

# Options for Strengthening ZMOS

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# **REPORT**

## **Options for Strengthening ZMOS (The Association of Towns and Communities in the Slovak Republic)**

**Bratislava, Slovakia**

**August 1996**

Prepared for

U.S. Agency for International Development  
Bureau for Europe and the New Independent States  
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Urban Development and Housing Division

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## ABSTRACT

This report describes the consultant's July 8 to July 24, 1996 mission to the Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia (ZMOS), a non-governmental, non-partisan organization which, since 1990, has represented the interests of the villages and towns of Slovakia. The report provides findings of the consultant following in-depth interviews with a number of key staff and association officials and presents options for strengthening the association in the areas of legislative advocacy, administrative procedures and systems, communication with members, and in-house use of computer equipment and software. The consultant views ZMOS as an excellent candidate for assistance. The association in its first six years has made a strong start in several areas under challenging conditions such as successfully sponsoring a municipal newspaper and a training foundation. It has developed a solid membership and revenue base when compared to municipal associations in many other central European countries and has a secretariat which is poised to take advantage of additional resources. Further, leadership recognizes that adjustments and improvements are needed in light of changing conditions, and welcomes technical assistance to help work through the changes. ZMOS has a near countrywide base which substantially enhances its opportunity to effectively represent the interests of municipalities and to facilitate them in their newly acquired role of self-government. The report sets forth recommendations for technical assistance to ZMOS by the Local Self-Government Assistance Center (LSGAC) office located in Bratislava and by USAID. The report also outlines options for ZMOS to consider in improving its internal operations.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**of  
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This report summarizes the consultant's July 8 to July 24, 1996 visit to the Association of Towns and Communities in Slovakia (ZMOS). The primary purpose of the consulting engagement was to present ZMOS with a series of options to consider for improving its operations, following an in-depth survey. In addition, the consultant was expected to provide the Local Self Government Assistance Center (LSGAC) and USAID with its findings and provide options for providing technical assistance and training designed to strengthen the association.

With regard to his work, the consultant was to focus on four major areas of ZMOS: (1) administrative procedures and systems; (2) the policy development and advocacy process; (3) communication with the membership, including the availability of communication equipment and the capacity for rapid communication with its membership; and (4) the current utilization of computer hardware and software. The consultant was to prepare a report detailing his findings and recommendations and to prepare a strategy for LSGAC and USAID to provide technical assistance and training to ZMOS over the next 18 months. Additionally, it was asked that the report include options for internal changes which ZMOS might implement that could strengthen the association.

The ZMOS report is divided into nine sections: the first section sets forth the background and purpose of the consulting assignment; the second, provides an introduction to ZMOS; the third, outlines the institutional framework of ZMOS; the next four sections sets forth findings and recommendations of the consultant's work by separately addressing policy development, administrative procedures and systems, communication with membership, and use of computer equipment; the eighth section discusses other issues and opportunities; and the final section summarizes the recommendations included throughout the report. An appendix includes certain background materials.

First and foremost the consultant wishes to thank ZMOS for the importance it gave his visit. President Sykora, Executive Director, Thurzo and all other officials and staff the consultant had time to meet with put everything aside to give ample time and attention to the consultant. President Sykora and Executive Director Thurzo are mentioned by way of examples. President Sykora left his medical treatment at a spa and traveled three hours each way to spend the greater portion of an afternoon and evening meeting with Mr. Wirt. Executive Director Thurzo went far beyond the call of duty on several days to dedicate extensive time in responding to Mr. Wirt's questions. He offered his personal office to Mr. Wirt to use and served as a gracious host. It should also be pointed out that Mayor Jozef MRVA, Chair of the Village Section of the Board, and Mayor Mitrik, ZMOS Board member who is about to be elected President of the Slovak Union of Towns each set aside substantial time to work with the consultant and both provided very thoughtful help and insights. All staff were prepared and ready to meet with the consultant.

It was very clear to the consultant that ZMOS is serious about making ZMOS the best organization it can be within its resources and the current situation in Slovakia. Further ZMOS is

open to learning from U.S. municipal association experiences and to make adjustments or to try new ways to achieve its goals.

The consultant was impressed with many aspects of the operations at ZMOS. For example, the association sponsored newspaper (*Obecne Noviny*) and associated training foundation (The Foundation for Training in Self-government of the Slovak Republic) would be sources of pride for any U.S. municipal association. ZMOS also has developed strong press connections and actively works to provide information to the media. Additionally, ZMOS has a number of very committed and capable staff persons and volunteer officials associated with it who in addition to dedicating substantial time to ZMOS are anxious to learn and build the strongest possible organization. It is also worthy to note that ZMOS has refused to take the easy way out financially in its commitment to stay non-partisan. In the past couple years, ZMOS has turned down an offer by the Prime Minister of grant money.

There are, however, a number of opportunities for improvement in ZMOS and particularly in the policy development and advocacy area. ZMOS is bogged down in its policy process and recognizes a need to strengthen legislative staffing and streamline the organization to better adapt to current conditions. ZMOS also faces the challenge of balancing the interests of towns and villages and remaining attractive to town membership especially in light of the formation in 1994 of the Union of Towns, an organization that has become active in policy development.

#### **Recommendations for LSGAC/USAID assistance to ZMOS over the next 18 months**

- Deepen professional staffing within ZMOS by providing on a contract basis the equivalent of three years of declining funding for high level professional staff persons to work in the legal and economic sections of ZMOS. (Note: the term "legal" in legal section is sometimes translated as "legislative" or legislative section. The staff in this section are generally attorneys who have lead roles in the ZMOS legislative efforts.)
- Conduct two additional study tours to the United States to provide insights into U.S. practices as a follow-up to the May 1996 ZMOS study tour to the North Carolina League of Municipalities. A further study tour to the North Carolina League would be for key ZMOS staff and a second study tour would be targeted for key officials of parliament and the Ministry of Interior and Finance. This second tour would focus on the division of competencies between state and local governments.
- Provide continued assistance to ZMOS by a U.S. professional with high level municipal association staff experience and with knowledge of ZMOS and municipal associations in Central Europe.
- Sponsor a working session on the art of lobbying. One goal would be to assist ZMOS in moving towards the development of a written legislative program including the selection of priority issues on which to concentrate. LGSAC could assist ZMOS to address one of these priority issues especially from the standpoint of developing good staffing patterns and process to follow in pursuing the issue.
- Assist ZMOS develop a central data base of useful literature and materials for local governments and local government professionals.
- Assist in expanding and upgrading the computer system used at the ZMOS headquarters.

**Additional recommendations for LSGAC/USAID assistance to ZMOS over the next 18 months if such assistance is not provided through funding of the United Nations Development Program (Sec. 9.5 of this report outlines a grant application being developed by ZMOS for strengthening ZMOS and municipal development in Slovakia. The application would be submitted to the UNDP through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with ZMOS as the Slovak implementing organization.)**

- Assist in developing a ZMOS institutional strategic plan.
- Assist ZMOS develop an internet computer network for its membership to enhance effective and timely communication.
- Provide technical assistance to ZMOS in evaluating the feasibility of developing at least one revenue producing program.
- Develop a workshop to assist municipalities to more effectively communicate with its citizens and to explore ways to increase citizen involvement in local self-government.

**Options for ZMOS to consider in improving its operations**

- Streamline the board and committee system of ZMOS to facilitate the policy development and legislative advocacy process.
- Appoint a small by-laws committee equally divided between town and village leadership to address rotating the ZMOS presidency between villages and towns.
- Make greater use of volunteer local government professionals in the work of ZMOS and consider appointing representatives of the manager and finance director associations to serve as non-voting members of the Managing Board.
- Initiate legislative policy and positions, as needed, in addition to the current approach of largely responding to proposals of the central government.
- Develop a system for more directly involving elected mayors and council members in advocating ZMOS positions with members of parliament and the central government.
- Develop and annually update a 3 year plan for maintaining and upgrading the office computer system.

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## **1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTING ASSIGNMENT**

### **1.1 Background and Purpose of the Consulting Assignment**

This assignment is an outgrowth of the current work of the Local Self Government Assistance Center (LSGAC) to strengthen the Association of Towns and Communities in the Slovak Republic (ZMOS) and follow-up on the technical assistance provided by the consultant to ZMOS in late 1993. As part of LSGAC's effort, a two week study tour was organized in May 1996 for the purpose of acquainting the ZMOS Board of Directors and the new Executive Director, Mr. Alexander Thurzo, with municipal association operations in the United States. The North Carolina League of Municipalities served as the focal point for the tour. As a result of the study tour, the Board authorized the ZMOS Executive Director to enter into negotiations with the LSGAC and USAID for the purpose of obtaining additional technical assistance.

In 1993, USAID funded Clay Wirt, the consultant, to spend two weeks at ZMOS to survey the organization and provide technical assistance focusing in the areas of association management and legislative representation following which a report was prepared. Prior to that time the consultant had hosted for four days in the United States the (then) President and the International Director of ZMOS as part of an ICMA/USAID study tour. He had also visited ZMOS for three days on his own in November 1993 at the invitation of ZMOS.

Given the extensive work of Mr. Wirt in association work in the U.S. (serving the Virginia Municipal League from 1981 to present) and his prior knowledge of ZMOS, LSGAC with the approval of Mr. Thurzo, contracted with Mr. Wirt to conduct the assignment.

The purpose of the consulting engagement was to present ZMOS with a series of options to consider for improving its operations, following an in-depth survey. In addition, the consultant was to prepare a report detailing his findings and recommendations including a strategy for LSGAC and USAID for providing technical assistance and training to ZMOS over the next 18 months.

With regard to his work, the consultant was to specifically focus on four major areas of ZMOS: (1) administrative procedures and systems; (2) the policy development and advocacy process; (3) communication with the membership and especially the capacity for rapid communication with its membership; and the current utilization of computer hardware and software.

Consultant was in Bratislava from July 7 to July 24 and worked under the direction of Kennedy Shaw of the Local Self-Government Assistance Center.

## **2. INTRODUCTION TO ZMOS**

### **2.1 Overview**

The Association is a voluntary, non-governmental, non-partisan organization composed of the towns and villages (municipalities) in Slovakia. Membership runs to the municipality and requires the majority vote of the local governing body. Each member pays dues which constitutes a significant portion of the ZMOS budget. No funding to the association is provided by the central government. The village or town is represented in ZMOS by its statutory

representative, the mayor. The mayor can only delegate this right to deputies of his or her town or village.

The association began with 178 members in March 1990, and increased to 641 the same year. It has continued to rise to 2717 members in 1996, over 90% of all towns and villages in Slovakia. Slovakia has 156 municipalities designated as towns with the balance designated as villages. The powers of towns and villages are the same and are set forth in the parliament passed local government law. Towns, however, are required to have a city administrator and a town office. Special statutory provisions apply to Slovakia's two largest cities Bratislava and Kosice setting forth their city structures.

Based on verbal information provided the consultant, the population of Slovakia is roughly divided between persons living in towns and villages above 4,500 in population and those living in towns and villages under 4,500 in population. The towns and villages collectively cover the entire geographical area of the country. Villages do not automatically become towns when they reach a certain population level. Rather, the decision to create a town is left to parliament based on an application of a village. As would be expected, villages tend to be smaller in population than towns.

The main objective of the Association is set forth in the ZMOS Articles of Association:

“to defend the interest of towns and communities of the Slovak Republic, respecting their autonomous position, to influence actively the development of their self-administration functions, to unify the procedure of towns and communities in executing the competencies entrusted to them and to propose concretely to the corresponding bodies the solution of problems of self-administration in accordance with the constitution and laws of the Slovak Republic and taking into account the European Charter of Local Self-Government.”

ZMOS has a full time staff of 21 persons in its central office in Bratislava. Under the general supervision of the Executive Director, Alexander Thurzo, the professional staff is divided into five sections: (1) legal (often translated into English as the “legislative” section) (2) economics, (3) towns, (4) villages, and (5) the international section. In addition ZMOS has a full time press officer. The President of ZMOS has an office at the central headquarters in Bratislava and generally spends one day or more a week there. The staffing organization chart is included in Attachment A of the Appendix to this report.

The current budget of ZMOS is 6,749,096 sk. It has increased each year from a budget of 1,685,450 sk in 1990. A special assessment was approved at the last General Assembly to provide funds to expand the central office space.

ZMOS has 47 regional local government associations which collectively cover most of Slovakia. Total staff capacity of the 47 regional associations is ten. While regional associations have formed for a variety of reasons, their underlying purpose is to strengthen local self-government.

## **2.2 Changes at the Association Since the Consultant's November 22 to December 7, 1993 internship at the Association**

Among staff changes, there is a change in the Executive Director position and two key positions previously filled are now vacant (the Director of the Legal Section and the Director of

the International Section). However, there has also been some continuity in staffing with three key persons hired shortly before the consultant's December 1993 internship still with ZMOS: the Press Secretary, the Director of the Economics Section, and the Director of the Cities Section.

At least three major structural changes have been implemented as a way to reach out to the town side of the organization: the division of the ZMOS Board into a town chamber and a village chamber; the balancing of town and village representation on the Board committees; and the replacement of the regional association staff section within the ZMOS office with a villages section and a towns section. During the time period of the consultant's 1993 visit, several large towns including the core city of Bratislava were withholding dues from ZMOS. Also, during the consultants visit, the Mayor of Bratislava called what was described as the first meeting of town officials to explore forming a separate towns association. Subsequently, an organization with similar purposes to ZMOS, the Union of Towns, was created.

Training for local government officials has taken on increased importance since 1993. A training foundation initiated and sponsored by ZMOS has an active program. During the last visit, a ZMOS training foundation gave every appearance of being defunct perhaps due to a delay in receiving anticipated PHARE funding. PHARE has been an important source of funding for the current foundation.

There is expanded computer use within the office -- although ZMOS seeks to make further substantial advances in this area.

ZMOS has a new office location, although the current space is still inadequate for longer term ZMOS needs.

### **3. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF ZMOS**

#### **3.1 The Assembly, Chairman, Board, Managing Board, Committee of Control and Revision**

- The top organ of ZMOS is its Assembly (e.g. an assembly of mayors). It takes place every year. Originally it was an assembly of all member towns and community representatives. Since 1993, however, the delegates take part in it according to a way of selection approved by the ZMOS Board. Each four years, it elects the President, the 123 member ZMOS Managing Board, and the Committee of Control and Revision. The Board is the highest executive body of the association and together with the Chairman it manages the activities of the association between the sessions of the Assembly.

The Board consists of 123 members and includes a 50 member village chamber and a 50 member town chamber. Also each chamber has 11 additional village members and 11 additional town members with one of these serving as Chair of the Village Chamber and one as Chair of the Town Chamber. These 22 mayors serve, along with the President of ZMOS, as the Managing Board of the organization. The Chair of the Village Chamber and the Chair of the Town Chamber of the Board, by virtue of their positions, serve as Vice Presidents of the association. In 1995, ZMOS added 3 new Vice President positions which are filled by the Board. The six positions of President and Vice Presidents are currently evenly divided between town and village mayors.

The two chambers sit together, but vote separately. In order for a vote to pass, it must be approved by each chamber.

The 123 member ZMOS Board meets approximately ten times per year. The Board appoints the Executive Director based on the recommendation of the President. The Board also appoints the ZMOS staff section heads, but based on the recommendation of the Executive Director.

The 23 member Managing Board serves as the executive and initiative body for the (full) Board. The Managing Board generally meets a week or two before the 123 member Board meeting and makes a wide range of management and legislative decisions. Such decisions must be submitted to the Board for approval.

One key responsibility of the Managing Board is preparing the budget of the association. Additionally, the Managing Board decides whether to submit the legislative proposals of the various committees to the ZMOS Board. The Managing Board may also amend positions of its committees before sending its recommendations to the full Board. The Managing Board often prepares specific announcements for ZMOS.

The Committee of Control and Revision consists of five members elected by the Assembly following recommendations by the proposal of the Board. The committee gives its viewpoint regarding the draft budget and reports on the effective usage of financial funds and the property of the association.

### **3.2 Board Committees, Reconciliation Committee**

There are 18 Board committees each which serves as a counterpart to one of the 18 ministries of the central government. The President and the Vice Presidents are largely in charge of the committees. The committees can initiate ideas, but in most situations the committees react to legislation proposed by the central government. Committees are staffed by ZMOS legislative staff who are designated by the Executive Director. Each Board committee has ten members with membership divided evenly between village members and town members. Membership increases to seven positions for towns and three for villages for certain committees which handle key issues of importance to towns (such as economic development issues) and seven to three in favor of villages for committees of special interest to villages (such as agriculture).

A Reconciliation Committee may consider incidental conflicts which may arise between the members of the association. However, this committee apparently has not been used to resolve differences of opinion on legislative issues.

### **3.3 The Bureau of ZMOS**

This is the ZMOS headquarters and its 21 member staff located in Bratislava.

### **3.4 Regional Associations of ZMOS**

At present ZMOS indicates it has 51 regional associations of towns and villages in Slovakia. A very high percentage of municipalities in the country are members of such an association. The regional associations have largely spontaneously come into being on the basis of common interests of member municipalities. There is no requirement that the boundaries of regional associations follow the lines of the central government administrative districts or any other

criteria. Associations have wide flexibility in their mission and activities but generally have common goals with ZMOS including the exchange of information and experiences and the promoting of strong and effective local self-government. Each regional association has a Chair. Total staff capacity of the 47 regional associations is 10

Since 1993 members of the 123 member Board are comprised of representatives of each regional association which has at least 30 towns and villages in its membership. There is an opportunity for an additional representative on the Board for every 30 towns and villages which are members of the regional association.

Regional associations have the right to submit initiative proposals to the bodies of the ZMOS association.

The directors of the sections of the ZMOS office in Bratislava supervise the regional associations. The majority of such associations are supervised by the Director of the Cities Section. This director was previously Director of the (former) Regional Association Section at ZMOS. In the past he has traveled extensively to the home regions of the associations.

### **3.5 Newspaper, Training Foundation**

The ZMOS newspaper and the training foundation were each initiated by ZMOS but are independent bodies. The newspaper *Obecne noviny*, a weekly, was founded as a stock company near the beginning of ZMOS. ZMOS owns approximately 30% of the stock which has derived ZMOS a small annual profit. The individual who owns a majority of the stock personally runs the paper. This municipal paper is printed weekly with approximately 6,000-7,000 copies distributed. Each municipality must individually subscribe to receive the paper as it is not automatically sent to the membership and is not distributed through the newsstands.

The ZMOS Press Officer indicates that all items submitted by ZMOS are carried in the newspaper. The items are submitted through the Press Officer to ensure consistency in content and writing. The newspaper is located in a different building from ZMOS but was once housed in the same building on an adjacent floor. The ZMOS Press Officer worked for two years for *Obecne noviny* before taking her current position with ZMOS in 1993.

The *Foundation for Training in Self-government of Slovak Republic* provides educational opportunities for representatives and employees of the local government in the Slovak Republic. The foundation has a full time director housed at the ZMOS headquarters and has ten regional training centers. A Vice President of ZMOS currently serves on the foundation board. Each center has an Managing Board consisting of mayors and each center determines its own training. The foundation staff person who works in the ZMOS headquarters, however, serves in a very important coordinating role for the activities of the training centers.

ZMOS does not give any funding to the Foundation, rather funding comes from grants and membership and training fees.

The types of municipalities and the officials involved in the Foundation training centers somewhat vary by region. Although the membership area of the training centers does not cover the entire country, training is open to everyone with non members paying a higher rate. The Foundation hopes to eventually expand to nationwide coverage by adding three to four more centers.

Geographically, the boundaries of the regional centers vary from the boundaries of the ZMOS regional associations.

Regional training centers were founded by towns and villages which simultaneously contribute to maintaining them. So far local government training activities have not been subsidized by the state, but have received PHARE Programme funds and more recently LGSAC assistance. LGSAC assistance includes a trainer of trainer program, and plans for extensive training utilizing elected leadership materials.

A recently approved Slovak law regulating Non Governmental Organizations (NGO's) will become effective September 1, 1997. It applies to the training foundation. This law would seem to require the foundation to dissolve and reorganize to continue its current form of operations. Specifically, the law places a 15% cap on the amount of a total NGO budget which can be spent for training activities. The foundation, by the nature of its mission, substantially exceeds this percentage. A possible solution is for the foundation to reorganize under the same public association statute whereby ZMOS was created. Dr. Terezia Palikova, Director of the Training Foundation, felt the foundation would be able to meet this challenge and continue its training efforts.

### **3.6 International Partners and Activities**

ZMOS is a member of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions and is represented in both the Chamber of Regions and the Chamber of Municipalities of the Council of Europe.

ZMOS has not entered into any bilateral written agreements, but has cooperated or had contact with municipal associations in the Czech Republic, Austria, Switzerland, UK, Spain, the Netherlands and Germany. For example, when the consultant did his 1993 consulting assignment at ZMOS, several staff officials of the Austrian League and Austrian mayors came to Slovakia and met with ZMOS officials and mayors in order to exchange experiences.

## **4. POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND THE ADVOCACY PROCESS**

### **4.1 Findings**

A central purpose of ZMOS is to actively represent the interests of villages and towns before parliament and the central government. This purpose is included in the Articles of the Association and is reflected in the manner in which ZMOS has organized its boards and committees and professional staff.

ZMOS has enjoyed a certain amount of success over its first six years such as the opportunity to be represented on various advisory bodies of the central government ministries and to enter into direct conversations and negotiations on key issues on several occasions with high level central government officials including the President of Slovakia and the Prime Minister. For example, this past year ZMOS had four negotiation sessions with the central government.

However, based on conversations with ZMOS leadership and staff, it is in this public policy development and advocacy area where ZMOS feels it can make substantial improvements. Opportunity to hold high level discussions is a crucial first step. But the next critical step, and

one where ZMOS struggles, is having a clear cut ZMOS negotiating position and the necessary supporting documentation and a strong membership voice to advance the position. It is acknowledged that improvements in this area are vital to the future success of the organization and also vital to the future of local self-government in Slovakia.

Although the findings below focus on areas where improvements can be made, it should first be pointed out that the system of policy development and advocacy currently in place at ZMOS was a logical start in the association's first steps in the democratic setting. It should also be pointed out that many talented and dedicated persons are involved in the ZMOS organization and that everyone with whom the consultant talked seemed dedicated to finding new and better ways to strengthen the local government voice at the central level. This commitment is an excellent start towards change.

**Core findings include:**

1. The study tour of ZMOS leadership to visit the North Carolina Municipal League served as an effective education experience regarding ways ZMOS might more effectively represent the interests of municipalities.

2. There is a strong consensus in the organization to deepen the professional staff and especially in the legal section. The legal section is viewed as vital to properly preparing for persuasion of parliament and the central government ministries and carrying out this role. There is also a desire to add an additional professional in the economic section who has background and experience in the financial aspects of local government employment law. This would compliment the human services background of the Staff Director of this section.

3. The policy making process, in its effort to allow broad based input, is cumbersome from the U.S. local government association viewpoint and there is a growing movement within ZMOS to simplify the system. One official explained that the 123 member Board is so big, it is extremely difficult to negotiate controversial issues.

When ZMOS is asked to respond to a proposal, the first level of input following staff reaction is the ten member Board committee assigned to such topic. The input of this committee goes to the 123 member Board. The input of this Board then goes to the full Assembly. Naturally, this process assumes that adequate time is given to consider the matter which is often not the case.

4. The association has not initiated proposals before parliament or the central government, rather it reacts to proposals put forth at these levels. An exception occurred during this past Assembly when the association decided to initiate legislation to give certain preferences to persons living in municipalities. Apparently little effort has been made to move the issue forward as details on the proposal were not widely known.

5. The association has had difficulty developing option papers and a consensus within its membership on key issues. Part of this challenge, is how to bridge the gap between key interests of the larger localities (the towns) and the smaller localities (the villages).

An example of the difficulty in developing consensus is the association's efforts to deal with the recently passed law on the administrative division of Slovakia. The Board separately voted on four different approaches to administrative division which were put forth. None of the four approaches received majority support.

The efforts of the association contrasts with those of the Union of Towns which approved a comprehensive proposal and sought to move it forward, though unsuccessfully, at the central government and parliamentary levels.

6. The association has passed a number of resolutions dealing with legislative issues, but it does not appear to have a comprehensive written legislative program for ready distribution which prioritizes the most important issues and includes key background information on them. President Sykora did readily list several legislative priorities, however, including: Slovak Republic acceptance of the European Charter; the need for adequate resources for localities in the transfer of competencies, the need for a good local government finance law; the inappropriateness of municipal enterprises paying income tax; and the need to resolve problems in the transfer of water and waste water systems to municipalities.

7. The effectiveness of ZMOS and the Union of Towns before the central government is increasingly compared, with the Union giving the appearance of a more streamlined organization with a more focused voice. The Union operates with a built in efficiency advantage of a governing board of three persons which can quickly decide on policy issues. The Union does not hesitate to initiate its own positions and it also appears to make a stronger effort to gain input from volunteer local government staff professionals.

8. The consultant was told that the strong role of political parties at the highest levels of the central government also complicates association efforts to be effective. Although ZMOS has good relations with key persons in the various ministries of the central government and is generally taken seriously, agreements at this level do not guarantee success when final decisions are made at higher levels.

9. The election of members of parliament from four regions of Slovakia versus single member districts throughout the country reduces the ability for mayors and council members to effectively lobby home town legislators to support ZMOS positions. The passage of the recent law establishing the number of administrative divisions in Slovakia at eight provides an opportunity for local government officials to promote a greater number of districts from which members of parliament are elected.

10. ZMOS does not have a system to actively involve mayors and council members in advocating ZMOS positions with legislators they know on a first name basis or with legislators who live in their municipalities. In the setting of U.S. municipal associations, elected municipal officials actively promoting the association positions with home town legislators. Frequently this is the deciding factor in adoption of the association positions.

11. A further challenge ZMOS faces is the sometimes short time frame given by a central ministry to provide comments to a ministry proposal. It was mentioned that the time frame sometime is as short as two or three days. This does not leave ZMOS with adequate time to properly address the issue and certainly insufficient time to run it through the current ZMOS policy process.

## **4.2 Opportunities for LSGAC and USAID Assistance**

- Help to deepen professional staffing within ZMOS by providing on a contract basis the equivalent of three years of funding for high level professional staff persons to work in the legal and economic sections of ZMOS. This envisions the establishment of a new position in each section and enhancing current positions in the legal section. It is anticipated that several of these individuals would be attorneys who have strong professional capabilities in the legislative area and who have a local government background. Funding would be on a decreasing matching basis and ZMOS should commit to finding revenues to sustain the positions following the end of USAID funding.
- Conduct two additional study tours to the United States as a follow-up to the May 1996 ZMOS study tour to North Carolina. One study tour would be for key ZMOS staff who would be exposed to the role of municipal leagues and league staff work and the second might include targeted members of parliament, the Ministries of Interior and Finance, mayors and academic specialists. The tour should focus on division of competencies between state and local governments.

Continue to provide in-house training and assistance at ZMOS as the association works through changes by means of continuing technical assistance by a U.S. professional with high level municipal association staff experience and with knowledge of municipal associations in Central Europe.

## **4.3 Options for ZMOS to Consider**

- Streamline the board and committee system of ZMOS to enhance the voice of municipalities before parliament and the central government. This could include reducing the size of the 123 member Board, the membership (currently ten) of the 18 Board committees, and substantially reducing the number of these committees.
- Make greater use in the policy making, training and other work of ZMOS of volunteer professionals working for villages and towns, or the associations of such professionals.
- ZMOS could build avenues for cooperation by offering to the professional associations a few key positions on ZMOS boards and committees. One example would be to offer a non-voting position on the ZMOS Managing Board to a member of the association for town managers and to the soon to be created association of finance directors. Further ZMOS could provide opportunities to the professional associations to jointly sponsor workshops or publications, or even offer to staff certain secretariat activities. For example, such staffing could be comparable to the secretariat arrangements many U.S. municipal leagues have with a wide range of local government professionals groups.
- Take steps to initiate legislative policy and positions, as needed, in addition to responding to proposals of the central government.
- Prepare an annual written ZMOS legislative program that briefly summarizes ZMOS legislative positions and selects the highest priorities for the current year. An appendix could include supportive materials.

- Develop a system for more directly involving elected mayors and council members in advocating ZMOS positions with members of parliament and the central government.

## **5. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND SYSTEMS**

### **5.1 Findings**

1. ZMOS includes a number of very fine and clearly dedicated mayors and staff. This was evident to the consultant based on numerous interviews and discussions. It is clear that mayors actively participate in the work of the association giving substantial amounts of their time. For example, several mayors were seen at ZMOS headquarters during the consultants visit and were readily available to provide input and assistance for the consultant and ZMOS activities.

2. The organization has had relative stable resources with revenues rising at least some each year. However, ZMOS as of May 31 had a current deficit of 2,000,000 SK which makes additional expenditures difficult.

Total membership has been stable with the membership rising each year. This should be seen as a very positive sign during this period of rapid transition in Slovakia. The members have also been willing to adopt several small dues increases in past years and agreed to a special assessment this Spring to allow expansion of office space.

3. The consultant did not review the financial records of ZMOS, but asked whether an independent audit of the records had recently been done. Executive Director Thurzo advised that he had asked an outside person with bookkeeping knowledge and familiarity with ZMOS to review the records when Thurzo recently assumed his position. He plans to work more in this area and to make some changes based on his findings.

(Though the consultant did not have opportunity to discuss such with Mr. Thurzo, the thought occurs that further focus on the financial system and procedures would be in order before upgrading of the accountant's computer. This upgrading is identified as a computer priority later in this report. The order of priority of purchasing decisions should be which financial accounting software best meets the ZMOS needs for the upcoming future. The next decision is which machine best runs the software.)

4. The organization has made substantial efforts to reach out to both its town and village membership by division of membership on key boards and committees. This reaching out has enabled ZMOS to retain a significant majority of the town membership even through the Union of Towns (an association with comparable purposes) was formed in 1994. ZMOS, however, has not become sufficiently attractive for all the town members to unite behind ZMOS. Some of the town members would like to see a change in the way the President is selected to have an election for a four year term of two Presidents with one from the Village side and one from the Town side. Each President would serve two of the four years.

5. ZMOS regional associations continue to be important to ZMOS. For example, since 1994, membership on the ZMOS Board has been based on representation from the regional associations.

The effectiveness of regional associations also remains an important goal of ZMOS. By way of example, the regional associations are the first group the ZMOS headquarters hopes to more effectively communicate with if ZMOS is able to establish an internet computer network.

6. ZMOS seeks to bridge the gap between the various interests in the association and to develop consensus for moving the organization forward. While ZMOS has given a great deal of thought of how best to serve its membership, the organization has not gone through a formal strategic planning process to define the mission and goals of the organization. When the consultant outlined a typical strategic planning process used by municipal associations in the U.S., the ZMOS President and other leaders were very open to assistance in this area. For example, Pres. Sykora readily stated that the idea of going through a strategic planning process "is welcome ... we want to be clear about our mission." He also indicated that it would help in relationship to other associations.

7. There is also a feeling among many that continuity in leadership is important at this critical time. For example, there did not seem to be anyone asking for annual rotation of the presidency. Even the proposal from the town side used a four year term of two Presidents with each serving two of the four years.

8. ZMOS has a shared system of management with the primary day to day management role going to the Executive Director. However, the ZMOS President and the Board have significant roles which influence management. For example, the President has responsibility for recommending who will be the Executive Director and the Board approves the ZMOS staff section heads based upon recommendation of the Executive Director.

In Slovakia, Mayors are directly elected by the people and have considerable management responsibilities. The consultant heard no negative feedback within ZMOS of the elected official's role or influence in the administration of the association.

9. The active involvement and importance of mayors in ZMOS is quite evident. However, there has generally not been a similar involvement of local government staff professionals volunteering in the work of the organization. This is an area, however, where top elected leadership within ZMOS wants to reach out and tap the resources of appointed staff providing them a meaningful volunteer role in the organization.

10. Finding the right professional persons to work on the staff of ZMOS at the pay ZMOS can afford represents a challenge. For example, an attorney would might represent the association before parliament can get a much higher level of pay from work in the private sector.

11. ZMOS is limited by its current office space. For example, there is not a stand alone conference room within its headquarters to hold negotiating meetings with members of the central government ministries or to develop a central library. However, this Spring, the ZMOS Assembly agreed to a special membership assessment to pay for expanded space. The association is hopeful to begin moving into additional space in the same building this Fall. Yet availability of such space is dependent upon the outcome of an eviction action the district government in Bratislava has filed against the tenant.

12. Finally, it should be pointed out that ZMOS appears to have good relations with the mass media in Slovakia. This includes the daily and weekly papers and radio and TV. Credit for these goods relations go to the commitment and extra efforts put forth by both the elected leadership

and the ZMOS staff. During the consultants stay in Bratislava, President Sykora left his medical treatment at the spa in order to take a TV interview. Also, the Press Officer of ZMOS, Olga Gafrikova, a journalist by profession, has actively worked to develop good press relations. She has concentrated on publicizing the association with journalists and other media. As she informed me in December of 1993, "I contact everyone who will listen, not just those I knew well." The Press Officer not only actively works the press in Bratislava but tries to meet and cooperate with the local media when ZMOS meetings are held outside the city. For example, a meeting with the press is held in conjunction with each monthly meeting of the ZMOS Board which typically meets outside Bratislava.

## **5.2 Opportunities for LSGAC and USAID Assistance**

- The greatest need expressed to the consultant was for additional resources to deepen the professional staffing in the central office. Assistance in deepening professional staffing was discussed under section 4 of this report addressing the policy development and advocacy process.

## **5.3 Additional Recommendations for LSGAC/USAID assistance to ZMOS over the next 18 months if such assistance is not provided through the grant to the United Nations**

- Assist in developing a ZMOS institutional strategic plan. This would begin with two carefully structured surveys. The first would target as a minimum the 61 villages and 61 towns (or 62 including the hometown of the President) represented on the ZMOS Board and inventory priority needs of such local governments to enable them to better serve their citizens and the role of ZMOS in helping municipalities to meet these needs. The second survey would go to all ZMOS members and would inventory priority needs and interests of the membership as it relates to ZMOS. An outside independent facilitator would be hired to work with the Managing Board over a two day work session to develop or reaffirm in writing the mission and goals of the association. The survey results would serve as the backdrop for the work session. The Executive Director would then have responsibility for proposing to the Managing Board an implementation plan for moving the strategic plan forward.
- Provide technical assistance to ZMOS in evaluating the feasibility of developing one revenue producing service program such as: a self-insurance program for local governments; compilation of a municipal data base; provision of consulting services to Slovak municipalities; a joint purchasing program to acquire goods and services for local governments (such as computers); a desktop publishing or editing services program; or a program helping local governments find capable professionals to provide contractual services to the locality.

## **5.4 Options for ZMOS to Consider**

- Appoint a small by-laws committee equally divided between town and village leadership to address rotating the ZMOS Presidency between villages and towns. For example, by laws could be amended to establish a First Vice President and Immediate Past President positions. A term of office could be for two years. The town and village chambers of the Board could rotate selection of a first vice president each two years. This individual could automatically elevate to the President and Past President thus providing a total of six years of top leadership. Both the First Vice President and the Immediate Past President could be given

special assignments or roles by the association. Another alternative, for example, could be the selection of two Presidents each four year period with one being the Chair of the Village Chamber and the other the Chair of the Town Chamber. Each could serve as the President for two of the four years of the term.

- Appointment of non-voting members of the manager and finance director associations to serve on the Managing Board.

## **6. COMMUNICATION OF ZMOS WITH ITS MEMBERSHIP INCLUDING THE AVAILABILITY OF COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT AND CAPACITY FOR RAPID COMMUNICATION**

### **6.1 Findings**

1. ZMOS owns a modest amount of equipment to communicate rapidly with its membership. As a practical matter, the better equipment is owned by the municipal newspaper and the training foundation. The newspaper equipment is located at a separate location from the ZMOS office and offers little opportunity for direct ZMOS use. The foundation equipment is at the ZMOS office and is on lease for free for use by ZMOS. But presumably the foundation could use the equipment for its own urgent needs. The foundation computer equipment includes the ZMOS headquarters file server which runs an eight computer Novell software based network. Section 7 of this report fully details the computer equipment in the office and projected costs for improvements. It will be noted that roughly half is owned by ZMOS and the other half is on loan from others.

In short, a significant investment will be required to ensure capacity for rapid communication. For example, ZMOS neither has an internet account nor owns a modem. On the other hand, the press officer has in her office a 28,800 bps modem on loan from the foundation which she uses in her work. The association owns a copier and a fax machine.

2. The ZMOS initiated weekly municipal newspaper *Obecne noviny* would be a source of pride to any municipal league. ZMOS actively uses the newspaper to inform the membership and the broader readership of the work and positions of the association. This paper has served as an important asset of ZMOS from the start with ZMOS diligently working to maximize the benefit of the paper to the organization.

A sample of ZMOS submitted articles in a recent issue include:

Regarding the New Laws on Self-Government

The Official Opinion of ZMOS about Public Administration

A Call to Action of ZMOS Related to When Mayors are Recalled

Appointment of Mr. Alexander Thurzo as ZMOS Executive Director

Description of Section Work

Additionally, the paper carried an insert from the Ministry of Finance which included information about a ministry proposal.

The paper should remain a very important asset for ZMOS and local governments for the indefinite future.

3. ZMOS, however, is fully aware of the limitations of interacting with its membership using a one way weekly newspaper. Therefore ZMOS has a very strong interest and is anxious to supplement the weekly paper by taking advantage of the internet and its two-way e-mail/bulletin board advantages. ZMOS points out that a weekly newspaper does not mean that news actually hits the streets in seven days, rather it routinely takes from 10-14 days to get urgent information out when factoring in the time required for assembling the paper, printing it, and delivery.

Just as municipal associations in the U.S. are rapidly finding out, use of the internet for e-mail and bulletin board communications has valuable advantages. This includes the ability for rapid transmission and feedback on key legislative issues. Also, ease of placing information on the internet gives ZMOS staff better incentive and opportunity to summarize useful information for the membership.

For example, the monthly summaries that section directors now provide the Executive Director and President on their activities relating to the central government, could be divided up and put on the internet, on a semi-monthly or even weekly basis. Following the U.S. municipal association model, each professional staff member would have responsibility of being a reporter. Articles could be submitted through the Press Officer with review by the Executive Director to maintain consistency.

A ZMOS home page could also provide a valuable source of useful information for elected and professional staffs who run the towns and villages of Slovakia on a day to day basis. A home page, for example, provides an ideal place for links to practical helps on local government budgeting or procurement practices. The home page would serve as a road map for where to turn for the highest priority types of help. The home page of the National League of Cities in Washington, D.C. is just one model of the valuable types of information available for local governments.

There are also numerous other types of information ZMOS could put on the internet such as: a master calendar of upcoming ZMOS activities, a master training calendar of the Foundation, a listing of ZMOS staff members and their key function areas, a listing of ZMOS officers, a blank e-mail form to send comments or questions to ZMOS headquarters.

It was suggested to the consultant that all towns undoubtedly already have computers as well as villages of more than 2,000 in population. Of course this does not mean that towns and villages have modems and internet accounts in place or computer systems adequate for higher end internet activity. Only one local official the consultant talked with mentioned that he is currently using the internet. It is thought, however, that internet access is generally available throughout Slovakia (although not all the telephone wiring is the best) and that an internet system is doable. Local officials are very anxious to move in this direction.

4. As previously indicated the ZMOS initiated *Foundation for Training in Self-government of the Slovak Republic* should be a source of pride to any municipal league in the U.S. especially considering the short history of this organization. ZMOS, however, feels there is need for development of "practical helps" publications that would provide the basis for further training. For example, ZMOS has recently started developing a municipal handbook similar to the style of the handbook of the North Carolina League. ZMOS seeks sponsors to help in this effort.

Further, ZMOS wants to develop materials to benefit mayors by providing helps related to the legal and financial aspects of the mayor's role and also to publish a book giving tips for the mayor on how to manage effectively. ZMOS has at least some experience in this area having previously published with one of the central government ministries materials about small enterprises, tourism, and certain aspects of operating local governments. However, ZMOS apparently had little input into those publications.

5. ZMOS seeks to develop a central data base of useful literature and materials for local governments and local government professionals. A number of materials have already been collected in the office, but are not centrally organized, at least partially due to lack of space for a central library. Executive Director Thurzo has recently written member localities and has also asked them to send helpful materials for the library. The goal is to have research and reference materials not only for ZMOS staff but also the membership. The goal is that the materials be broad enough to benefit not only mayors, but also city managers, finance directors and other staff professionals of local governments.

6. ZMOS not only seeks to improve communication with its own members, but would like to have a role in helping villages and towns improve communications with their own citizens. By way of illustration, if ZMOS gains in house desktop publishing capabilities, Executive Director Thurzo mentioned that ZMOS could explore contracting with individual localities to assist them in providing meaningful information to citizens about their local government's role and activities. For example, ZMOS could standardize a format and produce pamphlets in house on a fee basis. Press Officer Gafrikova suggested the possibility of holding a workshop for municipalities on how to effectively communicate with citizens and to explore ways to increase citizen involvement in the life of local self-government.

## **6.2 Opportunities for LSGAC and USAID Assistance**

- Assist ZMOS develop a central data base of useful literature and materials for local governments and local government professionals. This central library should be developed at the ZMOS headquarters and materials should be identified as belonging to ZMOS. The availability of the library should be advertised to its membership and to local government professionals. As opportunity allowed, key materials should be put on the internet accessible through the ZMOS home page.
- Support the association in its efforts to improve and expand publication efforts.

### **Additional Recommendations for LSGAC/USAID assistance to ZMOS over the next 18 months if such assistance is not provided through a grant from the United Nations.**

- Develop a workshop to assist municipalities to more effectively communicate with their citizens about local self-government and to explore ways to increase citizen involvement in the life of local self-government.
- Provide financial resources and technical assistance to ZMOS to develop an internet computer network for its membership to enhance effective and timely communication. The initial focus would be to implement e-mail communication between the central office and the ZMOS regional associations. The second step would be to establish a ZMOS Web page and place useful local government information on the net comparable to that of the North

Carolina Municipal Association. Among other items, ZMOS would need financial assistance to pay for storage capacity on the internet (such as a file server located at ZMOS headquarters).

- As a starting point ZMOS should inventory the ZMOS regional associations and select villages and towns – such as those with representatives on the ZMOS Board – to analyze the extent to which computer equipment and internet accounts are currently in place and to scope out a plan of action for proceeding.

Any plan of action should address cooperative (competitive) procurement of affordable computer systems, including the browser software, and address coordination of obtaining internet accounts. Also considerable thought should also be given to developing guidelines or rules for use of the system. This would need to include a strong commitment by ZMOS to place useful information on the system on a systematic basis and a commitment of members to provide meaningful feedback.

## **7. CURRENT UTILIZATION OF COMPUTER HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE IN ZMOS**

### **7.1 Findings**

1. By all appearances ZMOS has done a number of things right in utilization of computers given its available resources. This includes having a computer specialist on staff (Mr. William Varga) to help develop the system and keep it working. (At the present time only one computer at ZMOS is not working.)

2. Mr. Varga provided the consultant an inventory of computer hardware and software in ZMOS. This is Attachment B in the Appendix. As detailed in the attachment, a significant amount of the hardware (5 computers, all office printers, the fax modem and the scanner) is owned by parties other than ZMOS but is leased to ZMOS for free. Although outright ownership may be preferable, ZMOS is to be commended for leveraging such use. Among the computers used in the ZMOS office, but owned by others is the office network file server. This is the best computer in the office – a pentium 75 with 16 meg of ram. Three of the loaned computers are provided by a bank (shown as PKB on the listing in Attachment B) and the balance are loaned (leased for free) from the ZMOS training foundation (shown as NVS). It is assumed that the foundation could pre-empt its equipment if the foundation has a critical need.

ZMOS owns eight computers. The best of these machines is a 486 DX4/100 with 8 meg of ram, a step below what the leading U.S. business firms currently use when going out and buying a new machine. (The August 5, 1996 issue of *Computer World* placed a Pentium/166 in the category of a “basic entry level corporate PC.”) 486DX machines, however, are still found in many offices in the U.S. (such as the Virginia Municipal League). They are capable of running basic windows 95 applications such as word processing. Other ZMOS computers include two 486/DX2/66’s, one 486 SX/40, one 386 DX/25, one 386 SX/25 portable, and two Macintosh Classics. At least 3 of the ZMOS owned machines are significantly below current U.S. industry standards for hard drive capacity or internal memory.

Four of the ZMOS owned machines are part of the eight networked computers in the office.

Four others (the two macs, the 486SX, and the 386DX) are used for stand alone applications such as accounting, press, and archive use. The laptop is used by a staff member in the village section.

If the two ZMOS owned 386's or two ZMOS owned Macintosh Classics were in a U.S. municipal association office, it would be time to think upgrade. The same is true for the 386 SX/25 laptop on loan from the foundation except for isolated use. The machines and software running on them probably work fine. However, more recent upgrades in software such as Windows 95, desktop publishing software, or even accounting software are designed to be run on faster machines. Associations upgrade to minimize the very real frustrations of not keeping files and computer programs standardized and compatible in the office and to take advantage of newer features of later software. These features often make using a computer easier and allow a wider range of options, thus improving output. The nature of municipal association work is that computer files are often moved throughout the office. Teamwork and sharing of information is critical. Association professionals are constantly preparing materials in short time frames and must integrate knowledge and information from others on staff. Many times it is much easier to let the second professional work from the same computer file or to have one professional integrate computer files prepared by staff members throughout the office. Experience shows that even passing back and forth a computer file run on differing versions of the same software can create major complications.

3. Eight computers networked under Novell 3.12 software serve as the backbone of the computer system in the ZMOS office. Novell networking software is an industry leader and use of Novell is a very standard configuration for municipal associations in the U.S. Three of these networked machines are used by administrative workers (such as the secretary), one each is used by the legal, village and computer (informatics) sections, and the last is the file server.

Ideally additional machines could be added to the network – to allow better advantage of exchange of files, use of in-house e-mail, calendaring, etc. For example, it is noted that the Executive Director, the Director of the Economics Section, and the Director of the Towns Section currently do not have a computer at their work stations.

4. The cost of purchasing software can also quickly add up. Attachment B of the Appendix includes software currently used at ZMOS. The software is largely standardized around industry leading software developed by Microsoft such as MS DOS 6.22, MS Windows 95, and MS Office 95. The consultant commends the approach of sticking with widely used software as this reduces the learning curve, enhances the ability to exchange files with outside parties and better insures future support.

One major problem according to Mr. Varna is that ZMOS has not had sufficient resources to purchase a license authorizing use of multiple copies of MS Office 95. The computer consultant explained that only one person on the network can use the software at a time versus all persons on the network as the number of persons who can access network programs simultaneously is based on the number of licenses purchased.

5. While not in any fashion suggesting that ZMOS moved too quickly to Windows 95, the consultant does not generally recommend purchasing upgrades of software when current software does the job. In addition to cost, a key reason is that newer versions frequently require faster and more memory intense machines to run them.

An association plan laying out a time table for future computer upgrades could help coordinate software upgrades with purchase of new machines.

6. The consultant asked Mr. Varga to prioritize and price computer needs in the ZMOS office. The response is Attachment C in the Appendix. The total amount is 2,570,000,00 sk (approximately \$85,000 in USD) or approximately 38% of the annual budget of the association. Mr. Varga also prioritized equipment and software needs with the highest priority (the first interval) representing 745.000 sk (approximately \$25,000 in USD) or 11% of the budget.

7. The 745.000 sk highest priority items include 5 new computers, a color ink printer, a modem, three copies of windows 95 and six licenses for Office 95. The five new computers should allow a replacement for the computer used in accounting, an upgrade of the file server for the computer network, and provide a work station computer to all or nearly all of the professional positions.

8. The second level priority for computer expenditures are projected to cost a total of 1420.000 sk (approximately \$47,000 USD). This would allow implementation of the proposed membership computer internet network by providing for an in house storage server, a stand alone workstation, and a contract for 30 internet connections for a total cost of 524.000 sk (or approximately \$17,000 USD). The balance of the money, 896.000 sk (or approximately \$30,000) would allow sufficient resources to expand the office computer network largely to all staff in the ZMOS office. It is also noted that the bulk of the equipment to be purchased (five computers, four printers and one scanner) generally equals the amount of computer equipment currently on loan to ZMOS.

A CD ROM is also included for purchase as well as Lotus notes, plus application software..

9. The third priority for computer expenditures amounts to 405.000 sk (approximately \$13,000 USD). 300.000 sk (upwards to \$10,000) is for network cabling. Additional amounts would go for Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software, WRQ Reflection (probably enhanced internet) software, and Langmaster (English learning) software.

10. The consultant is unable to readily evaluate the Slovak prices listed in the attachment for the various computer items, although they certainly appear well above prices in the U.S. for basic hardware and software. Under current U.S. price wars and a long line of price cuts this year, according to the August 1996, edition of *Computer World*, Dell is pricing its Pentium Pro/180 (the OptiPlex Gxpro) with 2G bytes hard drive for \$2,698 and AST is pricing its Pentium/166 (the Bravo LC) with a 1.2G for \$1,783. (The article does not state whether the monitor is included.) Although U.S. prices are looking pretty good, the consultant is mindful that true costs are often well in excess of advertised costs when factoring in such items as installations costs, training, and troubleshooting.

11. The consultant does feel that the projected needs and priority of purchases as outlined by Mr. Varga are reasonable and represent an approach in tune with the discussions consultant had throughout the organization. In fact, the consultant did not find any part of the ZMOS staff requests that seemed out of line.

12. Of course the big question from the management standpoint is what is affordable to ZMOS given available resources including grant and technical assistance. It is not unusual for

U.S. municipal associations to have to live with a gap between the reasonable and the affordable at least for intervals when moneys are being acquired to make the upgrades.

One approach recommended in the U.S. for public organizations is development of a strategic plan (e.g. for three years) for computer use. Such a plan outlines where the organization seeks to be at the end of the three year period and includes a plan of action for getting there. When the organization does not have sufficient resources on an annual basis to make essential progress, it will often treat computer purchases something akin to acquiring more office space: The organization might set up a sinking fund, for example, where money is set aside each year for three years until enough money is accumulated to make an upgrade; or it may ask the membership for a special assessment; or sometimes it may take a loan.

### **7.3 Opportunities for LSGAC and USAID Assistance**

- Provide financial and technical assistance to help ZMOS address its priority computer needs at the ZMOS headquarters and to formalize a plan of action for future improvements.

**Additional Recommendations for LSGAC/USAID assistance to ZMOS over the next 18 months if such assistance is not provided through a grant from the United Nations.**

- Provide financial and technical assistance to help ZMOS establish an internet computer network with its membership as outlined in section 6 of this report.

### **7.4 Options for ZMOS to Consider**

- Develop a three year plan for upgrading the office computer system factoring in assistance that is provided by outside sources. The information provided to consultant is a useful start. A strategic plan would clearly outline the goals of the organization for computer use and include a plan of action to achieve these goals. The plan of action would include specific steps that would be taken in the next year. The information provided to date by Mr. Varga is a good start.

## **8. OTHER ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **8.1 Communication of ZMOS with the Towns Association**

Twenty-three of the 156 towns in Slovakia are members of the Union of Towns. Seventeen of the 23 towns are members of ZMOS. The mayor of these 17 towns serve as the representatives to both the Union and ZMOS thus building in a substantial amount of common information and communication between the two associations.

It should also be pointed out that a large number of towns are members of ZMOS but are not members of the Union of Towns. However, even here it is probable that the mayors of many of these towns are in cities that cooperate with the Union of Towns (though not as members) or are members of the Club of Mayors which focuses on town issues.

It is interesting that the town of Bratislava has not joined either association although several of its district municipalities have joined ZMOS. Kosice, the second largest municipality in Slovakia, has joined the Union of Towns, but several of its districts are members of ZMOS. Prior to the creation of the Union of Towns, the former Mayor of Bratislava was a vice president of ZMOS.

In addition to cross membership, signs of developing cooperation between ZMOS and the Union have appeared in the past several months. For example, Alexander Thurzo, Executive Director of ZMOS and Pavol Ifcie, Director of the City Section, attended the Union of Towns assembly this past spring. ZMOS also recently cooperated with the Union of Towns in the development of position papers on regionalism. However, ZMOS did not endorse the proposals put forward by the Union. Mayor Mitrik, about to be elected President of the Union, is a ZMOS Board member and participated in the North Carolina study tour.

## **8.2 The Relationship of ZMOS with other Support Organizations for Local Governments and Local Government Professionals**

Additional Slovak organizations linked with local self-government which ZMOS comes into contact with from time to time include: the Association of City Managers of SK, the Association of Slovak Head Auditors; the Slovak Association of Physical Culture; the Slovak Association of Public Interests Organizations; the Slovak Office of Voluntary Fire Protection; the Slovak Association of Owners of Private, Cooperative, and Municipal Forests; and the Association of Corps for Civil Affairs.

Internationally, ZMOS is a fee paying member of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions. ZMOS is represented in both the Chamber of Regions and the Chamber of Municipalities of the Council of Europe - Standing Congress of Local and Regional Self-Governments. The Slovak Republic pays membership fees as a member country.

Although ZMOS does not have written agreements, it has worked with or received assistance from municipal associations in the Czech Republic, Austria, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, and the Netherlands, as well as having received assistance from the U.S. International City/County Management Association.

## **8.3 Application of ZMOS for United Nations Development Program Grant**

When the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) had its annual conference here in early June of this year, it indicated an interest in supporting municipal development in Slovakia. Mr. Peter Hueleny with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs encouraged that a grant application to the U.N. be developed which could be submitted through the Ministry to the UN with ZMOS as the Slovak implementing organization. It was determined that the grant could center around the work of ZMOS.

USAID agreed to provide technical support to draft a grant proposal in the range of up to \$1 million dollars and Mr. Richard Kobayashi, a former local and state official in Massachusetts who served as the liaison with local governments, was brought in to put the grant proposal together.

A ZMOS advisory committee was formed and it proposed five major areas for possible assistance under the UNDP grant proposal.

- 1) Improving communication with organizations like ZMOS in other countries.
- 2) Training and certification of local officials.
- 3) Improving ZMOS' ability and its members' ability to communicate with each other and with the public and media.
- 4) Policy advocacy for local governments with the central government, and
- 5) Community renewal.

Based on mini brainstorming sessions focusing on each of these topics, a consensus developed to submit a grant proposal focusing on the middle three. The framework for this proposal was developed by Mr. Richard Kobayashi during the same time period as Mr. Wirt's visit.

Mr. Kobayashi and Mr. Wirt closely coordinated their work including holding several joint interviews of ZMOS staff and officials.

## **9. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **9.1 Recommendations for LSGAC/USAID assistance to ZMOS over the next 18 months**

- Deepen professional staffing within ZMOS by providing on a contract basis the equivalent of three years of funding for high level professional staff persons to work in the legal and economic sections of ZMOS. This envisions the establishment of a new position in each section and enhancing current positions in the legal section. It is anticipated that several of these individuals would be attorneys who have a strong professional capabilities in the legislative area and who have a local government background. Funding would be on a decreasing matching basis and ZMOS should commit to finding revenues to sustain the positions following the end of USAID funding.
- Conduct two additional study tours to the United States as a follow-up to the May 1996 ZMOS study tour to North Carolina. One study tour would be for key ZMOS staff who would be exposed to the role of municipal associations and association staff work and the second would be for targeted members of parliament, the Ministry of Interior and Finance, local officials and academic specialists. This second study tour would focus on division of competencies between state and local governments.
- Continue to provide in-house training and assistance at ZMOS as the association works through changes by utilizing the services of a U.S. professional with high level municipal association staff experience and with knowledge of municipal associations in Central Europe.
- Conduct a workshop on the art of lobbying. Participants should include ZMOS officials who went on the two ZMOS U.S. study tours. The workshop should include a review of the U.S. local government association model that promotes active involvement of Mayors and council members in promoting association positions. One goal of the workshop would be to assist ZMOS in moving towards developing a written legislative program which establishes priority legislative issues. Following this, the LGSAC could provide technical assistance to

ZMOS on one or two high priority legislative issues.

- Assist ZMOS develop a central data base of useful literature and materials for local governments and local government professionals. This central library should be developed at the ZMOS headquarters and materials should be identified as belonging to ZMOS. The availability of the library should be advertised to its membership and to local government professionals.
- Assist in upgrading the computer system used at the ZMOS headquarters . For example, neither the Executive Director nor the Director of the Economics Section has a computer available at their work stations and the press office is using outdated Mackintoshes. Priority for upgrade should focus on priority program needs at ZMOS.

**Additional Recommendations for LSGAC/USAID assistance to ZMOS over the next 18 months if such assistance is not provided through the grant to the United Nations**

- Assist in developing a ZMOS institutional strategic plan. This would begin with two carefully structured surveys. The first would target as a minimum the 61 villages and 61 towns (or 62 including the hometown of the President) represented on the ZMOS Board and inventory priority needs of such local governments to enable them to better serve their citizens and the role of ZMOS. The second survey would go to all ZMOS members and would inventory priority needs and interests of the membership as it relates to ZMOS. An outside independent facilitator would be hired to work with the Managing Board over a two day work session to develop or reaffirm in writing the mission and goals of the association. The survey results would serve as the backdrop for the work session. The Executive Director would then have responsibility for proposing to the Managing Board an implementation plan for moving the strategic plan forward.
- Provide financial resources and technical assistance to ZMOS to develop an internet computer network for its membership to enhance effective and timely communication. The initial focus would be to implement e-mail communication between the central office and the ZMOS regional associations. The second step would be to establish a ZMOS Web page and place useful local government information on the net comparable to that of the North Carolina Municipal Association. Among other items, ZMOS would need financial assistance to pay for storage capacity on the internet (such as a file server located at ZMOS headquarters).
- Provide technical assistance to ZMOS in evaluating the feasibility of developing one revenue producing service program such as: a self-insurance program for local governments; compilation of a municipal data base; provision of consulting services to Slovak municipalities; a joint purchasing program to acquire goods and services for local governments (such as computers); a desktop publishing or editing services program; or a program helping local governments find capable professionals to provide contractual services to the locality.
- Develop a workshop to assist municipalities to more effectively communicate with its citizens about local self-government and to explore ways to increase citizen involvement in the life of local self-government.

## **9.2 Options for ZMOS to consider in improving its operations**

- Streamline the board and committee system of ZMOS to enhance the voice of municipalities before parliament and the central government. This could include reducing the size of the 123 member Board, the membership (currently ten) of the 18 Board committees, and substantially reducing the number of these committees.
- Appoint a small by-laws committee equally divided between town and village leadership to address rotating the ZMOS Presidency between villages and towns. For example, by laws could be amended to establish a First Vice President and Immediate Past President positions. A term of office could be for two years. The town and village chambers of the Board could rotate selection of a first vice president each two years. This individual could automatically elevate to the President and Past President positions thus providing a total of six years of top leadership. Both the First Vice President and the Immediate Past President could be given special assignments or roles by the association. Among other alternatives, for example, could be the selection of two Presidents each four year period with one being the Chair of the Village Chamber and the other the Chair of the Town Chamber. Each could serve as the President for two of the four years of the term.
- Make greater use in the policy making, training and other work of ZMOS of volunteer professionals working for villages and towns, or the associations of such professionals. ZMOS could build avenues for cooperation by offering to the professional associations a few key positions on ZMOS boards and committees. One example would be to offer a non voting position on the ZMOS Managing Board to a member of the association for town managers and to the soon to be created association of finance directors. Further ZMOS could provide opportunities to the professional associations to jointly sponsor workshops or publications, or even offer to staff certain secretariat activities. For example, such staffing could be comparable to the secretariat arrangements many U.S. municipal leagues have with a wide range of local government professionals groups.
- Prepare an annual written ZMOS legislative program that briefly summarizes ZMOS legislative positions and selects the highest priorities for the current year. An appendix could include supportive materials.
- Take steps to initiate legislative policy and positions, as needed, in addition to responding to proposals of the central government.
- Develop a system for more directly involving elected mayors and council members in advocating ZMOS positions with members of parliament and the central government.

## **APPENDIX**

**Attachment A: Listing of ZMOS Staff**

**Attachment B: Inventory of Computer Hardware and Software Currently Used by ZMOS**

**Attachment C: Listing of ZMOS Computer Needs Developed by ZMOS Computer Staff Person**

# Attachment A

## Listing of ZMOS Staff

### Executive employees:

1. Executive Director - Ing. Alexander Thurzo, CSc.
2. Press Officer - PhDr. Oľga Gáfriková
3. Director of Legislative Section - PhDr. Viliam Kukumber
4. Director of City Section - Ing. Pavol Ifčič
5. Director of Villages Section - Ing. Karol Jurica
6. Director of International Section - VACANT
7. Director of Economics Section - Ing. Eva Sirotková
8. Head of Organizational and Administrative Department -  
- JUDr. Daniela Franzenová

### Specialists:

9. Specialist for Legal Matters Related to Self-Governments -  
- JUDr. Jana Partlová
10. Specialist for Commercial Law - Mgr. Herman Ulrich
11. Specialist in City Section - VACANT
12. Specialist for Villages Section - Ing. Jaroslav Néma
13. Specialist for Informatics Section - Ing. Viliam Varga
14. Specialist for International Bilateral Cooperation -  
- Ms. Gabriela Lengyelová
15. Specialist - Accountant - Ms. Viola Galgóciová

### Administrative Staff:

16. Officer at the Secretariat of the President - Ms. Alena Kocková
17. Officer in the Office of the President in Štrba -  
- Ms. Mária Pavelová
18. Officer for Membership Recording - Ms. Eva Dómeová
19. Officer for Property Administration - Mr. Viliam Chorváth
20. Archive Person - Ms. Petronela Michaličková
21. Officer - Librarian - VACANT

### Other support staff:

22. Driver - Mr. Jozef Malachovský
23. Mail Room and Switchboard - Ms. Zdenka Gajdošová
24. Support Person - Ms. Lubomíra Žovinková
25. Cleaning Lady - Ms. Eva Gebauerová

## ATTACHMENT B

### Inventory of Current Computer Hardware and Software Used by ZMOS

#### 1. COMPUTERS

pieces	COMPUTER	RAM(MB)	HD(MB)	OWNER	
1	P75	16	1200	NVS	Novell server
3	486 DX4/100	8	850	PKB	
1	486 DX4/100	8	730	ZMOS	
2	486 DX2/66	8	170	ZMOS	
*1	486 SX/40	2	40	ZMOS	
*2	Macintosh Classic	2	40	ZMOS	
*1	386 DX/25	4	40	ZMOS	
1	386 DX/40	8	850	ZMOS	Linux server
*1	386 SX/25	2	40	NVS	notebook

#### 2. PRINTERS

pieces			OWNER
1	HPLJ 4M	Laser printer	NVS
1	HPLJ 5P	Laser printer	NVS
1	OKI 591	24 pin. printer	NVS
3	HPLJ 5L	Laser printer	PKB

#### 3. OTHERS

pieces			OWNER
1	Faxmodem	Zyxel Elite 2864, v. 34, 28.800 bps	NVS
1	Scanner	HP ScanJet IIp, 300 dpi, 8bit monochr.	NVS

#### 4. SOFTWARE

MS DOS 6.22
MS WINDOWS 95 CZ
MS OFFICE 95
MS ACCESS 2.0
Economical Software
Adresar (MS ACCESS)
Novell NetWare 3.12/ 10 users
Linux Slackware UNIX

\* - computers are useable for the work in ZMOS office only partially

## ATTACHMENT C

Listing of ZMOS Computer Needs as Prioritized by Mr William M'anya, Informatics Specialist

### PRIORITY

pieces			PRICE ( SK )
<b>1. Priority Level 1</b>			
3	PENTIUM 100 MHZ, 16MB RAM	WORKSTATION	180 000
1	PENTIUM 100 MHZ, 16MB RAM	NOTEBOOK	150 000
1	PENTIUM 150 MHZ, 32MB RAM	Novell Server	200 000
1	DJ 1600C	Color ink printer	50 000
2	Zyxel 2864 E	Modem	50 000
3	MS Windows 95 CZ		15 000
6	MS Office 7.0 Professional		100 000
			<b>745 000</b>
<b>2. Priority Level 2</b>			
1	PENTIUM 150 MHZ, 32MB RAM	UNIX server	350 000
5	PENTIUM 100 MHZ, 16MB RAM	WORKSTATION	320 000
1	PENTIUM 100 MHZ, 16MB RAM	NOTEBOOK	150 000
4	HP LJ 5P	Laser printer	140 000
30	Mail boxes in INTERNET	Per year	110 000
5	NetWare Connect	COM - ports sharing for NetWare	40 000
1	CD ROM Writer	Incl. software	70 000
1	Scanner + datapen	Incl. software	40 000
	LOTUS NOTES + appl. soft.		200 000
			<b>1 420 000</b>
<b>3. Priority Level 3</b>			
1	OCR Recognita +	OCR Software	35 000
5	WRQ Reflection	TCP / IP Software + terminal	60 000
3	Langmaster	English learning software	10 000
	Networking - cabling	New cabling for office K - ZMOS	300 000
			<b>405 000</b>

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**Listing of ZMOS Computer Needs as Developed by Mr. Villiam Varga, Informatics Specialist  
broken out by computer equipment, software and other**

pieces			PRICE ( SK )
<b>COMPUTERS, PRINTERS, MODEMS,...</b>			
1	PENTIUM 150 MHZ, 32MB RAM	Novell server	200 000
1	PENTIUM 150 MHZ, 32MB RAM	UNIX server, incl. software	350 000
8	PENTIUM 100 MHZ, 16MB RAM	WORKSTATION incl. software	500 000
2	PENTIUM 100 MHZ, 16MB RAM	NOTEBOOK incl. software	300 000
4	HP LJ 5P	Laser printer	140 000
1	DJ 1600C	Color ink printer	50 000
2	Zyxel 2864 E	Modem	50 000
1	CD ROM Writer	Incl. software	70 000
1	Scanner + datapen	Incl. software	40 000
<b>SOFTWARE</b>			
3	MS WINDOWS 95 CZ		15 000
6	MS OFFICE 7.0 Professional		100 000
1	OCR Recognita +	OCR software	35 000
5	WRQ Reflection	TCP / IP software + terminal	60 000
5	NetWare Connect	COM - ports sharing for NetWare	40 000
3	Langmaster	English learning software	10 000
	LOTUS NOTES + appl. soft.		200 000
<b>OTHERS</b>			
	Networking - cabling	New cabling for office K - ZMOS	300 000
30	Mail boxes in INTERNET	Per year	110 000
			<b>2 570 000 sk</b>

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