

**BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS'  
OBSERVATION VISIT**

**April 8 - 19, 1996**

prepared by

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for

The United States Agency for International Development  
Bureau for Europe and the Newly Independent States  
Office of Environment, Energy and Urban Development  
Urban Development and Housing Division

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The success of this observation visit was due to the professionalism and dedication of USAID, LGI, MTKK, and ICMA staff. Ms. Bonnie Walter, USAID/Washington provided diligent guidance during the planning of the visit. Dr. Michael Hoffman, LGI, was instrumental in designing and coordinating the program for the officials; which Ms. Maya Koleva and Ms. Vanya Ivanova, MTK Konsult, made a reality through their invaluable coordination, facilitation, and guidance throughout the visit. Mr. George Valais, ICMA, provided technical direction and program management, while Messrs. Stoyko Stoykov and Yonco Mermersky bridged the gap between hosts and guests with unparalleled interpretation and translation services. Finally, the officials at the local governments and institutions participating in the observation visit provided the delegation with valuable insights into the practices of local government administration, and will be remembered by the Bulgarian visitors and their U.S. counterparts.

## **ABSTRACT**

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through its Local Government Initiative program (LGI) invited seven mayors in the LGI program, six of whom are newly elected, as well as four national government official to participate in a two-week observation visit to the Washington, D.C./Baltimore area. The purpose of the visit was to introduce the delegation to the U.S. system of government, including such topics as citizen participation, finance and budgeting, municipal service management, economic development, public relations, and association development; as well as other aspects of the democratic process in the context of increasing local financial accountability and professional municipal management.

The delegation was hosted by several cities, counties, and associations during the observation visit including Cities of Annapolis, Baltimore, and Alexandria; Loudoun, Montgomery, and Fairfax Counties; the National League of Cities; the U.S. Conference of Mayors; the National Association of State Auditors, Comptrollers, and Treasurers; and the Bulgarian American Business Center. The delegation was introduced to the administration and technical expertise of each organization, and engaged their hosts in discussions focusing on current municipal management issues in Bulgaria. The visit culminated in a plenary round table attended by the national officials, mayors, USAID, LGI and ICMA project staff. Lessons learned were discussed and prospective technical assistance projects were suggested to USAID by the delegation.

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# **BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS' OBSERVATION VISIT**

**April 8 - 19, 1996**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through its Local Government Initiative program (LGI) has been focusing technical assistance on ten pilot Bulgarian municipalities since 1992. LGI has developed relationships with the mayors and officials of these municipalities, as well as the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction (MRDC), the Bulgarian Parliament and Council of Ministers. LGI has contracted the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) to implement technical assistance projects in the areas of municipal finance, management information systems, public-private partnerships in land development, citizen participation, and economic development.

Municipal elections were held in the Fall 1995, resulting in the election of new mayors in nine of the ten LGI municipalities. Despite the change in municipal leadership, each of the cities reiterated their dedication to cooperate with USAID and LGI in support of their transition to transparent and accountable governance, and the empowerment of citizens through democratic political processes in their respective communities. To further reinforce this cooperation, USAID and LGI invited the mayors participating in the LGI program, as well as four national government officials responsible for introducing legislation supporting decentralization in Bulgaria, to participate in a two-week observation visit to the Washington, D.C./Baltimore area (for a detailed list of participants please see **Attachment 1**).

## **2 U.S. OBSERVATION VISIT**

The purpose of the observation visit was to introduce the delegation to the U.S. system of government, including such topics as citizen participation, finance and budgeting, municipal service management, economic development, public relations, and association development; as well as other aspects of the democratic process in the context of increasing local financial accountability and professional municipal management. The delegation made site visits to cities, counties, and local government associations throughout the Washington, D.C./Baltimore area. During site visits, emphasis was placed on establishing a dialogue between the hosts and the delegation. The exchange of information was bi-lateral, with both parties departing with a clearer understanding of each others' legal, political, and management context.

The delegation was hosted by several cities, counties, and associations during the observation visit including Cities of Annapolis, Baltimore, and Alexandria; Loudoun, Montgomery, and Fairfax Counties; the National League of Cities; the U.S. Conference of Mayors; the National Association of State Auditors, Comptrollers and Treasurers; and the Bulgarian American Business Center (please see **Attachment 2** for a detailed

program itinerary). The delegation was introduced to the administrative and technical expertise of each organization, and engaged their hosts in discussions focusing on current municipal management issues in Bulgaria. The visit culminated in a plenary round table attended by the national officials, mayors, USAID, LGI and ICMA project staff. Lessons learned were discussed and prospective technical assistance projects were suggested to USAID by the delegation.

## **2.1 Meetings and Site Visits**

### **2.1.1 Introduction to the U.S. Government System**

Dr. Enid Beaumont, Professor of Government at Johns Hopkins University, Center for the Study of American Government, met with the delegation to present an overview of the U.S. government system. The main points of her presentation focused on the separation of powers, checks and balances, and the three levels of government (federal, state, and local). The judicial system and the assignment of authority regarding revenue collection were the two most discussed topics of the day. The delegation left with a clearer sense of the role of local government and its relationship within the state's unitary system, and the federal system of the national government. In the afternoon, the delegation visited the U.S. Congress and was briefed on the workings of the U.S. legislative system.

### **2.1.2 Economic Development**

The delegation travelled to the City of Annapolis, MD to explore the City's, as well as Anne Arundel County's, economic development strategy. Annapolis, and the surrounding Anne Arundel County, have very few public land holdings and feature various historic properties and buildings throughout its jurisdictions. This situation predisposes the city and county officials to carefully plan land use projects and infuse redevelopment into its overall economic development strategy. The group congregated in the city council's chamber, and was welcomed by the Honorable Alfred Hopkins, Mayor of Annapolis. Mayor Hopkins' introduction was followed with presentations by Annapolis officials Ms. Susan Zellars, Director, Economic Development; Eileen Fogarty, Director, Planning and Zoning; and Mr. Michael Lofton, CEO, Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation.

The use of public-private partnerships and the benefit of retaining municipal holdings was discussed. The quandary over the value of municipal holdings, which draw revenues from rents and leases, was explored in comparison to the value of the same holdings as taxable private assets in a free market. The delegation discussed its apprehension about selling the property outright; they would rather have the revenues from tenants than risk the loss of funds while waiting for a tax base to form on the newly privatized property.

The day concluded with a reception which allowed the delegation to interact with other Annapolis officials including Mr. John Prehn, City Administrator; Ms. Kathie Sulick, Director of Finance; Mr. David Smith, Director of Public Works; and featured a presentation by Mr. Scott Hancock, Director, Maryland Municipal League.

### **2.1.3 Management Information Systems**

The City of Alexandria, VA hosted the delegation and invited them to meet with staff from their Management Information Systems (MIS) Department. The delegation was briefed on Alexandria's MIS program by Mr. Peter Orzel, Supervisor, and Ms. Karen Waldrop, Database Administrator, both from the Technical Services Section. The delegation discussed Alexandria's efforts to convert its computer systems and examined the accounting, financial reporting, and property management software utilized by the City.

### **2.1.4 Solid Waste Management**

Ms. Joyce Doughty, Director, Division of Solid Waste Disposal and Resource Recovery, presented an overview of Fairfax County's solid waste collection system. Fairfax County has one of the most consolidated and environmentally sound solid waste collection and disposal systems in either Virginia or Maryland. Solid waste is separated for recyclable materials in the home. Collection is then contracted out to private firms, which pay the County for the quantity of refuse they deposit of in Fairfax County's waste-to-energy plant. The only landfill in use is for the ashen waste produced by the plant. The former garbage landfill has been buried, and is tapped for the natural gas by-product of decomposition. The county has a contract with a private gas company, which purchases the gas from the county to sell to the general public.

Fairfax has interjurisdictional agreements with the District of Columbia and Arlington County for use of Fairfax County's solid waste facilities. The delegation initiated a discussion about the planning and budgeting of such solid waste operations, including the use of municipal bonds rather than taxes to support capital improvements to the system. The autonomy of the divisional budget, extensive use of private contractors, and the high level of education regarding recycling were also issues about which the mayors were most curious.

### **2.1.5 Municipal and Professional Associations**

The delegation visited the National League of Cities and was met by Mr. Jim Brooks, Director, International Programs. In the afternoon, the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) hosted the delegation. Mr. Don Slater, Assistant Director, gave a presentation on the benefits of association development and the priorities of U.S. mayors in medium to large cities. The lobbying efforts of USCM were discussed as well as the function of the association regarding information and best practice dissemination. The delegation seemed interested in the administration of the association, considering the executive and regional boards consist of currently elected officials. Mr. Slater factored in a professional administrative staff as well as the annual national conference as keys to the unity and success of the USCM.

### **2.1.6 Community Development**

The Empowerment Baltimore Management Corporation (EBMC) hosted the delegation at their corporate headquarters. The Empowerment Corporation is a nationally-funded program which targets low-income areas, or empowerment zones, for technical assistance in master planning for business, community, and economic development. Adult education, public housing reform, and tax incentives are used as catalysts for change in these depressed zones. Citizen participation and local investment are the keys to the success of this neighborhood revitalization program.

Ms. Diane Bell, Director; Ms. Leslie Bender, Business Development Manager; and Mr. Michael Preston, Public Information Officer hosted the delegation. The delegation was joined by City Councilman Handy and Dr. Doris Hall, both residents in the empowerment zones as well as community representatives in the program. After a presentation which provided an overview of the program, the delegation was given a tour of the empowerment zones. At each stop, community leaders and volunteers were given the opportunity to share their individual redevelopment projects with the delegation. The Bulgarian officials were able to make inquiries and hold discussions with Dr. Hall throughout the visit.

### **2.1.7 Business Development**

Mr. Vladimir Ossenov, President; and Ms. Kalinka Momchileva, Managing Director, welcomed the delegation to the Bulgarian American Business Center (BABC). Following an overview of professional services provided by the BABC, each delegate was given the opportunity to share information about their municipalities or national concerns. The delegates gave Mr. Ossenov ideas for potential investment opportunities, as well as the general outlook for private sector development in Bulgaria. The banking system was also an issue which was discussed, especially the escalating interest rates on personal loans and the inflation rate of the lev.

### **2.1.8 Planning**

Land use planning was discussed with members of the Loudoun County Planning Department. Ms. Julie Pastor, Director; Ms. Wanda Suder, Principal Planner; and Ms. Pamela Bower presented the County's planning strategy and illustrated the democratic process of approving the County's General Plan. The discussion that followed focused on the role of the public, the number of opportunities for input given throughout the approval process, and its effect on creating a professional plan in a reasonable amount of time.

### **2.1.9 Finance and Budgeting**

The County of Montgomery hosted the delegation for a discussion on U.S. finance and budgeting practices. Mr. Bruce Romer, County Administrator, provided a demographic and political context for government in Montgomery County. Mr. Robert Kendall, Director, Department of Management and Budget, provided a thorough overview of the County's budget, revenue sources, taxing authority, appropriations, and program prioritization (please see **Attachment 3**).

The issue of national control over local revenues and budgets was discussed, especially in terms of proposed legislation to be considered by the Bulgarian Parliament. Autonomy and control at the local level regarding revenue collection and program appropriations were of highest priority for the delegation.

#### **2.1.10 Law Enforcement**

Due to the fact that local law enforcement in Bulgaria is still under national jurisdiction, the delegation was very interested to learn about U.S. police practices. Montgomery County, because it has three independent cities within its borders, operates a full service police department. Mr. Gordon Aoyagi, Senior Chief Administrative Officer, Montgomery County, escorted the group to the County Police Headquarters for a first hand look at the department and crime lab facilities. Interjurisdictional cooperation, funding, and departmental authority within the overall county administration were discussed.

#### **2.1.11 Public Health**

Mr. Aoyagi also brought the delegation to one of the County's public health clinics. The staff presented the clinic's capabilities and explained its function. The delegation explained that Bulgarian municipalities are responsible for providing socialized medicine in their communities. These programs are funded through central government transfers, based on rough estimates instead of actual usage. Any inaccuracy or discrepancy in funding is compensated for out of the municipal budget. The need for more local control over staffing and budgeting for health care was unanimously described as a priority concern for the delegation.

#### **2.1.12 Personnel Management**

Alan Christenson, Personnel Director, County of Arlington, welcomed the delegation to his office for a meeting. Mr. Christenson gave an introduction and departmental overview, as well as explained the Civil Service Commission rules and the principles of government service. Cathie Craighill, Personnel Analyst; and Ms. Susan Newell, Senior Classifier, joined the discussion and gave an overview of job analysis and classification as well as compensation policies for Arlington County. Keith Edwards, Personnel Analyst; and Paddie Walters, Chief, Employee/Management and Retiree Services Division, closed the discussion with an overview of staffing and recruitment policy, employee relations, and on-the-job training.

#### **2.1.13 Accounting and Auditing**

The delegation met with Mr. James M. Krouse, Washington Director, National Association of State Auditors, Comptrollers and Treasurers (NASACT). Mr. Krouse presented the functions of local government accounting and auditing departments. The discussion that followed focused on the issues related to auditing and financial control for local governments and the fiscal relations among federal, state, and local governments.

### **3 Lessons Learned and Recommendations**

The final session of the observation visit was a plenary round table in which the delegation shared major themes, lessons learned, and future initiatives to be undertaken in their municipalities. Ms. Bonnie Walter, Project Officer, USAID/Washington joined the delegation at ICMA for the round table. Discussions were initiated through a brain storming exercise which divided the delegation into two discussion groups (for a list of the group participants please see **Attachment 4**). Major themes, areas of interest, and lessons learned were shared, and each group's ideas were presented in front of the congregation (for the group presentations please see **Attachments 5A and 5B**). The topics of specific interest to each municipality were then transferred into potential projects for each municipality to undertake within the LGI program.

Members of Group A were very interested in the computer automation work which they observed during their visit to the City of Alexandria as well as Arlington, Loudoun, and Montgomery Counties. There was a strong consensus that an effort should be made to expand the current usage of Bulgarian municipal local area networks (LAN) presently in operation to include the full automation of municipal administration as well as expand their capabilities to include geographic information systems (GIS). Deputy Mayor Kossev, Varna, the groups spokesman, also mentioned the Data Exchange Network (DEN) in the context of an Internet connection which will enable world-wide access to municipal and local government home pages. Group A also requested technical assistance in the area of finance and tax collection for property and business assets. Sanitation and solid waste collection based on market principles, including citizen participation in recycling with monetary incentives was also cited.

Group B shared many of the same desires but focused more strongly on economic and business development. Mayor Iablanski, Stara Zagora, the group's representative requested that more community development and information centers be initiated. Also, the group wanted to explore utilizing public-private partnerships for social welfare issues, as well as a redefining of terms regarding personnel management of municipal civil servants.

### **4 Participant Assessment of the Observation Visit**

USAID, LGI, and ICMA staff felt that participant input and assessment of the observation visit was an essential component for a successful program. The delegation was given two opportunities to formally express opinions, questions, and concerns. The mid-term assessment was distributed on Friday, April 12 (please see **Attachment 6**). The overall observation visit questionnaire was distributed on Saturday, April 20 (please see **Attachment 7**). Overall, the delegation voiced positive opinions about the observation visit. The content, organization, schedule, accommodations, and use of time were all seen as highly beneficial.

### **5 Conclusion**

The visit to the United States by the mayors and national government officials was an essential step in coordinating the efforts of Bulgarian local government leadership and that of USAID and the Local Government Initiative. The site visits and meetings between the delegation and their U.S. counterparts helped foster a mutual understanding of municipal and national management in Bulgaria. The interaction also provided a direction in which to develop LGI program assistance.

The delegation was bid farewell with a reception which was attended by Mr. Tom Dine, Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Europe and the Newly Independent States (ENI), as well as other notable USAID staff persons, representatives from the Bulgarian Embassy, and members of the Bulgarian-American community. Mr. Dine, as he addressed the reception audience, summed up the sentiments of all who participated in the observation visit when he said that, "the Bulgarian LGI program is the pride of USAID's ENI Bureau. The continued cooperation and dedication of the mayors will be the foundation on which this program will continue to grow, which will lead to measurable decentralization, democratization, and privatization in Bulgarian local self-government in the very near-term."

**ATTACHMENT 1**

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

**ATTACHMENT 2**

**OBSERVATION VISIT ITINERARY**

**ATTACHMENT 3**

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY FINANCE PRESENTATION**

**ATTACHMENT 4**

**PLENARY GROUP BREAKDOWN**

## **PLENARY GROUP A**

**Mr. Ognian Panov**, Head of the Department of Administrative Reform, Council of Ministers

**Mr. Dimitre Vele**v, Chairman of the Parliamentary Commission on Local Self-Government, Administrative Territorial Structure, and Regional Policy

**Mr. Nikolay Datchev**, Mayor, City of Gabrovo

**Mr. Nikolay Despodov**, Mayor, City of Zlatograd

**Mr. Dimitre Kaltchev**, Mayor, City of Rousse

**Mr. Daniel Kossev**, Deputy Mayor, City of Varna

## **PLENARY GROUP B**

**Mr. Boris Vladimirov Mihaylov**, Chief Secretary of the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction

**Ms. Guinka Tchavdarova-Karchakova**, General Director, National Center for Regional Development and Housing Policy, Ministry of Regional Development and Construction

**Mr. Tzanko Iablanski**, Mayor, City of Stara Zagora

**Mr. Ventzeslav Kojouharov**, Deputy Mayor, City of Blagoevgrad

**Mr. Venelin Ouzounov**, Mayor, City of Razgrad

**Ms. Ivanka Ivanova**, Director, Business Services, MTK Konsult

**Ms. Maya Koleva**, Principal, MTK Konsult

**ATTACHMENT 5A**

**GROUP A PRESENTATION**

## **GROUP A PRESENTATION**

### **SIGNIFICANT THEMES OF THE OBSERVATION VISIT**

1. Separation of Powers
  - Executive
  - Legislative
  - Judicial

A. System of Checks and Balances
2. Harmony of Relationships in Municipal Administrative Services

A. Democratic Principles of Public Hearings

**ATTACHMENT 5B**

**GROUP B PRESENTATION**

## **GROUP B PRESENTATION**

### **SIGNIFICANT THEMES OF THE OBSERVATION VISIT**

1. Voluntary Participation in Local Government
2. Administrative Service of Citizens
  - Providing Services
  - Automation
  - Availability
  - Easy Access
3. Attracting Business into the City/County
  - How to Promote Economic Development in the Community
4. Social Programs
  - Public-Private Partnerships for Social Welfare
5. Organization of Solid Waste Collection
  - Developing an Environmentally and Ecologically Sound Plan
6. Personnel Management

**ATTACHMENT 6**

**MID-PROGRAM ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

**United States Agency for International Development  
Local Government Initiative - Bulgaria  
Observation Tour Mid-Term Assessment, April 12, 1996**

The following questionnaire is designed to record participant comments and concerns regarding the current observation tour. Your input is essential to the success of the observation visit, and will shape the future planning of observation visits to come. Please rate each topic (5 being excellent, 3 being satisfactory, and 1 being poor) and answer the following questions as you feel appropriate. LGI appreciates your assistance in making the observation visit more technically and personally rewarding.

1. Accommodations Average 5

How do you find the hotel and transportation arrangements? What can be done to make your stay more comfortable and convenient? Do you have access to everything you need?

*The Hotel and transportation arrangements are excellent; everyone is very accommodating and the arrangements are very comfortable.*

2. Technical Meetings Average 5

How do you find the planned itinerary? Would you like more meetings? Are there technical areas that you would like included on the schedule? Are the presentations clear and is the information relevant?

*The program is well balanced.*

*All meetings so far have been directly related to the work in our municipalities and therefore have been very useful in terms of information. It will be of interest to get information on the funding of public schools and hospitals.*

*The program is planned and implemented very well. More meetings are not necessary because topics that have not been scheduled are being discussed during the planned meetings. We had very well prepared presentations.*

*Very well planned itinerary. It will be very good for the mayors if they could meet with city police and visit a hospital.*

3. Leisure Time Average 5

What activities would you like ICMA to arrange for the group? How is the current situation with translators and escorts? Do you find that you prefer arranged activities or the freedom to make your own schedule?

*Special thanks for the work of the whole team that provides organizational support of the program.*

*The interpreters and those that accompany us are doing an excellent job. It would be nice to have more arranged cultural activities like musical shows and theater. I prefer arranged visits.*

4. ICMA Host Staff

Average 5

Has ICMA been responsive to your needs and requests? How can ICMA be of better service? Have your administrative, personal, and professional needs been met? Would you like ICMA staff to be more available on a consistent basis?

*I would like to express my appreciation to the ICMA staff who are very responsive to our professional and personal needs.*

*The overall organization is excellent. ICMA staff is responsive to our requests and suggestions.*

*Excellent. I am very pleased with the program. ICMA staff availability is sufficient.*

5. General Comments or Concerns

*Once again, a special thank you to all who are engaged in the organization and implementation of our program in both its professional and cultural aspects.*

*There is a good balance between professional meetings and free time.*

*For me personally, the visit to the U.S. will be very useful. New ideas were born out of all discussions which I will try to implement in our situation. I suggest that all printed materials that are given to us by the U.S. cities be translated and given to us in the form of a newsletter which which could be used by us and our staff.*

ICMA appreciates your honesty and your input. Your comments will help shape the remaining week's activities, and will have an impact on the coordination of future observation visits and study tours.

Please remember that this observation tour is your program, and ICMA is here to make sure that you have the most productive and enjoyable trip as possible. We thank you for your participation and for the opportunity to work together.

**ATTACHMENT 7**

**FINAL ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

**United States Agency for International Development  
Local Government Initiative - Bulgaria  
Observation Tour Assessment, April 20, 1996**

Please rate each topic (5 being excellent, 3 being satisfactory, and 1 being poor) and answer the following questions as you feel appropriate. LGI appreciates your assistance in making the observation visit more technically and personally rewarding.

1. Technical Meetings Average 4.8

Were all of your interests covered through the various site visits on the itinerary? Were the municipal and county officials appropriate for your needs?

*Yes, most of all in Rockville, MD.*

*Yes, the meetings with specific municipal and county officials were very useful.*

*Meetings to be up to deputy mayor level. Besode technically, it would be useful to share experience with people from the higher management level.*

2. Leisure Time Average 5

Were you given the opportunity to attend to personal business? Were you able to experience American culture in a manner that provided insight to the overall observation visit? How can ICMA better fulfill your needs during future visits?

3. LGI/ICMA Staff Average 4.8

Has LGI/ICMA been responsive to your needs and requests? How can ICMA be of better service? Have your administrative, personal, and professional needs been met? Were the interpreters efficient, available, and responsive to your needs? Were you provided with ample opportunity to express your needs?

*Absolutly all nees were satisfied. Mr. Stoykov was an excellent interpreter and organizer.*

*Extremely high marks for the host staff and interpreters. the interpreters were excellent consultants on all issues that were raised, with a very high sense of responsibility, very competent and knowledgeable.*

4. General Comments or Concerns

*All presenters were on a very good level. This approach for organizing the program works very well.*

*Depending on the resources - accommodations could be improved.*

*A very useful visit offering diverse benefits and effects for a short period.*

*The contents of the program were very well selected, the preparation and implementation were on a very high level. All additional meetings that were requested were organized on a very short notice.*

*Thank You.*

*The program was very well designed. All important topics about the work of the municipal administration were included. The organization of the program was on a very high level. All meetings were very useful. We are leaving the U.S. with many ideas and an appreciation for the warm hospitality.*

ICMA appreciates your honesty and your input. Your comments will help shape future observation visits and study tours. USAID, LGI, and ICMA appreciate your participation and cooperation throughout the observation visit. The exchange of information will be essential for building the relationship between the central government, municipalities, and USAID. We thank you for your participation and for the opportunity to work together.

**Local Government Initiative Municipal Officials' Observation Visit Agenda**  
**April 5 -20, 1996**  
**Washington, D.C.**

**Friday, April 5: Briefing in Sofia**

1. Review itinerary and objectives.

Present the participants technical briefing and Observational Visit materials; review and assess the agenda; solicit interests, suggestions, or recommendations.

2. Familiarization with US Government Structure and Terminology.

This is as much a language and definition problem as substantive one. for example, how do we translate "county" and what does it mean in the US context? Our experience is that communication is increased and the time needed for everyone to "get up to speed" is decreased with a little attention to this before departure.

**Note:** The participants will have been provided with basic material on this subject prior to the briefing.

3. The role of the Observation Visit in the LGI program.

Discussion on how the Observation Visit relates to the LGI program both in general and on a municipality by municipality level (it will also be useful to the municipal officials to understand what initiatives the other cities are implementing.) We will be asking the municipal officials to think about what they want to take back as information and input into their projects.

To better prepare them, we will be sending information in advance (including the draft program) and -- during visits before their departure briefing -- discussing it with them.

**Saturday, April 6: Depart Sofia (London, Newark) Arrive in Washington, D.C.**

**Sunday, April 7: Rest and Cultural Activities**

1. Meet with John Tennant for at Embassy Row Hotel.

**Monday, April 8: Introduction to the US Government and Community Relations**

1. Overview of US Government.

Presentation at ICMA by Dr. Enid Beaumont, Professor of Government, Johns Hopkins University, Center for the Study of American Government. Followed by a discussion of the state of Bulgarian local government.

2. Visit to the US Capitol Building.



**Tuesday, April 9: Economic Development**

1. Visit to the City of Annapolis, Department of Economic Development.  
Discussions will focus on identifying, planning, and funding municipal redevelopment projects. Anne Arundel County Economic Development Corporation will speak and highlight private initiatives in county-wide economic development efforts.
2. Visit to the City of Annapolis, Office of the Mayor.
3. Reception hosted by Susan Zellars, Department of Economic Development.

**Wednesday, April 10: Management Information Systems**

1. Visit to the City of Alexandria, VA, Information Systems Department.  
Focus will be on designing management information systems; automating municipal administrative functions; and system security and privacy issues.
2. Visit to the Torpedo Factory Redevelopment Project and City Jail Housing Development Site.

**Thursday, April 11: Solid Waste Management**

1. Visit to Fairfax County, VA, Solid Waste Department.  
Focus will be on the establishment and maintenance of solid waste services using private contractors; identifying a fee for use system; and the environmental impacts of solid waste service delivery.
2. Visit to the Fairfax County Community Solid Waste Collection Facility.

**Friday, April 12: National Associations**

1. Visit to the National League of Cities.  
Focus will be on the establishment and function of a municipal association; member services; the organization of national associations.
2. Visit to the US Conference of Mayors.  
Discussions on the role of the Mayor in the US, association building, and the future of mayoral politics in the democratic framework.

**Saturday, April 13 and Sunday, April 14: Optional Cultural Activities and/or Visits.**

**Monday, April 15: Citizen Participation and Community Development**

1. Visit to City of Baltimore, MD, Office of the Mayor.
2. Visit with the Empower Baltimore Management Corporation.

Focus on community mobilization and citizen participation in municipal and economic initiatives, with discussions on the function and development of community relations/economic development centers organization.

**Tuesday, April 16: Business Development and Planning**

1. Visit to the Bulgaria-American Business Center, Vienna, VA.  
Ms. Kalinka Momchilova will present viable options for international commerce and business development; Bulgarian American resources in the US; and municipal economic development initiatives.
2. Visit to Loudoun County, VA, Planning Department.  
Focus will be on preparing a local government plan; zoning rules and regulations; preparing and administering a Capital Improvement Plan; and dealing with new development.

**Wednesday, April 17: Finance and Budgeting**

1. Visit to Montgomery County, MD, Management and Budget Department.  
Presentations will focus on the preparation of budgets; the roles of municipal departments in the budget process; the citizens' role in the budget process; and monitoring budget performance. Focus will also be on accounting for local governments' economic activity; reporting financial results; auditing local government finances; and detecting and preventing fraud.
2. Visit to Montgomery County, MD, Police Department  
Discussions will focus on the authority of local law enforcement within the national police framework. Funding and delegation of authority to law enforcement officials within the local government structure will also be presented.
3. Visit to the Montgomery County Civic Health Clinic.  
Presentation of county facilities for general, maternal, and dental care.

**Thursday, April 18: Personnel Management and Public Administration**

1. Visit to Arlington County, VA, Personnel Department.  
Discussions will focus on Arlington County's principles of government service, including training, staffing issues, and employee/management relations.
2. Visit to the American Society of Public Administrators.  
Presentations will focus on the role of professional public administrators in national and local government. Also, the function of the association within the professional community.

**Friday, April 19: Applying Lessons Learned to the LGI.**

1. Visit to the National Association of State Auditors, Comptrollers and Treasurers.
2. Planning roundtable and USAID briefing.

Participants will review lessons learned through site visits and technical presentations; and apply them to their municipalities' situation. Using this assessment, the municipal officials will propose areas for technical assistance through the LGI program. USAID/Washington staff will be invited to participate in the roundtable discussion about LGI objectives and the future of SEED assistance in Bulgaria.

3. Evening Reception at the Embassy Row Hotel

**Saturday, April 20: Depart Washington, D.C. (Vienna) Return to Sofia**