHSE concept in Serbia. Besides his deep understanding of the nature of the Project and of the impact design can make to social objectives, he was continuously involved in “author’s” supervision during the whole construction process. All the buildings are highly appreciated by all interlocutors representing the Project partners and beneficiaries. All the interviewees from municipalities and local institutions perceive these buildings among the most beautiful in their towns and are proud of them. This proves how good design is important for affirmation of the program, which is a general case for all social housing projects.

It would be recommendable that the conceptual design is done through public competition. It is becoming common for social housing projects in Serbia and should be so in general, whenever there is a budget financing. It will certainly give high quality design and raise visibility of the program, although it can slow down implementation for 2 or 3 months and negligibly raise costs.

3.3.4 Energy efficiency

The buildings were designed and built respecting the principles and existing norms for energy efficiency (orientation, form, thermal insulation, external doors and windows).

However, having in mind that beneficiaries of SHSE are among the most economically vulnerable and that they have to bear utility costs (or it is the municipality who provides subsidies), in general, it will be very important to significantly raise energy efficiency of the buildings and apartments in order to maximally reduce living costs and finally, protect environment. This means working in two directions: 1) to lower the heat loss through adequate design (orientation, shape, insulation, openings, etc) and 2) selection of adequate economical heating system. Both issues may be set as recommended standards for all the future SHSE projects.

3.3.5 Accessibility of building and dwellings

Access for disabled persons to the building is provided by access ramp of a regular inclination. The building ground floor is almost barrier-free and the apartments are accessible for wheelchairs users, excluding doorsteps, which could be removed. Since among potential beneficiaries there was no single-headed household with handicapped person none of the apartments were designed and equipped fully according the standards for disabled. On the other hand to the certain extent a possibility exist to convert in future some of the apartments in ground floors to be adequate for people in wheelchair, with minor interventions. In Vranje, there were 20% of such apartments, in Leskovac 30%, in Smederevo 20% and in Negotin some 30%.

Following the Social Housing Law of 2009 it is recommended that 10% of apartments are designed and equipped fully according to accessibility norms for disabled. The State Secretary responsible for social welfare in the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy strongly supported this concept in the interview we had in the evaluation process. Majority of the new social housing projects include this concept. We would therefore recommend to adopt a rule of having minimum 10% of apartments designed and fully equipped for the disabled.

3.3.6 Selection of contractors / Tender procedure

After the blueprints were shared among the stakeholders - UNHCR, SCR and the local authorities, and once the building designs was approved by the competent municipal authorities, HC has prepared tenders for pre-qualified designers for preparation of main design documentation. The tendering procedure for selecting designer's company was done based on collection of three offers, according to the applied EU/PRAG thresholds. Once the design documentation was complete, HC announced the public tender for construction works. The tender is done according to UNHCR procedure. This tender process has no right of appeal, and it was only possible to make a complaint to the selection committee. The selection committee was organized internally in HC and UNHCR was regularly invited to monitor the procedure. The selection rules do not foresee an unambiguous selection of the best tender with a pointing system. Selection of the most favorable tender depends on the offered price, requested advance payment, term of construction, reality of unit prices, offered warranty period, elements for additional works and references. This approach leaves full flexibility for arbitrary selection, which is generally avoided in all local public procurements, because it lacks transparency. The selections were generally lead by the lowest price, which doesn't have to be the best parameter. As a result, all the four selected contractors had prices lower than estimated, which created certain budget reserve. Similar, the contractor selected in Smederevo, although not being the cheapest one, was found further completely inefficient. The tender requests were not imposing any higher standards for qualification of the contractor and that was the reason why the small and weak contractors were on top of the ranking lists.

A problem with contracts occurred due to the fact that they were fixed in dinars, with USD currency clause. A drop of USD rate made cash flow problems on the contractor's side and HC has made annexes to the contract to prevail and somehow mitigate this problem

It is advisable that the tender procedure is done in any of the standards for public procurements and adapted either to the EU PRAG rules and the procurement practice common already on other SHSE projects or to the Serbian Public Procurement Law. These two similar tendering concepts would certainly make more precise profile of the desired contractor, require more vital information on contractor's capacity and solvency and would not leave room for arbitrary decisions, which are the problems of the analyzed tendering procedure.

The performance guarantee for the warranty period of two years from handover is issued in favor of HC and not in favor of the investor, the municipality. This can make significant problems in performing repairs and claiming any problem with construction during the warranty period. It is necessary that the performance guarantees for the warranty period are issued in favor of the investor / owner, to enable its use.

3.3.7 Construction works

The quality of executed works is at satisfactory level. Having in mind the contracted prices were lower than the estimated, the supervision done by HC and local teams of official supervisors were probably essential to reach the designed quality. Before the official technical acceptance, HC performed internal thorough check-up of the buildings which gave an additional quality control.

Technical acceptance of the buildings was done in all municipalities and concluding with 29th December 2010 all buildings were handed over. For the moment, permit of use is issued only in Vranje, but it is expected that in all other municipalities this will be done in due time.

During construction a number of problems have occurred. Works have been carried out with delays in all municipalities, mostly because of objective circumstances (start in winter, floods, inadequate foundation design etc), but still remaining within the Project time frame. The delays happened on two sites where flood from high groundwater occurred (Negotin and Leskovac) and on one where the soil was inadequate for foundations (Smederevo). This caused subsequent changes in type of foundation and leveling the building. Resuming, in Negotin delay happened due to the change in foundations, while the main cause of delays in Smederevo (the ceremonial opening of the building was on 29 December) and Leskovac (the beneficiaries moved in on 7th December) was the contractors' weak performance. Construction time ranged from 7 to 13 months, while delays comparing to contracted terms range from 40% to 100%. This may be explained by the vague tendering procedure, where very low priced tenders are winning. That is probably the reason why penalties for delays were not applied.

Construction price ranged from 27,000 to 34,000 dinars per m² of gross built area (between 270 and 340 euro respectively with average exchange rate of 1Euro=100 dinars). This comes to construction prices of average units sizing from 32 to 35 m² net area: 18,000 Euro m² in Negotin (590 Euro/m²), 15,000 Euro in Smederevo (440 Euro/m²), 15,000 Euro in Vranje (440 Euro/m²) and 18,000 Euro in Leskovac (540 Euro/m²). All the costs are VAT excluded. This roughly calculated final indicators, shows that the price per unit and price per m² of the net apartment area

is a bit above the local average costs¹⁰. In general, the notified difference in cost per unit between the projects of about 20% came primarily due the lower ratio between net and gross area and apartments smaller than the average in new construction. The gross area is enlarged with the common living room and usually two stairways and also through addition of external works around the building, which significantly raises values of the Project. All the costs remained within the projected price per unit

3.3.8 Furnishing

The Project foresaw furnishing apartments with basic equipment, not specifying the items in detail. In fact, the apartments are fully furnished with all necessary fixed and movable furniture. That includes complete kitchen furniture with cooker and fridge, washing machine, dining table and chairs in quantity of household members plus one or two more, beds with mattresses, folding couch, wardrobes and a stove. In the apartments with more members, double-decker beds are installed. The common living room is equipped with the kitchen furniture, fridge and a cooking plate, tables and chairs. All the equipment is well designed and durable. All the beneficiaries have expressed their full satisfaction with the equipment, which in fact overcame far their expectations. It seems that, in some cases, the selected beneficiaries were not informed that the new equipment will be installed and some of them brought their own furniture.

The equipment is purchased through a standard UNHCR tendering procedure with results that could be assessed as very good value for the money. The formal handover of equipment is not done properly between the HC and the future owner (the municipality) and as result it is not registered in municipal property books. In some municipalities beneficiaries were signing list of handed over equipment together with the rental contract which should be a mandatory practice.

Regarding furnishing of SHSE apartments several recommendations could be given: a) some guidelines should exist to specify minimum equipment, depending on the size of the apartment and household; b) the equipment should be properly handed over to the municipality and the assets registered in the books; c) in future, option of storing unused equipment may be considered in a separate municipal storage, since lot of people will like to fit the apartment with their own furniture; d) rules for use of equipment should be annexed to the rent contract and some training foreseen if needed (for the electric equipment).

3.3.9 Municipal responsibilities in the construction process

According to the CoC, the municipalities have taken over the following responsibilities: organization and financing preparation of the serviced construction plot, regulation of all taxes related to land equipping, provision and financing the site plan, obtaining planning documents and all the necessary conditions and approvals of

¹⁰ Apartment prices in the first half of 2010 / construction costs per m2 according to the national statistics in the Project municipalities: Smederevo 44, 624 din, Vranje 39,720 din, Negotin 48,046 din (average cost in 2009), Leskovac 41,551 din - Source: <http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/axd/drugastrana.php?Sifra=0004&izbor=odel&tab=2>. In order to make comparison, costs of SHSE should be lowered for 5% (1/21 additional unit-common living room)

the relevant utility companies, obtaining building permits, registration of works, and issuing all other permits and inspection certificates necessary for construction works. The municipalities have also ensured provisional electrical and water supply connections during construction, organized official supervision of works, connections to services, technical acceptance of the building, issued the permit of use and registered the building in the Cadastre.

Overall cash contribution of municipalities ranged between 8 and 10 million dinars (80.000 to 100.000 Euro) which was approximately 1/3 of the value of construction works or 25% of total financing costs (excluding in-kind contributions in land, taxes, primary infrastructure etc).

The official handover of works has been done from the contractors to the municipalities. The building permit is issued only in Vranje and it is expected that the others will be issued soon. Regarding legality of the procedure and eventual risks, it is advisable that the buildings are not occupied before permit of use is obtained.

3.4 Selection of beneficiaries

In general, target group of the Project are the most vulnerable individuals and families among the displaced, accommodated in the CCs or inadequate private accommodation and socially vulnerable persons and families among the domicile population. The Project specific objective is to provide them with adequate housing solution and with support in the social integration in local community. The selection process is based on general rules, set by SCR, fine tuned in every municipality according to local specificities and with the ultimate imperative to ensure that the most vulnerable people applied and are selected.

3.4.1 Selection rules

The MoU, signed in May 2009 between SCR and all EC implementing partners on IPA 2007 program *Support to Refugees and IDPs in Serbia*, sets basic rules for selection of final beneficiaries. This comes out of the agreement signed between the Government of Serbia represented by SCR and EC delegation on EC IPA 2007 Programme 07SER01/09/11. Besides the selection criteria, this MoU foresees composition of the beneficiary selection committees (in further text: Joint Committee /abbr. JC). The JC is composed of representatives (1 representative and 1 replacement) of the implementing partner, municipality, UNHCR, SCR, CSW with possibility of presence of one representative from the Ministry of Social Welfare.

The four-party MoU, signed between SCR, UNHCR, each of the four municipalities and local CSW foresees who are the beneficiaries (article 5), how they are selected (article 6) who is the Host of Social Housing and how is he/she selected (article 7). These provisions stipulate formation of a Joint Committee with representatives of all parties that will adopt a Book of Rules on detailed definition of criteria and selection procedures.

The four-party Contract on Cooperation (CoC) foresees quotas for the displaced (16 housing units) and for local population (4 units). In Leskovac, the municipality

insisted to make two parallel lists for the displaced: the one for the people from CC (10 units) and the other for those living in private accommodation (6 units). The CoC for all municipalities go a step further in detailing selection criteria and procedures. It also adds a directive to the municipality to adopt a *Decision on Social Protection of Citizens*¹¹ where the SHSE program will be included. These municipal decisions should stipulate that the first selection of beneficiaries will be done according to the MoU and CoC provisions, and how will the further selections be processed. We can notify that a link is being made here with the overall national welfare system that recognizes SHSE in the scope of “extended rights in social protection”, that are funded by local government. In term of legal arrangements this could be perceived as a crucial point that brings sustainability to the Project. It fully fits with policy of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in decentralizing and differentiating social protection services¹².

The Decisions were adopted in all municipalities several months after signing CoC, but without endangering selection process. In Vranje, such decision existed from before. They are fully based on elements of the CoC, but none of them has provisions on future selection of beneficiaries and other important respective rules. It has been already mentioned that it is important that all respective rules and before all, conditions of staying the beneficiaries in SHSE, have to be defined through adoption of the Decision before the call for application is open. Ideally, the Decision should be brought before the signature of the CoC.

The Book of Rules sets criteria and procedure for selection of 16 families among refugees and IDPs and 4 families among the local population, and one host family among those who are qualified. In Vranje, the Book of Rules foresaw three application lists (displaced from the CC, displaced from private accommodation and local population). Books of Rules ascertain that rules for applications are established under the CoC conditions, and they develop details on work of JC and on documentation to be submitted by applicants. The documents required were in standard statutory formats or in form of the statement given by the applicant.

3.4.2 Selection criteria

The pre-screening of potential beneficiaries done in the initial phase, with the involvement of the local trustees, CSW and UNHCR/HC, justified the project objectives and vulnerability and needs of the targeted groups. It also helped to make the functional scheme of housing units. By this, the targeted groups were anticipated in very early stage.

The vulnerability among the displaced population is very present in both CCs and private accommodation. Displaced in private accommodations often live in poorer conditions and the level of vulnerability is critical. But still, priority is given to the

¹¹ Actually, the correct name of the document is Decision on Extended Rights of Citizens in Social Protection

¹² Article 9 para 4 of the Social Welfare and Citizens' Social Security Law, (Official Gazette of RS 36/91...115/05)

persons accommodated in the CCs, except in Leskovac, where 40% of units were reserved for the displaced from private accommodation.

The MoU signed between SCR and all EC implementing partners foresees two sets of criteria for selecting beneficiaries. The qualifying criteria (*Conditions*) are very concrete and all of them are transferred through top-to-the-bottom into the rulebooks for beneficiary selection. The ranking criteria (*Vulnerability Criteria*) are given as framework and descriptively, without weighing any of the vulnerability parameter.

It can be noted that in the qualifying criteria, a typical and standard condition in social assistance or social housing doesn't exist, that is the income limit. We can also comment that the same set of conditions widely target beneficiaries per their civil status (former refugees are included) and housing conditions (not only for those living in CCs, but also for those living in private accommodation). This extension of the target scope which may look illogical at the beginning, should be looked at a good concept, since many very vulnerable displaced families, in their personal efforts to integrate and take the Serbian citizenship and move out from CC, may stay away of the projects such as SHSE that is for many of them, a lifesaving opportunity.

Qualifying criteria for the local population were non-possession of real estate property in RS, 2 years of residence in the municipality, and in Smederevo and Vranje it was requested that potential beneficiaries must be recipients of MOP.

The vulnerability criteria is listed in Article 5 of the CoCs *Beneficiaries*,¹³ *social vulnerability of a person or family*, and further repeated and extended in the article 7 *Selection of Beneficiaries* for economic vulnerability, women-headed households and those *interested in this type of accommodation and accept to pay the expenses emanating from the usage of the housing unit*. The latter is not a criteria, but a condition to apply, so it will be advisable to move this line to the end of the Article 7. The discrepancy in vulnerability criteria has to be clarified, or simply, all the criteria has to remain only in one article. Still the formulation (*socially and*) **financially vulnerable persons and families**, that is further processed in the Book of Rules under the criteria "economic vulnerability" could be somehow opposed to the narrow formulation of vulnerability.

The Book of Rules is developed based on a template and is usually slightly adjusted to local preferences and JC first task is to adopt them. The differences by municipalities were in pointing income level and households with self-supporting single parent. This made a final selection visibly different (see tables 5 and 6).

An interesting issue is the income level criteria. We have already made a remark that income ceiling is the usual pre-condition in social housing. Here, it is ranked in three steps: 1) up to the level of social security¹⁴, 2) up to the doubled level of social security and 3) up to the average income, except in Smederevo, where the last option didn't exist. This means that everybody having higher income than the three

¹³ 1. *socially vulnerable persons and families that because of health or mental diseases, chronic disease or disability of a family member cannot ensure the existential conditions.* 2. *self-supporting single parents, and 3. elderly persons, singles and couples, who are able to live independently*

¹⁴ For detailed explanations on social security level, see the footnote 2

mentioned categories will get zero point on this criteria. Even if he/she can easily afford renting solid apartment on the market, if they make a good score on other criteria, they can live for free. However, despite this probability, it seems that there were no household with higher income selected in none of the four municipalities.

	Negotin	Vranje	Leskovac	Smederevo
Economic Vulnerability				
income up to the security level	20	30	20	20
income up to the doubled security level	10	20	10	10
income up to the average in the municipality	5	10	5	n/a
Elderly household	10	10	10	10
Self-supporting single parents	20	20	20	20
Disability				
80-100%	20	20	20	20
50-79%	15	15	15	15
less than 49%	10	10	10	10
without working ability	30	30	30	30
Household with the handicapped child	40	40	40	40
Household with an ill member	20	20	20	20
Household with a victim of sexual-family harassment	20	20	20	20
Child in school	10	10	10	10
Housing vulnerability / substandard housing	10	10	10	10

Table 5. Overview or selection criteria and scoring system

By analyzing applications of the selected beneficiaries we can set an important hypothesis, that may be commonly known, but somehow oppose the Project principles:

1. *The beneficiaries from local population and privately accommodated displaced are sometimes more vulnerable than refugees and IDPs in CCs*

In all municipalities local applicants were scored much higher than refugees and IDPs. Their average score was between 75 (in Negotin and Leskovac) and 100 (in Vranje and Smederevo), while the average among refugees and IDPs was between 40

in Negotin and 55 in Smederevo, even if the Project has specifically targeted the most vulnerable refugees and IDPs. It somehow directly confirms a common hypothesis we have heard in discussions with all officials that local vulnerable population and privately accommodated displaced are sometimes more vulnerable than the displaced persons in CCs.

To explain on the example, the beneficiaries were selected with only 20 points, which represents, for instance, a household whose vulnerability is just having two children of school age or one ill member¹⁵. The score of 40 points in the table below is taken as a lower average line. It corresponds to the family with a handicapped child. The table shows how many selected beneficiaries were above.

The starting hypothesis was proven in Leskovac where selected displaced households living in private accommodation had range of scores between 40 and 80 points, while the selected beneficiaries from CC had between 20 and 55 points¹⁶. In Leskovac, the Book of Rules did not foresee 3 separate application lists, but the JC adopted the request of the municipality to have two divided quotas for displaced (8 from CC and 8 from PA). On the other hand, in Vranje, where the Book of Rules already existed with 3 lists all the selected beneficiaries were finally selected only from CC.

	Negotin	Vranje	Leskovac	Smederevo
Refugees and IDPs max	60	70	80	80
Refugees and IDPs min	20	20	20	30
No of ref and IDPs with more than 40 pt	3/16	8/16	8/16	12/16
Local population max	90	110	95	130
Local population min	60	90	60	70
Refugees and IDPs from CC	15	16	9	16
Refugees and IDPs from PA	1	0	7	0
Local population	4	4	4	4
Host family	from the CC	local	local	from the CC

Table 6. Results of selection of beneficiaries; scoring and households per living conditions prior the Project

¹⁵ Despite the fact that this was never the case and that interviewed members of JCs claimed that such family will never be accepted, the Book or rules doesn't strictly specify the evidences requested to proof fulfillment of qualifying criteria (conditions)

¹⁶ It should be noted that JC hasn't evaluated living conditions of applicants from the CCs, since they were all in same conditions and not competing with others since for them there was always a pre-defined quota o housing units. This means that in order to have better comparison between applicants from CC and others 10 points should be added to the applicants from CCs.

In practice, the JC has followed general provisions of the Book of Rules from Part 1 *Persons to whom the housing units are dedicated* (Article 2), accepting only those applications that, on their opinion, fits into one of the 3 categories:

“1. Socially vulnerable persons and families that due to physical or mental illness, chronic disease or invalidity of a family member cannot ensure the conditions for existence

2. Self-supporting parents,

3. Elderly persons, single or couples, capable of independent life)”

These general qualifying criteria, however, does not have appropriate stipulations in part 3. *Conditions for selection of housing beneficiaries*, (Article 6) and are not explicitly backed up with appropriate requirement for submission of material evidence (document) and in fact, may become subject to arbitrary decision of the JC. All the selected beneficiaries certainly fall in the three categories, but the Book of Rules should be amended accordingly with additional provisions in the Article 6 that will define conditions and appropriate proofs.

In practice, the minimum number of points of the qualified applicants was 20. There are 31 out of 64 selected displaced families with less than 40 points. That means that any displaced household from CC that is eligible can become SHSE beneficiary, regardless to its vulnerability. It is advisable that this should also be rectified by setting a minimum number of points that eligible applicant should score based on it's vulnerability. This will raise legitimacy and lower the risk of arbitration.

It is important to point out that the selecting criteria allowed large families to apply (up to 6 members), but also the single person households. The latter represent 14% of all selected beneficiaries in all four municipalities, which is adequate to proportion in the CCs. Although not targeted specifically, the selected households of Roma nationality comprised 4% of households and 6% of total number of persons.

No of household members	1	2	3	4	5	6
Negotin	2	6	5	2	3	2
Vranje	6	1	5	6	1	1
Leskovac	1	10	6	2	1	0
Smederevo	2	4	5	4	3	2
TOTAL	11	21	21	14	8	5
Share in total	14%	26%	26%	18%	10%	6%

Table 7. Selected households per size, total number per municipality and share in total Project per household size

Scoring systems for selecting beneficiaries of any housing program are always far from being perfect and they are usually targeting a certain group. This is the case with this project as well, where intention is to close CCs in Serbia and where SHSE is in fact one of the measures.

On the other hand, the above mentioned facts and conclusions may be seriously misleading. The vulnerability of the CC population is not adequately expressed through the existing ranking criteria. The CC dwellers problem is most often psychological barrier to get out of the shelter in which their natural sense for survival is almost benumbed. The gradual lowering of ambitions and need for fight put them in extremely vulnerable conditions.

Therefore, the quota exclusively reserved for the CC dwellers seem to be fully justified and that any comparison with other groups, as done in this research, is not adequate. In social housing policy it is found commonly that certain group becomes positively discriminated as result of some higher policy objectives, usually linked with some emergency or other temporary problem situation. This means that the above mentioned hypothesis is not well grounded and should not be applied as generalized qualifications, but rather looked at as exceptions.

Some improvements within the selection criteria could be made. We will recommend including the income limit in the conditions and simplifying the scoring system by reducing the number of criteria and number of multiplied pointing of one particular criteria (for instance, the number of children in school.). The improved system of criteria should be simulated on already selected households, by choosing typical household profiles (elderly, with handicapped, single parent etc) and on those still remaining in CCs and local households being already under protection of CSWs. The purpose of the proposed exercises would also reduce risk of arbitrary decisions.

3.4.3 Selection process

The selection process constitutes a very significant part of the Project. It took place in parallel with construction. This process started even before formal selection procedure, through screening of the targeted beneficiaries in the CCs.

The obligations of the contracting parties in the selection process are specified in detail in the CoC. However, the CoC doesn't specify which partner out of four prepares the Book of Rules and further, manages the extensive selection procedure and coordinates work of the JC. Some of the activities of the procedure are dedicated to CSW (advertising call for applications and receiving applications), but others remain unspecified. This practice is in fact proven in all SHSE projects completed by today. It is only the Project implementer that can dispose with spare resources to commit for this activity. In fact, it remained an unwritten rule that it is its obligation. Anyhow, since this important activity is missing in several documents (the CoC and the sub-agreement between UNHCR and it's implementing partner), it is recommendable that it is clearly stipulated whose responsibility is the technical coordination of the selection process.

The first step of the selection process was to decide on Book of Rules and agree on the text of advertisement for the Call for Applications. Further activities of JC were assessment of received applications establishment of pre-selection lists, selection of the host family, answering to the appeals of the applicants and establishment of final lists. The selection process lasted significantly: 8 months in Negotin, 9 months in Leskovac and Smederevo, 6 months in Vranje.

CSWs have advertised the Call for Application with a deadline of 15 days for submission of applications (30 days in Smederevo). The period of 15 days seem to be too short, since the potential beneficiaries first have to be informed in detail on the new housing option and on changes that would occur if they move in SHSE and in addition, they have to collect numerous statutory documents. As a rule everywhere, the applications were incomplete and the trustees (and in Negotin, staff from CSW, as well) were helping the applicants to complete their documentation because the Book of Rules strictly imposed rejections of all incomplete applications. Thanks to the above mentioned assistance, JCs haven't rejected any application on those grounds in all four municipalities. In addition to the assistance in obtaining documents, Leskovac authorities released the applicants from paying all taxes for certificates issued by local institutions.

To adjust to the practice, it is advisable that the Book of Rules extend the period for submission of documents longer than 15 days¹⁷ and foresees cases when JC will accept incomplete applications. The suggestion from UNHCR field officer and a member of the JC is to leave 15 days for collecting applications and to add 7 days for completion of necessary documentation (assisted by local authorities, UNHCR, and CSWs)

Even if somewhere it is already a common practice, it would be good to make a provision in the CoC that the municipalities will exempt the applicants from paying local administrative fees for certificates issued by local institutions.

Here we can make an observation, that since the mid 1990s, it became common that in all projects for refugees in Serbia, the selection committees consist of members from all the involved institutions. Processing of applications is always done by the JC itself. On the other hand, this custom is contrary to the standard practice in public administration where the selection committee decides on a proposed list, selects and elaborates unclear cases and appeals. All the applications and appeals are processed by the committee's secretariat, that may be a competent professional body or an ad hoc working group, composed by within or outside the committee's membership. Changing of the present position and assignments of the JC in SHSE, according to this setup, would certainly raise efficiency of the selection process¹⁸, but is probably not likely to happen due to the long tradition of the actual selection system.

By looking at the time spent, the selection process in the Project may be considered expensive, having in mind the wide composition of the JC and it's geographical and institutional diversity. In Vranje, 6 JC members met 7 times, in Negotin 11 times, in Leskovac 12 times and in Smederevo 8 times. In a few cases, the members of JCs agreed on results via telephone and signed the minutes when they met on the next session.

¹⁷ The usual period of application in social housing projects in Serbia is 30 days

¹⁸ City of Belgrade social housing programs for the most vulnerable are performed in this structure. The project of Kamendin settlement for around 170 units of 2007 has the following timing. Overall selection procedure lasted 4 months, out of which the call was open 30 days and the term for appeal was 15 days. The committee met 6 times.

The coordination and secretarial work of the process has taken significant working time (not less than 120 days for the four projects plus transportation and other costs).

3.4.4 Informing the beneficiaries

CSW has published the Public Advertisement in local newspapers and exposed the ad on the bulletin boards of the city hall, CSW office, CC and on important spots on the municipal territory. The application process was open to everyone who meets the established conditions and in all four municipalities the response was considered as good. It was two to four times the number of housing units. UNHCR field officers were visiting CCs and explaining potential beneficiaries on advantages and other features of the new housing option. In Negotin, HC and UNHCR made a public presentation of the Project for the interested public.

Through discussions with selected beneficiaries and few others who retreated after being selected, we have noticed that much important information was not available before and during the application process, essential for the CC dwellers, that were the most reluctant to apply (all the others were only winning).

One usual question posed by almost all of them, was how they can become owners of the apartment. In fact, nobody was prepared to accept the fact that the new housing solution is temporary while the appropriate vulnerability of their household exists.

They all understood that they will have to bear the costs of living, but nobody knew exactly: a) what are the bills they could expect each month and b) for those already being clients of CSW (recipients of MOP), will all the utility costs be covered by CSW, as it is the case now in the CC.

Other issues of utmost importance are duration and certainty of remaining in the apartment. The text of the Public Advertisement is very rigid in this respect. It says that the beneficiary could be *withdrawn the right of use of the apartment, according to the municipal Decision on Extended Right of Social Protection and Lease Contract*, without explaining what are these conditions. None of the four adopted municipal Decisions stipulates these conditions, but rather just repeats what was written in CoC in general terms. We have discussed this with the two families that can be seen as typical beneficiaries of SHSE, in Negotin. They are indigent families of elderly and sick parents (in one there is a handicapped parent), living on a 5th floor in small hotel rooms, without elevator, both with an adult unmarried son. The first family had been selected but afterwards gave up of signing the lease contract and the other hasn't applied at all. They both claimed the same reason. They were told that as soon as one parent dies, the remaining family will be thrown out. In practice this should not happen, but unfortunately, nobody from the interviewed local officials and social workers, knew the answer. It is obvious that the rules on conditions for further use of SHSE are needed before the selection starts since they are one of the key conditions of any tenancy contract.

Due to the fact that the exploitation issues of SHSE are not developed enough, all stakeholders are missing some important information. Trustees, social workers and UNHCR field officers, should be able to answer, but they can quote only those defined

in the Book of Rules. This problem is most significant for CSW who should be able to provide such information throughout all implementation phases of the project.

The CSW staff, that undertakes full responsibility in further management of SHSE have perplexities on all crucial issues: beneficiaries' duties and rights, future conditions of using apartment, exact role and activities of the Host, building management and maintenance, establishment of the tenants' assembly, house rules etc. In addition, it became obvious in all municipalities that once these issues are sorted out and converted into (local) regulations, it will be necessary to train the CSW staff and any other staff that will be appointed for these tasks.

Besides arranging regulations, it is recommendable to draft an easy reading leaflet for beneficiaries with all key frequently asked questions and concrete answers. Majority of these issues were already recognized in the publication *Social Housing in Supportive Environment - Research on accomplished project results 2003-2009*, published by HC which evaluates in detail the SHSE program. Intention of HC to publish guidelines for SHSE implementation goes fully in that direction.

3.4.5 Appeals

The procedure has allowed the possibility of one level appeal (complaint) to the decision within the given timeline. All the complaints have been forwarded to the JC for further consideration and final decision. After the preliminary list of precedence was put out, there was a certain timeline for all applicants to file a complaint throughout the local CSW. There have been complaints in all four municipalities – most of them were unfounded, but some were adopted. Most often, complaints were related to scoring and to request to accept applications that were found ineligible. The remaining cases were complaints on allocation of the apartment made by the pre-selected beneficiaries and complaints coming from the unselected applicants from private accommodation, that were usually having significantly higher score than those from CCs.

Municipality	No. of applications	No. of complaints	No. of adopted complaints	No. of unfounded complaints	No. of withdrawal
Negotin	36	7	1	6	2
Vranje	86	10	1	9	1
Leskovac	40	2	/	2	2
Smederevo	70	1	/	/	/

Table 8. Appeals per municipality

The scoring of all submitted applications was performed by JC and two separate list of proposals were made – one for refugees/IDPs and the other for local population (with exception of Leskovac, where a third list existed, covering the displaced from private accommodation). After considering the complaints, the JC has set final ranking lists, which were then forwarded to CSW for further processing. The selected beneficiaries have signed tenancy contracts with local CSWs and soon moved in.

The possibility of a complaint to a higher authority is not determined by the Project and it doesn't exist in this procedure, which is opposite to the common public administrative procedure in Serbia. However, it is considered by all parties that composition of JC and representation of interests of the partner institutions and probity of the procedure is fully protected.

3.4.6 Selection of the host family

The Host family is defined as one family with working capacity, preferably selected among the displaced or the domicile population in every municipality. In accordance with the Book, the choice of host family is twofold. One option is that the JC puts forward a list of potential candidates after scoring all applications (what has been done in Smederevo and Vranje). The nomination list was then forwarded to the CSW which has performed the professional processing of candidates. Based on these findings the JC made the final selection. The other option is that potential users initially apply for the host and become eligible after scoring (which is the case of Leskovac and Negotin). In this case CSW also performed the professional processing of potential candidates based on which the Commission conducted final election. The selected host family signed a particular contract with CSW on their rights and obligations, in which it is stated that the temporary accommodation of the host family is provided on terms of acceptance of the host family services.

The host family has an important role for social integration of selected beneficiaries into the new environment. In this regard, the host family should be a catalyst of social life in SHSE and is responsible for the development of good relations among neighbors and of alleviating tensions. According to discussions with representatives of the CSWs, none of the selected hosts is fully following their contractual duties. After talking to the three hosts in Negotin, Leskovac and Vranje, we concluded they were not fully aware of what the contractual obligation meant. They were also not fully aware, especially those coming from CC, that they are in fact paid for this work by being housed for free, i.e. the cost of their assignment as host is worth a value of rent on the market¹⁹. They also didn't understand how long they would be able to live in SHSE. It is therefore important to establish detailed guidelines and instructions, and to develop training for the host family, so they can fulfill their expected role. This is in fact indicated as CSW task in Book of Rules, but it is not likely that CSW is competent and able to do it properly.

It will be good that the role of the Host is defined in more detail and explained to all interested candidates before application. It would be also advisable that the selection rules and tenancy contract or other contract form concluded with the Host is more precise in rights and obligations, with expression of the rent value which this family is not paying. The Host should be trained, as it is foreseen by the Project, and a detailed manual for his/her activities should exist.

¹⁹ It is approximately 100 Euro.

3.5 Exploitation: main sustainability issues

3.5.1 Transfer of responsibilities

For the focal beneficiaries, the households from CCs., the Project provides a transfer from one comprehensive housing and livelihood assistance modality to another, that is considered as more sustainable. Besides the crucially improved housing conditions, the eligible households (it is supposed that all of them are) will receive new forms of social assistance. The institutions responsible for the previous care (SCR, Trustee for refugees, UNHCR) will be replaced by different ones, that is the local government and the local CSW. Through this transfer of responsibilities, type and nature of the new benefits for the beneficiaries will be changed. While the SCR has been providing a sub-standard rent-free accommodation in CCs, ensuring heating, payment of all utility bills and in many cases, providing free meals, in the SHSE the municipality and CSW are providing a standard, but dignifying, rent-free accommodation and new forms of social assistance to the individuals and households in need. However, all the utility bills and, where applicable, heating fuel, is supposed to be fully borne by the beneficiaries. The new housing option also gives them much less certainty than the previous one, since the future of their stay is not clear and judging by the existing terms, it is very unstable.

3.5.2 Provision of social services

Each of the four selected municipalities took the decision on the extended rights that has established SHSE as one of the social services. Furthermore, CSW as an institution of social assistance is the most involved. Meeting the requirements of the CoC, CSW is obliged, among other things, to provide conditions for improving the position of beneficiaries.

CSW began the provision of social services during the selection of beneficiaries when the professional assessment of potential beneficiaries and host family candidates was performed. After the beneficiaries have moved in, CSW was supposed to assess the status of the beneficiaries and provide social services to those who qualified (selected beneficiaries from the local population were already qualified for the MOP because it was the selection criteria). Furthermore, CSW should monitor any changes occurring in the beneficiaries' status, and initiate their integration.

In the three municipalities in which beneficiaries have moved in, certain indicators of the CSW activities are noticed. In Negotin beneficiaries moved in November 5, and since then the CSW team visited them twice. For that time, CSW has continually supplied beneficiaries with medicines and were helping them to organize themselves as tenants. Furthermore, CSW has helped those beneficiaries who do not have sufficient income to obtain firewood.

3.5.3 Tenancy and property management and building maintenance

Based on the tenancy contract signed between CSW and beneficiary, the selected household received the right to use the housing unit. According to this contract, the beneficiary is obliged to observe the house rules, carefully use the equipment and pay the running costs and to cooperate with the Host and CSW. Staying in SHSE depends

on the revision of the beneficiary's status, performed annually by CSW. This screening can then lead to termination of the tenancy contract.

The vague provisions set in CoC are transferred, top-to-bottom, through the Decision on Extended Rights of Citizens in Social Protection to the tenancy contract, In fact, all the issues that were supposed to be defined by the Decision, i.e. *other duties envisaged by this Contract and Decision on rights in the field of social protection in the territory of the City*. (Article 7 of the CoC) and *payment of running costs*, (as stipulated in Article 8) and finally *to define the more specific conditions to enable usage of the buildings by refugees and IDPs* (Article 9, chapter 1 *The City Agrees*), but in all the adopted Decisions, nothing has been detailed more than in the CoC.

The same applies to the tenancy contract itself. It has provisions referring to non-existing documents or non-existing by-laws. The House Rules were not part of any of the contracts and foresaw unknown activities in unknown future. This makes the tenancy contracts vague and announce full arbitration in future decision making process regarding who of the Project beneficiaries will remain and who will be evicted from the SHSE.

As already mentioned, the details on condition of use of SHSE have to be defined by the Decision, prior to opening of the Call for Application. In practice, as a result of our discussions with representatives of the local government and CSWs, it is obvious that they are not capable to draft these rules and conditions for a simple reason since SHSE concept is relatively new and not a sufficiently known program of social protection.

The way the Decisions were created and adopted, the contracts concluded, it looks that misunderstandings in assigning building management and maintenance obligation will happen in the future SHSE projects, the representatives from CSWs stated in the interviews. If no rent is collected, if arrears for utility payments are accumulated, if nobody cares regularly about building management and if the beneficiaries are not fluctuating, problems with sustainability of the existing SHSE should be expected.

Therefore it is necessary to solve all these complex issues through systemic distribution of management responsibilities, identification of real costs and distribution of financing responsibilities, definition in local by-laws (the Decision) and further developed in regulations, manuals and contractual documents.

In more concrete terms, some misconception should be corrected for both the present and future projects.

First, the free-rent concept should be replaced with rent expressed in the value of all the real costs (at least management, maintenance and insurance) with subject subsidies introduced for the eligible households, exactly the way utilities are paid and subsidized.

Second, the tenancy contract should be signed as temporary with specified duration, i.e. revision period (at present, revision of this right can happen once in a year and even more frequently, as any social transfer!). This period is usually not shorter than 3 years, but the revision of the contract should be performed. At present, the

contracts stipulates revision at least once a year, but in fact, there is no rule or regulation to enforce this procedure.

Third, a realistic, transparent and fair system of revision and extension of tenancy contracts should be developed. It is obvious that it overcomes capacities of individual local government and local CSW and that should be developed centrally and than given as part of the package. These conditions are even more important for sustainability of the program than any other element of SHSE (selection process, concept of the Host, design concept etc)²⁰. It could be concluded that, in case SHSE program doesn't introduce rent and subsidy system, the concept can easily collapse in time.

3.5.4 Property management and maintenance

It has been already mentioned in this document that there is a contradiction in the CoC in assigning responsibilities in building management and maintenance²¹.

In so far practice and interviews with all the representative from the CSWs it has been shown that there is no adequate competency and capacity in the existing structures of CSWs to fulfill this responsibility assigned both by the CoC and vaguely by the Decision.

Building management in SHSE should comprise a standard organization of a Building Assembly, as foreseen by the Law on Management and Maintenance of Housing Buildings (*condominiums*, DJM) and appropriate management procedures, which is a quite demanding process to organize and coordinate. We found a surprising example of a good practice in Negotin, where the tenants have already agreed on establishing a joint fund for common expenses, which has to be one of the future actions of the Tenants' Assembly and which is usually very difficult to establish even in richer condominium communities in Serbia.

It will be recommendable that:

1) the function of building management and maintenance is defined in detail (including contractual relationship with the tenants),

2) an appropriate distribution of tasks is done in particular municipality –

a) selecting tenants and providing social services by CSW.

²⁰ Many of the interlocutors from CSWs have perception that SHSE rights are similar to the other rights in social assistance, meaning that services are provided once the conditions occur and withdrawn when the same conditions don't exist anymore. In social housing, it is not possible to switch on and off the assistance and some inertia should be respected. That is why social housing is adjusted to the wider range of vulnerable population in housing need. In general the adjustment is done through setting rules that will define rent level, in theory from 0 to the market level. This general principle should be applied to SHSE, like to any other form of social housing program.

²¹ Article 9 of the CoC. *Obligations of the Contracting Parties*, in the 1st chapter *The City Agrees*, in line 7, *To assume the responsibility for regular maintenance of the building*. In the same article, in the 3rd chapter *The Center agrees* in line 10 *To resolve issues and make decisions pertaining to the Building management, as well as Building functioning and maintenance*.

- b) building and tenants management and maintenance by local housing agencies where they exist or by appropriate public/private organization.
- 3) appropriate stipulations in the CoC, Decision and tenancy contracts are carried out.
- 4) Tenant's Assemblies are established as mandatory, according to the Law and all the tenants trained respectively in their legal right and obligations, and
- 5) housing rules and other respective internal decisions of the Tenants' Assembly are given as template.

3.5.5 Activities of the Host

Social Housing Host is a person with working ability, whose obligations are similar to those of any other beneficiary, but in addition he/she is supposed to take care of proper use of the building and be helpful to other beneficiaries, for which he is exempted from paying the rent.

The CoC foresaw that CSWs should train the Social Housing Host Family, that will explain in detail the Hosts' duties. This, in fact, didn't happen in any municipality and it showed to be very important missing element, after joint discussions with the Hosts and representatives of the CSWs. This misconception is further spread to all relevant documents, including tenancy contracts for ordinary beneficiaries and the Host. It could be noticed that major responsibilities are found in the tenancy contract concluded between the CSW and the Host. In this contract, a range of serious and formal tasks related to property management and maintenance are assigned to the Host, who is in fact, a non-specialist, low educated person²².

Interviews with selected Hosts and CSW staff in all four municipalities brought to the conclusion that Hosts' contract obligations are defined widely and not specifically, therefore none of these hosts was fully aware and prepared for their responsibilities.

It is therefore recommended that:

- 1) Host's concrete and specific duties are defined.
- 2) Value of the Host's work is expressed (logically, in the amount of the market rent).
- 3) relevant information are stipulated in the CoC, Decision and the Host's tenancy contract templates.
- 4) Call for Application for SHSE beneficiaries includes all relevant and specific information with the intention to raise competition for the post of the Host, which has to be perceived as attractive to all vulnerable households and
- 5) after selection and signing tenancy contract, the Hosts should be trained for their new job, according to an appropriate manual. The last recommendations is also

²² For instance, the Host is supposed to communicate directly the building contractor during the warranty period, which cannot be treated as an official communication, that is essential in the claiming process. When suspecting deficiencies on the building, the Host should inform the responsible person in municipal establishment, who will then formally communicate the contractor requesting processing of the claim.

strongly pointed out in conclusions of the UNHCR / HC conference on SHSE of December 2009.

3.5.6 Running costs

Beneficiaries are obliged to pay running costs for the residence, which include water, electricity, heating and public utility services. For those coming from CCs it is a shock for the budget, since they haven't borne all these costs before. Therefore, arrears are to be expected and somebody (the owner) will have to take that in consideration and tackle with the problem. On the other side, it is very important that all the applicants from CCs are well informed on the range of utility expenses they will have to pay each month, as well as the subsidy they can receive depending on conditions they fulfill.

The misconception that we have mentioned that running costs are restricted only to utility costs has to be rectified, as previously said, by including inside management and maintenance costs too. Here some other smaller expenses should also be incorporated (such as insurance) and they can be estimated at level between 2% and 3% of all construction costs annually. Next issue to be solved through the local Decision is who, how and to whom these costs will be paid. All these elements has to be consequently defined in all the program documents.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

UNHCR's integration projects and SHSE in particular have already a long history with proven results. Many of the activities of the IPA 2007 Project can be considered as good practice examples and some of them go beyond contractual tasks and show high professional responsibility of UNHCR and its partner, the Housing Center. Through extensive research activities, a deep internal evaluation of the SHSE Project concept has been already done and its findings have already set ground for systemic improvements. Therefore, this evaluation could be seen as a follow up of an already started initiative. HC's publication on the results of the SHSE projects in 21 municipalities, constructed since the beginning of the program in 2003, as well as the recommendations of the conference on SHSE, held in Kragujevac in December 2009, are fully encompassed by our findings and recommendations.

The entire evaluation is structured in segments, in accordance with the project implementation process, while below we list the general findings, as a summary from the previous chapters:

1. The selection of municipalities was fully appropriate, which was proven through all of the evaluated parameters. The selected municipalities are municipalities with CCs hosting large number of displaced households, many of them being considered extremely vulnerable and living in sub-standard conditions. They all have significant presence of vulnerable households in CCs. The authorities of the four municipalities expressed strong commitment to implement the Project and they all demonstrated enthusiasm in cooperation and provided adequate resources, which proved that initial assumptions were correct and the selection appropriate.
2. The majority of Project partners (SCR and UNHCR with its sub-contractor HC) have long experience in implementation of SHSE while local partners (the municipality and the CSW) were new in the team (except in Vranje, where one SHSE building already existed). Not all the project activities are recognized in respective documents and not all responsibilities were clearly distributed, which resulted in problems and delays in implementation, but also opened the issue of sustainability, especially regarding some functions (property management and maintenance). As a result, some of the partners were given responsibilities that overcame their competencies (CSW). However, the project activities were done within the planned time frame and with all the expected outcomes achieved. In general, despite the fact that programme is decentralized from the welfare policy aspect, it contributes primarily to the national strategic goals (closure of CCs with project rules established between SCR and EC). However, there is a strong need for technical guidance from the central level in development of housing and social elements of SHSE functions.
3. Completed construction works are of satisfactory quality and architectural design is widely perceived as very appealing. It strongly contributes to positive recognition of their dwellers and the SHSE program itself. Problems that occurred during construction are related to: unclear division of responsibilities in the design phase

and unfocused tendering procedure for selection of contractor. Selection of the heating system, maintenance, energy efficiency and accessibility of buildings and apartments appeared as issues to be improved.

4. Selection of beneficiaries is part of the Project implementation where all parties were strongly involved, especially SCR and UNHCR. The applied methodology is inherited from the first joint projects for durable integration of refugees in the 1990s with the similar structure (UNHCR, SCR, municipality, implementing agency). The Project had a difficult task to positively discriminate the primary targeted beneficiaries, the displaced from CCs over the other displaced and local population, that seemed to be in much more difficult situation. This was allowed by setting a quota for CC dwellers, without a vulnerability census and by the fact that the Joint Committee for selection is setting the rules that will follow itself. Consequently, a first instance appeal was the only available option. This practice is significantly different than the common public administrative procedure in Serbia. Although less efficient, it enabled arbitrary decisions based on consensus of all project parties that led to selection of the most desirable beneficiaries.

5. In the exploitation phase, the Project could be facing major challenges, which has been already confirmed in previous evaluations and conferences and recognized by some Project stakeholders. Some crucial issues remained open related to security of tenure, socio-economic feasibility, property management and maintenance, endangering sustainability of the Project action. These issues request for immediate actions in setting relations, conditions and development of a number of regulatory and contractual documents. It is important to stress that this is not likely to happen without strong support from the central level, namely the line ministries for housing and social welfare.

General conclusion is that it is necessary to solve all these open issues through systemic distribution of management responsibilities, identification of real costs and distribution of financing responsibilities, definition in local by-laws (the Decision) and further developed in regulations, manuals and contractual documents.

4.2 Recommendations

Below recommendations derive from the previous chapters and they are summarized and systematized at more general level. For the particular evaluated items, concrete and detailed recommendations are given in respective chapters as the underlined text.

Recommendations that came out of this evaluation are practically all at the program level and, as a general methodological suggestion, they could make effects only if they are prepared at the central level, in an appropriate form of guidelines, manuals, by-laws or similar.

4.2.1 Further development of the key SHSE program principles

In order to raise sustainability of the program, it is advisable to improve existing and make an appropriate setup for new SHSE project through detailed development of the program conceptions in the following directions:

1) The free-rent concept should be replaced with the standard social housing rent calculated at level of all real expenses (at least for management, maintenance and insurance) combined with rent subsidies applied to the eligible households. Rent subsidies could follow the logic of subsidized utility bills. For sure, the building management and maintenance costs have to be recognized and added to the running costs of SHSE.

2) The tenancy contract should be signed with temporary duration that is suggested not be shorter than 2 or 3 years, with possibility to frequently adapt rent subsidy according to income change and, as usual, to cancel the contract in case of misuse or other violation. Defining the “cost” rent and sliding rent subsidies according to income criteria will allow smooth dynamics in occupation of housing units and flexibility to changes in household income.

3) A realistic, transparent and fair mechanism of revision and extension of tenancy contracts should be developed.

In case the rents and rental subsidies are not introduced, the risk of system collapsing, which happened to almost complete public social housing stock that remained from the socialist times, will be significantly higher. It is encouraging that the most relevant interviewees were strongly supporting the mentioned common tenure principles in social housing.

4.2.2 Selection of municipalities

Selection of municipalities should be led by national strategic priorities, real needs and motivation of local authorities, but it is very important that the municipalities are better informed about their responsibilities in SHSE program. They have to know in advance, before accepting to participate in the program, precisely what will be their inputs (land, human and financial resources) and how the SHSE will function in future with all implications to the local budget (tenants management, operation and maintenance costs, subsidies).

Based on the UNHCR good practice, whenever the objective for implementation of SHSE is to close CCs, it is recommendable that it is always offered in combination with other housing options.

4.2.3 Selection of beneficiaries

Improving the selection process

It is recommendable to extend submission of documents for a period longer than 15 days and define cases when JC accepts incomplete applications. Municipalities should make effort to issue the documents under its jurisdiction free of charge for all applicants.

The applicants should be better informed on all conditions of use SHSE, including with the appropriate printed material.

The role of the JC could be redefined to raise efficiency of the selection process in a way that assessment of applications and appeals is done by the secretariat of the selection process (one of the four partners assigned for the task of coordination of

selection) and that the JC takes decisions, discuss unclear applications and appeals and controls the work of the secretariat.

Improving selection criteria

In order to achieve higher level of fairness and equality between different targeted groups and reduce possibility and needs for taking arbitrary decisions, the present set of selection criteria can be improved through additional defining of qualifying conditions (inclusion of income limit), simplification of the scoring system and introduction of the census for minimal vulnerability points score.

4.2.4 Redefining responsibilities of the Project partners

Some important activities have to be better formulated in the project agreements and contracts. Also, some responsibilities have to be assigned more precisely to the existing project partners. In addition, some new responsibilities have to be included in the project as well as some new project partners.

In present constellation, the management or coordination of the selection process should be assigned to one of the project parties.

New tasks

Tenancy management and building management and maintenance are not given due attention in the Project and in these areas some concrete activities should be developed in long-term perspective and assigned to the appropriate local institution.

For these activities, the most adequate solution is certainly the specialized local social housing institution (Municipal Housing Agency, as defined by the Social Housing Law), which has been already concluded by all relevant stakeholders both at central and local level. In cases where MHA doesn't exist, option could be any other municipal, or private institution responsible for managing, renting and maintenance of local public real estate.

When the new partner is introduced, it will be necessary to make a clear delineation of responsibilities and define rules of cooperation between CSW and such institution and the local government. In practice, this should be formally arranged through an adequate local by-law.

4.2.3 Involving other project stakeholders

Ministry of Labor and Social Policy

Given the fact that SHSE is grown under auspices of MLSP and that it supports development of SHSE program within the national social policy under the scope of extended rights in social protection (decentralized activities), it will be recommendable that certain form of detailed guidelines are prepared, jointly with the ministry responsible for housing (or the National Housing Agency when established), and disseminated to all local governments. Provisional content of these guidelines will be suggested in further text

Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning

It would be highly advisable that the MESP includes SHSE in the National Strategy of Social Housing, which drafting is ongoing at the moment and that SHSE is foreseen in the overall national housing policy. Respectively, at the local level, the future SHSE projects should be included in the local housing strategies wherever they are formulated and where the municipality recognizes needs and capacities to implement these projects.

The Host Family

Considering the fact that the Host is one of the pillars of SHSE concept, it is advisable that his/her responsibilities and duties, rights and benefits are centrally developed in detail and made available as a written information to all interested persons, prior to call for application. This means that all the relevant issues are already formulated, realized respectively in all agreements and contracts and training curricula. It would be also very useful that a manual for the Host's activities is prepared, published and disseminated to all SHSE and CSW in Serbia.

4.2.4 Improving the SHSE building development

Selection of locations for construction

Given the fact that spare good locations in municipal ownership usually bear some deficiency, it is advisable that the foundation conditions are inspected thoroughly before starting with design. Future projects should rely on good practice developed through this Project and whenever possible, pay attention that the development is located in a neighborhood where there are possibilities to connect the building to either district heating or gas pipeline.

Design of SHSE buildings

It is proven by the Project that good design is very important for affirmation of SHSE and therefore, it is recommended that conceptual design is done through a national public competition. This practice will stand along with the new custom in implementing social housing projects in Serbia.

In general, SHSE should be designed and built paying high respect to durability and maximum reduction of maintenance costs.

Adherence to European trends in social housing and the regulations that will be soon adopted in Serbia, increased energy efficiency in future SHSE and lower living costs at the same time should be an imperative. This entails: 1) lowering heat loss through adequate design (orientation, building shape, insulation, openings, selection of materials etc) and 2) selecting adequate economical heating system. Future projects should bear in mind that selection of adequate heating system will be a major technical challenge in majority of smaller towns. In cases where there is no district heating system optimal sustainable heating systems should be developed.

Regarding the architecture, it is recommendable to review the security issue, especially on the ground floor. Following the social housing regulations in Serbia, the SHSE project should have at least 10% of apartments designed and fully equipped for the disabled.

It is advisable that a set of recommended spatial / technical standards and suggested equipment is developed for future SHSE projects.

Tendering procedure

It is advisable that the tender procedure is done in accordance with any of the public procurements standards and adapted either to the EU PRAG rules or to the Serbian Public Procurement Law in order to get more reliable contractors and abandon arbitrary decisions. By precise selection of adequate contractor, project risks will be significantly lowered and quality of works increased.

In cases like in this Project, where the developer (the municipality) is not implementing the project, but an implementing agency, it is necessary that the beneficiary of the performance guarantee for the warranty period is the municipality (the building owner).

4.2.5 Improving the project documentation

Contract on Cooperation

The CoC should reflect all basic changes that may occur if any conceptual improvement is done regarding better definition of responsibilities, recognition of new activities and partners and before all, redefinition of tenure conditions.

Decision on Extended Rights of Citizens in Social Protection

This is the pivotal and probably the most important document of the Project and none of the involved municipalities managed to define it fully. Once all the open issues are solved, regarding tenure conditions, rents, conditions of contract extensions and roles and responsibilities of all parties involved they should be entailed and regulated by this by-law. At present, it is obvious that all these crucial issues affecting the future of SHSE are not solved anywhere and therefore, it will be appropriate that they are defined at the central level, as said before, in form of guidelines, jointly developed and endorsed by the ministries responsible for social welfare and housing, or appropriate national institutions. It is highly advised that the Decision is prepared and adopted before concluding the CoC.

Tenancy contracts

These contracts would in any case reflect conceptual changes, carried out through the Decision, but essentially, they have to be developed as lease contracts and not as temporary social assistance and entail more elements related to use of apartments, house rules, responsibilities in tenants' assembly, financing of joint expenses, use of the common living room etc. The rents and subsidies could be expressed in one document or separately, but it is mostly recommended that rents are included in all

contracts. Most importantly, key legal issue of these contracts to be solved is the security of tenure, which is currently lacking.

Contract with the Host

Having in mind fundamental importance of the role of the Host and specific nature of this contractual relationship, it will be good to redefine in detail this contract to address all relevant requests and problems that have been identified in overall SHSE practice. International experience would be also of a great help.

Manual of the Host of SHSE

The Hosts receive scarce information on their duties, responsibilities and benefits and only in the tenancy contract they will find them listed, more of them in a vague, general form. A small publication defining in details their duties and providing all relevant information (addresses, procedures, rules for functioning of the tenant's assembly etc) will be very helpful for them. It is certain that long experience of over 40 Hosts in Serbia could be of great help in preparation of this manual.

The SHSE program guidelines

Need for such a document has been mentioned many times in this evaluation and it goes along the recommendation of the conference on SHSE results of December 2009, held by HC. In general, the guidelines should address and define to the operational level, all the open issues, not leaving any empty room for further formulation, as these issues have been traditionally treated to all of the Project documents (from the CoC through the Decision to the Tenancy Contract).

The guidelines therefore have to offer (recommend) standards and templates for all the relevant Project elements. They could be grouped in technical (requirements for micro locations, spatial and construction standards, tendering procedures equipment), social (general rules and procedures for beneficiary selection, including rules for designing selection criteria, contracts with beneficiaries, social services) and managerial (tenancy and property management, maintenance) aspects and include templates of the municipal Decision and all contracts.

Training

Results of all interviews with people involved in exploitation of SHSE showed that there is a lack of understanding and knowledge, thus preventing smooth functioning. First reason is that many of the important issues are not yet resolved. But, even in these circumstances, we found that there is a need to perform training of all the staff that will be involved in future operation of SHSE on nature, principles, roles of partners, especially on the role of the Host, on duties and rights of beneficiaries. Second and more important is training of the Hosts of SHSE that should be followed even by a manual.

4.3 Final comments

Summarizing conclusions and recommendations, we can wrap up that SHSE has proven its values and original objectives through time. We can expect that the strongest test in forthcoming years will be motivation of local government to implement this concept with its own funds or loans. And finally, today, seven years from the first SHSE projects, it is high time to resolve key sustainability issues and make new healthy foundations for its future.

5. Annexes

5.1 Annex I List of the people interviewed

Name	Date	Place of the meeting
Miloš Teržan, UNHCR	23/11/2010 26/11/2010	UNHCR, UDP
Branislava Žarković, Housing Center	23/11/2010 25/11/2010 06/12/2010	UNHCR, HC
Zoran Radojković, CC Manager Trustee for Refugees, Smederevo	30/11/2010	Smederevo, CC
Nebojša Kostić, Host family, Smederevo	30/11/2010	Smederevo, CC
Duško Došić, Selected beneficiary, Smederevo	30/11/2010	Smederevo, CC
Danica Kučinar, Supervisor of the construction works, Smederevo	30/11/2010	Smederevo, City Hall
Miodrag Nadaškić, Manager Center for Social Welfare, City of Smederevo	30/11/2010	Smederevo, City Hall
Bojan Milutinov, Project Co-ordinator, City of Smederevo	30/11/2010	Smederevo, City Hall
Ksenija Papazoglu, Field Officer UNHCR	01/12/2010	Belgrade, UNHCR Offices
Miroslav Guteša, Field Officer UNHCR	01/12/2010	Belgrade, UNHCR Offices
Vlajko Đorđević, President Municipal of Negotin	02/12/2010	Negotin, City Hall
Verica Crnogorac, Trustee for Refugees, Negotin	02/12/2010	Negotin, City Hall
Project Co-ordinator, Municipal of Negotin		
Radoslav Arandelović, Supervisor of the construction works, Negotin	02/12/2010	Building Site, Negotin
Predrag Đorđević, Manager Center for Social Welfare, Municipal of Negotin	02/12/2010	Building Site, Negotin

Slavica Vujaković, Center for Social Welfare, Municipal of Negotin, social worker	02/12/2010	Building Site, Negotin
Ružica Jovanović, Center for Social Welfare, Municipal of Negotin, lawyer	02/12/2010	Building Site, Negotin
Miroslav Milošević, Urban Planning Department, Municipal of Negotin	02/12/2010	Building Site, Negotin
Milovan Stolić, Host family, Negotin	02/12/2010	Building Site, Negotin
Maja Kapljesković, Selected beneficiary, Negotin	02/12/2010	Building Site, Negotin
Gak Vasilj, Potential beneficiary – withdrawal, Negotin	02/12/2010	CC, Negotin
Pavlović Milorad, Selected beneficiary – withdrawal, Negotin	02/12/2010	CC, Negotin
Milena Timotijević, HC, Social worker	06/12/2010	Belgrade, HC Offices
Svetlana Oklobdžija, Commissariat for Refugees	07/12/2010	Belgrade, Commissariat Offices
Svetlana Velimirović, Commissariat for Refugees	07/12/2010	Belgrade, Commissariat Offices
Dragana Stošić, Project Co-ordinator, City of Leskovac	08/12/2010	Leskovac, City Hall
Igor Kocić, Trustee for Refugees, Leskovac	08/12/2010	Leskovac, City Hall
Snežana Milojković, Manager Center for Social Welfare, City of Leskovac	08/12/2010	Leskovac, City Hall
Dragan Zdravković, Supervisor of the construction works, Leskovac	08/12/2010	Leskovac, City Hall
Gorica Mitrović, Host family, Leskovac	08/12/2010	Building Site, Leskovac
Miroljub Stojčić, City of Vranje, Mayor	08/12/2010	Vranje, City Hall
Zorica Perić, Trustee for Refugees, Vranje	08/12/2010	Vranje, City Hall
Verica Mihajlović-Nikolić, Manager Center for Social Welfare, City of Vranje	08/12/2010	Building Site, Vranje

Dragica Stanojković, Center for Social Welfare, City of Vranje, social worker	08/12/2010	Building Site, Vranje
Srboljub Tasić, Center for Social Welfare, City of Vranje, lawyer	08/12/2010	Building Site, Vranje
Željko Pejić, Host family, Vranje	08/12/2010	Building Site, Vranje
Ljiljana Lučić, State Secretary for Social Policy, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy	09/12/2010	Belgrade, Secretary Offices
Marzia Palotta Program Manager Delegation of European Union	10/02/2011	Belgrade, EU Delegation
Marija Vujošević, Adviser Ministry of Labour and Social Policy		telephone conversation
Rajko Radičević, Field Officer UNHCR		telephone conversation
Dobrivoje Ilić Supervisor of the construction works, Vranje		telephone conversation
Vesna Jeremić, Project Co-ordinator, City of Smederevo		telephone conversation
Đorđe Smiljković, Architect, HC		telephone conversation
Milena Timotijević Sociologist, HC		telephone conversation

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