GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY INITIATIVE

Contract Number 72016918C00002

QUARTERLY REPORT
(August 1 – October 31, 2020)

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# ACRONYMS

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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACA</td>
<td>Anti-Corruption Agency (now known as the Agency for Prevention of Corruption)</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMELP</td>
<td>Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
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<td>CPI</td>
<td>Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection</td>
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<td>ERCC</td>
<td>Electronic Register of Corruption Cases</td>
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<td>FMC</td>
<td>Financial Management and Controls</td>
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<td>GAI</td>
<td>Government Accountability Initiative</td>
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<td>INL</td>
<td>US Department of State International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau</td>
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<td>IOI</td>
<td>Independent Oversight Institution</td>
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<td>LAP</td>
<td>Local Anti-Corruption Action Plan</td>
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<td>LSG</td>
<td>Local Self-Government</td>
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<td>MOJ</td>
<td>Ministry of Justice</td>
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<td>MPALSG</td>
<td>Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMP</td>
<td>Performance Management Plan</td>
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<td>PPO</td>
<td>Public Prosecutor’s Office</td>
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<td>SAI</td>
<td>State Audit Institution</td>
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<td>TS</td>
<td>Transparency Serbia</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The third quarter of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Government Accountability Initiative (GAI) was characterized by increased use of technology to deliver technical assistance, mitigating restrictions on gatherings and local and international travel during the continuing COVID-19 health crisis. Although Serbia has had some of the lowest number of reported cases of COVID-19 in the region, elections at the central and local levels were delayed, creating a ripple effect on certain technical assistance planned for local governments. New local governments were ultimately formed late in this quarter and GAI was able to meet the leadership of local counterparts and reconfirm areas of cooperation. All component scheduled activities for completion within Year 3 are expected to be delivered as expected.

The new Law on Public Procurement has been a focus of GAI support across all project components, including through delivery of draft new internal rulebooks to local governments, support for a performance audit of a large scale procurement throughout Serbia, and provision of the only training to misdemeanor court judges in Serbia on the novelties of the Law.

Notable achievements in the third quarter (Q3) of GAI Year 3 include:

- GAI developed rulebooks for four counterpart local governments aligned with the new Law on Public Procurement which became effective on July 1, 2020. The rulebooks defined regulation of procurement, and established systems for monitoring centralized and decentralized procurements and implementation. The models also advanced local government responsiveness to SAI’s recent performance audit recommendations.

- GAI has scaled up a successful model for engaging youth in democratic principles of governance. High school students’ contribution to development of their local government budget, implemented last year in five schools in the City of Sombor, was significantly expanded during this period. Youth in four additional cities including Kragujevac, Sremska Mitrovica, Dimitrovgrad, and Novi Pazar are identifying, prioritizing, and voting on

1 Official Journal of the Republic of Serbia No. 91/2019
improvement projects in their schools to propose to local administrations for consideration in their communities’ 2021 budgets. Twenty-seven schools in five cities are participating in the initiative this year, demonstrating the sustainability of GAI’s approach when developing successful local models for participation of young people in governance.

• All counterpart local governments took part in a five-day online training on US local government practices in budgeting, public engagement, and public services. Numerous real-life examples, demonstrations of tools, and strategies enabled information exchange with the Assistant City Management of Tallahassee, Florida inspiring counterparts to develop new initiatives.

• GAI facilitated successful implementation of 13 performance audits to be issued as planned in 2020, detailing deficiencies in government programs and functions at high risk of fraud, waste and abuse and recommendations for corrective action in areas including public procurement, health care, and IT security.

• GAI advanced SAI’s utilization of the performance audit approach by delivering performance audit training for an additional 40 financial and compliance auditors who contributed to the design and implementation of the message development and quality assurance of this year’s performance audit draft reports.

• A critical gap in the skills base of the Agency for Prevention of Corruption, identified in GAI’s prior training needs assessment, was addressed in a two-week training on evaluation research methodologies. As a result of the training, the Agency’s newly formed Analytics and Research Department adopted GAI’s proposed research design matrix as a tool to structure its planned research of public officials’ understanding of the new Law on Prevention of Corruption, and the Agency’s administration of a corruption perception survey.

• GAI facilitated a third roundtable between the Agency and the Misdemeanor Courts, resulting in the Agency adoption and public issuance of Plea Agreement Guidelines which

2 In September 2020, the new Law on the Prevention of Corruption came into force, changing the name of the Serbian Anti-Corruption Agency to the Agency for Prevention of Corruption.
eliminated the incentive for defendants charged with misdemeanor offenses to opt for milder penalties offered under Misdemeanor Law rather than face more stringent penalties prescribed under the Law on Prevention of Corruption. The Guidelines also note that the Agency will now allow for penalties less than “the legal minimum”.

- GAI partnered with the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection to promote the public’s awareness of their rights to access information of public importance in an online forum *Access to Information in Times of Covid-19 Pandemic*, attended virtually by government representatives, civil society organizations, and media representatives. Notably, Dr. Predrag Kon, epidemiologist and member of Serbia’s COVID-19 Crisis Team; Ms. Anamarija Musa, international expert on freedom of information and former Croatian Commissioner for Information of Public Interest; and Ms. Natalija Jovanović, Journalist, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), elevated the importance of transparency in government practices and challenges experienced in Serbia imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic on free access to information of public importance.

- GAI, in cooperation with US Department of State’s International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau and the Judicial Academy, delivered a fourth advanced training on financial investigations. Nineteen representatives of the Higher Public Prosecutor’s Office in Belgrade, the Ministry of Interior’s Financial investigation Unit and the Unit for Suppression of Corruption, the Customs Administration, the Tax Administration/Tax Police, and the Anti-Money Laundering Directorate participated in the workshop.

- Building on the Anti-Corruption Practicum and expert roundtables held in the past, GAI prepared a comparative analysis of the use of financial forensics in legal systems, including those comparable to Serbia. The analysis reflects on Serbian legislation and practices related to engagement of expert witnesses, professional consultants, and forensic accountants, with recommendations to refine the normative framework and greater use of financial forensics in criminal proceedings.

- In response to the newly established jurisdiction of the Misdemeanor Courts, GAI, in cooperation with the Judicial Academy and the Misdemeanor Appellate Court, designed and delivered the only trainings offered in Serbia on the new set of competences.
introduced by the Law on Public Procurement for more than 100 misdemeanor judges from appellate and first instance courts. The trainings were held in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Kragujevac, and Niš.

- Seven bidders responded to GAI’s tender for the selection of an IT company for the design and testing of an Electronic Register of Corruption Cases. Having evaluated the proposals and shortlisted the best bidders, GAI submitted its proposed selection to USAID for technical concurrence.

- GAI supported the University of Belgrade Faculty of Law Anti-Corruption Legal Clinic in preparation of an Anti-Corruption Textbook. The Textbook is intended primarily for future generations of students of the Legal Clinic and professionals to acquire additional knowledge on the nature of corruption, international standards, and practice in this field, and existing mechanisms for prevention and repression of corruption in Serbia.
PROJECT OVERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Name</th>
<th>Government Accountability Initiative Activity (GAI)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Start and End Dates</td>
<td>6 February 2018 – 5 February 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prime Implementing Partner</td>
<td>Checchi and Company Consulting, Inc.</td>
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<td>Contract Number</td>
<td>72016918C00002 GAI</td>
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<td>Main Projected Counterparts</td>
<td>Local Governments</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Independent Oversight Institutions</td>
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<td>Anti-Corruption Court Units</td>
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<td>Work Plan Period</td>
<td>6 February 2020 – 5 February 2021</td>
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Government Accountability Initiative is a four-year United States Agency for International Development Activity initiated in February 2018 with an overall objective to strengthen the capacities and connections of key Serbian government institutions and stakeholders resulting in increased government accountability at the national and local levels. GAI consists of three components: Local Government Accountability, Independent Oversight Institutions (IOIs), and Adjudication of Corruption Cases. GAI counterparts include local self-governments (LSG), the State Audit Institution (SAI), the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA), the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection (CPI), specialized anti-corruption units in courts and the Public Prosecutor’s Office (PPO), and civil society organizations (CSO).

The Activity is structured around three components:

- **Component 1. Local Government Accountability**

GAI is supporting local governments’ efforts to increase inclusion of the public in government decision-making regarding public policy development and resource allocations; to encourage and incentivize local governments to operate in a more transparent and responsive manner, optimize service delivery, and strengthen whistleblower protection; as well as, to foster accountability with the development of local anti-corruption plans and set-up of independent bodies to monitor their implementation.
Component 2. Independent Oversight Institutions

GAI is providing technical assistance to oversight institutions, such as SAI, ACA, and CPI, to strengthen monitoring of government performance and public officials and encourage them to exercise their duties as defined in the institutions’ respective legislative mandates. To increase responsiveness to findings and implementation of recommendations of oversight institutions, GAI is working closely with relevant authorities, such as the specialized Public Prosecutor’s Offices, relevant ministries and National Assembly Committees, and civil society organizations. GAI is also working with the CPI to enhance personal data protection, particularly at the local level, and to raise awareness of the importance of the right to access information held by government institutions.

Component 3. Adjudication of Corruption Cases

GAI is providing technical assistance to specialized anti-corruption units established in courts and the Public Prosecutors’ Offices to strengthen prosecution and adjudication of corruption cases and to establish a system for the collection of unified statistics on corruption cases that distinguishes clearly between different types of criminal offenses, the length of cases, and outcome of the proceedings.

The Results Framework for GAI, as depicted below, provides the basis of operation for the three components that form this Initiative. GAI’s overall goal – strengthening the accountability of key democratic institutions in Serbia (DO.1) – aims to deliver two important Interim Results: IR 1.1 – Government Institutions More Responsive to Citizens, and IR 1.2 – Rule of Law and Oversight Improved.
Improving Government Responsiveness on the Local Level

GAI activities are designed to provide support to local governments to enable them to respond to citizens’ needs more effectively, as well as to implement standards and good practices in the field of accountable government consistent with local governments’ legal obligations.

GAI’s technical assistance assumes that each local government has unique characteristics with differing capacities, so technical assistance is tailored to the specific needs of each local government. GAI has offered local governments support in areas of importance to citizens, including adoption, implementation, and monitoring of local anti-corruption plans; improving transparency of their work; enhancing civic participation; and providing the prerequisites for
whistleblower protection. To share lessons learned, GAI is supporting the exchange of experiences and successes among local governments.

**Independent Oversight Improved**

To optimize the results and impact of the work of SAI, GAI is supporting the institution to fulfill its mandate consistent with current international professional standards and reflective of risk-based oversight of government. Assistance is designed to enhance the utility of SAI’s work to the National Assembly, to elevate the level of public understanding of anti-corruption efforts, and to increase the likelihood that SAI’s audit report recommendations lead to concrete, meaningful improvements in Serbian public sector governance and government delivery of services to the public. GAI aims to achieve sustainable, long lasting results and build on prior USAID training to build SAI’s capacities to assess whether public entities are achieving economic, efficient, and effective use of resources.

GAI’s support to ACA includes a manifold capacity building effort to implement ACA’s specific strategic goals, derived with GAI’s support in Y1 and Y2, and focus on strategies to prevent and detect corruption and enhance productive collaboration with key stakeholders, such as the misdemeanor courts and specialized anti-corruption PPOs.

Oversight of government and public engagement in governance is highly correlated with public access to information. GAI’s support to the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection focuses on promotion of the public’s right to know; raising awareness of the importance of free access to public information while placing appropriate attention and balance on data protection; and encouraging institutions to be more open in response to public, CSO, and media requests for public information. GAI continues its focus on development of awareness raising campaigns in support of CPI’s mission while also planning with the new Commissioner support to implement the strategies to enhance their oversight of laws on access to information and data protections.

**Adjudication of Corruption Cases**

established specialized anti-corruption court units and Public Prosecutor Offices (PPO). The Law, adopted by the National Assembly in 2016, came into force in March 2018. GAI supports the specialized anti-corruption courts and Public Prosecutors’ Offices to enhance their capacities to perform duties newly defined in the Law, identify information critical to improve efficiency in adjudication, and enhance procedures for data collection to ensure data quality and security. GAI will also facilitate the creation of an Electronic Register of Corruption Cases (ERCC) to enable a seamless interface for specialized anti-corruption court and PPO data, leading in turn to improved case management, monitoring, and adjudication of corruption cases.
ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

The USAID Government Accountability Initiative (GAI) continued planned Quarter 3 technical assistance with counterpart institutions and subcontractors throughout the period, utilizing a mix of in-person and online, audio-visual communications platforms to mitigate the restrictions on movement and gathering of persons while practicing safe distancing. Activities gained new momentum as the measures the Government of Serbia instituted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic lessened and in-person trainings became possible, local governments were formed, and new laws became effective. In several instances GAI continued to implement online trainings, as restrictions to international travel have affected international consultants.

I. Local Government Accountability

The reporting period was marked by election of local leadership, held on June 21, 2020. Constitutional local assemblies were held largely in late August and September. Mild improvement of the epidemiologic situation in counterpart LSGs, especially those that were initially hit hard, enabled them to normalize work and focus on activities that are not primarily related to the pandemic mitigation measures. GAI was able to meet several counterparts with newly elected leadership to agree on technical assistance. There has been positive response by new local officials towards technical assistance provided by GAI, and several activities planned in GAI’s Work Plan were confirmed. GAI confirmed activities with the City Municipality of Stari Grad, which experienced a significant change in political party leadership. The City of Šabac continued to have an unstable political situation, resulting in multiple repetitions of the elections in some polling places, following noted irregularities.
1.1. Local Anti-Corruption Action Plan Development and Oversight

GAI, through subcontractor Transparency Serbia, continued to provide technical assistance in the oversight of local anti-corruption action plans (LAP) to eight LSGs, including five Group 1 LSGs and three Group 2 LSGs. The assistance consists of three sets of activities: support for Local Anti-Corruption Action Plan (LAP) development for the City Municipality of Stari Grad; support for implementing LAPs in three LSGs (Novi Pazar, Raška, and Šabac); and capacity building of eight independent monitoring bodies to monitor LAP implementation.

**LAP Implementation** – Four model acts, envisaged by LAPs, were developed, and provided to Novi Pazar, Raška, and Šabac for adoption (Activity 1.1.B). Adoption of these documents is pending, awaiting adoption by new local Assemblies that held only one or two sessions in this quarter. It is expected that local governments will adopt these acts by the end of 2020.

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3 Group 1 LSGs include seven local governments. GAI counterparts from November 2018 – Sombor, Vranje, Vrnjačka Banja, Šabac, Dimitrovgrad, Raška, and Sjenica.

4 Group 2 LSGs include six local governments. GAI counterparts from November 2019 – Niš, Kragujevac, Novi Pazar, Sremska Mitrovica, Žabalj, and Belgrade City Municipality of Stari Grad.
Capacity Building of Independent Monitoring Bodies – GAI and Transparency Serbia continued to assist the independent LAP monitoring bodies established in seven counterpart LSGs (Vranje, Novi Pazar, Sombor, Kragujevac, Šabac, Raška, Vrnjačka Banja). The assistance included: 1) identifying needs and providing additional trainings for independent LAP monitoring bodies to raise their capacities to understand anti-corruption policies and LAP implementation in concrete fields; 2) assisting independent LAP monitoring bodies to modify and adjust their work to the new circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and regulating their operation; and 3) assisting independent LAP monitoring bodies to produce reports on LAP implementation that will be submitted to the local assemblies (Activity 1.1.C).

Following trainings on conflict of interest and public procurement delivered in Quarter 2, Transparency Serbia delivered a training on whistleblower protection in August. Members of the independent LAP monitoring bodies were equipped with the fundamentals of the Serbian Law on Whistleblower Protection, and with the duties that local governments must fulfill to comply with the Law. The main session of the training focused on how independent LAP monitoring bodies should monitor LAP implementation related to whistleblower protection and to determine if the LSGs are establishing internal systems required for compliance with the Law, as well as to inform the public.

New model acts that regulate the operation of independent LAP monitoring bodies have been developed. These model acts also provide provisions for their operations in irregular circumstances, such as those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly those relating to online sessions and online decision-making. Citizens in some LSGs perceived the independent LAP monitoring bodies as bodies to whom complaints should be submitted about inappropriate LAP implementation or omissions in LAP implementation, or suspicions of corruption in local governments in general. To manage these complaints properly, members of the independent LAP monitoring bodies expressed a need to have clear procedures, described in a model rulebook, and a complaint form made available to citizens, both of which GAI developed. The Model Rulebook for Citizens’ Complaint Receipt and Management includes a definition of complaints, methods for submission of complaints, classification of complaints received, a procedure for assessing the content of the complaint with expected results, as well as methods for providing feedback to the complainant. As of the end of October, Novi Pazar, Vrnjačka Banja and Raška each adopted a new rulebook on independent LAP monitoring body operations, a new
monitoring body workplan for 2020, and a rulebook for citizens’ complaints receipt and management.

The independent LAP monitoring bodies were supported to collect necessary data, information, and documents on LAP implementation and to produce reports that will be submitted to the local Assembly and subsequently presented to the public. The first such report, with recommendations on more efficient LAP implementation was developed by the monitoring body in the Municipality of Raška and submitted to the local Assembly. It is expected that the Assembly will discuss and adopt this report during their next session. After that, GAI and Transparency Serbia will assist this monitoring body to present this report to the public and to monitor whether and how recommendations are implemented. This report will be shared with all other independent LAP monitoring bodies to be used as a model.

1.2 Transparency

GAI’s support to LSGs to enhance transparency in government is three-fold. First, GAI supports counterpart LSGs by identifying areas of the Local Transparency Index (LTI) where improvements can be made and then providing technical assistance through Transparency Serbia to ensure sustainable improvement of their (LTI) scores. Second, GAI recommends improvements to LSGs’ websites, based on the GAI-developed model website for local governments but customized for each LSG. Third, GAI supports improvement of public outreach and communication strategies, including improving the use of social media by local governments. These interventions jointly provide a large volume of information, resources, tools, and examples of best practices for LSGs to significantly improve their transparency and set examples for others to follow.

Information Booklet Improvement – Based on the LTI Report findings, which has identified deficiencies in LSGs’ Information Booklets as a major weakness, GAI has begun providing technical assistance to counterpart LSGs – the City of Sombor and Municipality of Žabljak – to improve their Information Booklets, which will be used as models by other LSGs (Activity 1.2.C.a). The assistance is delivered by Transparency Serbia. The two local governments have been selected based on their needs and interest to work on the new structure and content of their Information Booklets, to meet all legal requirements and include best practices, and to serve as models as well as improve transparency in other Serbian local governments. The assistance includes: an assessment of existing practices in developing and updating Information Booklets in
these two LSGs; assistance in development of new Information Booklets and providing written recommendations to both LSGs relating to institutionalization of procedures for regular maintenance of the Booklets.

The first activity, the assessment of existing practices in developing and updating Information Booklets is underway. Transparency Serbia is also analyzing content of existing Booklets and the type of information provided by LSGs. The initial assessment shows that Information Booklets are massive and difficult to search, although mostly compliant with the CPI Guidelines. They require restructuring, shortening, and improvement of the content to make them more user friendly. GAI and Transparency Serbia will recommend ways to present all mandatory data more efficiently. Another important finding is that LSGs lack capacities to regularly update Information Booklets and that responsibilities for gathering and updating information should be assigned to staff persons. Finally, GAI and Transparency Serbia have agreed that there is a need to develop a methodology to update Information Booklets setting minimal standards that are aligned with the CPI Guidelines and adjusted to the capacities of small municipalities. The methodology should also contain examples for more advanced LSGs that have greater capacities to present more data.

Development of LSGs’ Communication Strategies – GAI has initiated assistance to the cities of Niš (Activity 1.2.F) and Novi Pazar (Activity 1.2.H) to adopt and/or improve their communication strategies to foster openness and public engagement.

The City of Novi Pazar has a Communication Strategy that covers the period 2017 – 2020. GAI’s assistance has focused on amending the Strategy to make it more operational and support the development of new channels of communication for improved public outreach. The amendments include a series of very concrete initiatives the City can undertake to improve communication with the public and overall public engagement.
GAI, with subcontractors DCG and the Executive Group, who combine expertise in local governance and communication, has created a methodology for development of the Communication and Participation Strategy, and delivered it to the City of Niš. The methodology includes a concrete description of each activity, responsibilities of the LSG, deadlines and indicators of success as well as guidelines on public participation in the process. It is compliant with the Law on Planning. The City plans to initiate the work soon and appoint the working group.

Development of Procedures for Regular and Timely Disclosure of Information by LSGs – GAI has initiated technical assistance to three local governments (Novi Pazar, Kragujevac, and Vrnjačka Banja) to develop internal procedures for regular website maintenance and content updates to ensure sustainability of implemented improvements. This activity has been designed as a response to a problem identified while working on website and LTI improvements – almost all LSG counterparts lack internal procedures that would ensure sustainable publication of data. The technical assistance is provided by DCG in cooperation with Transparency Serbia to support LSGs’ development of rulebooks that will define procedures for regular information flow required for website maintenance, website updates, and allocation of responsibilities. This assistance will ensure that improvements implemented with GAI support remain sustainable over time. In October 2020, initial workshops with representatives of all three LSGs were organized to agree on workplans for these initiatives, to assess existing practices in website maintenance and updates, and to collect necessary documents and information for drafting the rulebooks. It is expected that rulebooks will be agreed with local governments and provided for adoption by the year’s end.

Implementation of the New Public Procurement Law – GAI and subcontractor Law Office Varinac continued to assist the cities of Šabac, Sombor, Kragujevac, and Novi Pazar to develop new internal rulebooks on public procurement that are aligned with requirements of the Law on Public Procurement, which came into force in July 2020.

The City Council of Novi Pazar adopted on September 15, 2020, a new Internal Act which regulates in greater detail the rules and procedures for planning and conducting public procurement procedures. Particular attention was given to identifying the method of communication, rights and duties of the contracting authority representatives that take part in
the various stages of public procurement procedures, from the planning stage to the execution of the public procurement contract. Also, special consideration was given to the organizational structure of Novi Pazar local administration, considering the responsibilities assigned to individual organizational units within the local government. A separate section was produced to regulate planning and procurement procedures that are not covered by the scope of the Law. The new Law introduced new, significantly higher thresholds for which the contracting authorities have the duty to conduct public procurement. Also, outside of the scope of the Law is the procurement of social and other special services, which also have been included in the Internal Act. GAI has developed a unique way to regulate the procedures and processes in these situations, ensuring the highest level of transparency within these procurement procedures and allowing for better competition among the potential bidders. A significant section of the new Internal Act regulates monitoring and control of public procurement contract executions. This stage was often left unregulated in the past, ultimately resulting in omissions and irregularities, thereby failing to meet satisfy citizens’ needs and achieve value for money.

In September 2020, a draft new internal act on public procurement was sent to the City of Kragujevac for their review and inputs. As opposed to other LSGs, Kragujevac has a centralized public procurement system and the rulebook addressed its particularities.

1.3 Public Participation

The delayed elections followed by the late establishment of new local governments (most were elected in September) delayed the implementation of public participation activities for the adoption of local policies, which GAI planned to support. GAI counterparts were largely reluctant to make decisions relating to technical assistance for change and improvement of relevant procedures before the new local governments were in place. On the other hand, GAI was able to meet with most of the newly elected local officials in late September and October, and these officials expressed strong interest in engaging the public to participate in adoption of local policies.
While public participation activities in Niš (Activity 1.3.A) remain dependent on the development of the new Communication and Public Participation Strategy, GAI agreed on the modalities of public participation assistance with the newly elected city councilors in Kragujevac in October (Activity 1.3.B). The councilors requested technical assistance that would lead them through the process of revision of the public participation practices relating to the budget adoption, development of new initiatives as well as support with implementation of selected initiatives within the 2022 budget adoption cycle. This work will be complemented with development of the budget portal.

GAI has reconfirmed the agreement with the new leadership of the City of Sombor (Activity 1.3.D) to expand the budget planning participation process with high schools for the 2021 local budget, following the highly successful GAI-assisted high school participation in planning of the 2020 local budget. GAI met with the Mayor and city leadership to visit schools and discuss implementation of school improvement projects that were elected by students last year and to meet with student parliaments to discuss the process for this year. The City has increased budget allocations for each school up to $6,000 and preparatory student-led activities have been initiated.

Based on the highly successful model developed in Sombor, three additional cities have joined GAI in planning the initiative to engage youth in the budget planning process this year: Kragujevac, Sremska Mitrovica, and Novi Pazar (Activity 1.3.E). In addition, Dimitrovgrad informed GAI that instead of previously requested technical assistance for reinforcement of procedures for consultations with local agriculture producers (Activity 1.3.F), it would join GAI’s youth engagement initiative.
In total, 26 high schools plan to participate in this initiative. As Dimitrovgrad is a small municipality, their youth engagement initiative will trickle down to the elementary school’s senior year students to participate as well. In all five cities, GAI has been working closely with student parliaments to organize the process of identifying projects and voting, which will be conducted online due to the epidemiologic situation. The technical assistance is focused on building capacities among students to implement the process within schools while GAI is providing direction, support, and necessary coordination between LSGs and schools. Also, GAI has developed a promotional campaign for the participation process, both at national and local levels. It includes joint press releases, development of joint slogans and visuals, posters, organization of online debates for students to discuss their needs, and a social media campaign. GAI is working with students to support them to use social media for promotion of the initiative among students.

The City of Vranje has implemented an initiative, using the budget simulator developed with GAI, that included education of student parliaments about the city budget and a debate on budgets that the students developed. The students were asked to develop city budgets using the budget simulator and present their proposals to the Mayor, City councilors, and other City representatives. The initiative was implemented within the European week of local democracy.

SELECTED MEDIA COVERAGE

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

BUDGET PLANNING

CAMPAIGN

Students Participate in Local Budget Planning Process

For Two Years in a Row, Sombor Students Participate in Local Budget Planning

Students in Novi Pazar Participate in the Local Budget Planning Process

High School Students in Several Cities Participate in Budget Planning

Students Participate in City Budget Planning

Students Take Part in Local Budget Planning

High-School Students Took Part in Discussions on Budget Planning

Students Participate in the Local Budget Planning

High-school Students in Kragujevac Participate in the Budget Planning Process

Students Take Part in Creating the Local Budget

Novi Pazar: High School Students Participate in Creating the Local Budget

High School Students Participate in Planning the Local Budget

Students Taking Part in the Local Budget Planning Process

Novi Pazar’s Students Take Part in the Budget Planning Process

Students Engage in Local Budget Planning

Students that used the budget simulator and the Mayor of Vranje

Source: City of Vranje website

Checchi and Company Consulting, Inc.
1.4. Local Finances and Budgets

GAI is working with LSGs to facilitate a culture of openness, engagement, and information sharing on public spending, as well as to improve oversight and control mechanisms over public spending.

Šabac City Portal – GAI subcontractor Inbox IT has completed the second phase of portal development (site beta testing) developed in line with specification and functionalities agreed with city representatives (Activity 1.4.B). The Portal provides a basis for the digitalization of city administration as it provides public access to services provided by city and public companies and institutions. The completion of the second phase has been approved by representatives of the City of Šabac. The tense political situation in Šabac has delayed election results. GAI will agree on continuation of development as soon as the new leadership is elected. A short video tutorial in Serbian that describes functionalities of the portal for public users has been made available.

Work on implementation of financial management and controls (FMC) in Novi Pazar was delayed in expectation of the election of the new City leadership (Activity 1.4.C). Once the new leadership was elected, the City established the Working Group for FMC implementation. GAI and subcontractor Center for Sustainable Local and Regional Development (COR) delivered an introductory workshop to the

Screenshot of the new portal for the City of Šabac
members of the Working Group on October 23, introducing them to FMC requirements and mapping a joint work plan to initiate FMC in Novi Pazar.

In a meeting with the City of Kragujevac, GAI and the City agreed to help the City build its capacities for performance budgeting and consequently reinforce its capacities to demonstrate to the public its spending (Activity 1.4.D). In addition, work on a budget portal development for Kragujevac was agreed (Activity 1.4.E). The portal will be based on the model developed with the City of Vranje. Despite a series of discussions and expressed interest, the city of Sremska Mitrovica still has not confirmed its intention to develop a budget portal.

Based on interest from counterpart LSGs in current practices and models employed by US local governments, GAI provided training on US local government practices in budgeting, public participation, service delivery and planning on September 8-10 and September 15-16 (Activity 1.4.G). The training was developed and delivered by Mr. Raoul Lavin, Assistant City Manager for the City of Tallahassee, Florida. It focused on various strategies and approaches to foster citizen participation, ensure budget transparency, improve citizens’ trust in local finances, enhance public use of mobile apps for more efficient delivery of services, and public involvement in strategic planning. The trainings provided insight into various interactive tools, apps, surveys, examples of use of new technologies and traditional media, and other practical advice on how local governments can enhance public engagement, capturing the participants’ attention with Tallahassee’s experiences. The training was held online, via Zoom.

Strong LSG interest was reflected in the number of participants to the trainings, which engaged, on average, 35 to 40 counterpart LSG representatives per session. Implementation of some of the practices presented on the training have been discussed further with local counterparts.

GAI organized an interview of Mr. Lavin by the magazine Nedeljnik. The article entitled Improving Citizens’ Lives by Providing Efficient and Effective Public Services was published in the October 14 printed edition of the magazine and is also available on the Nedeljnik’s website.

Development of a capital investments plan in Vrnjačka Banja (Activity 1.4.H) has been delayed due to the local elections. GAI is still expecting feedback from the recently elected municipal leadership relating to their plans for development of the plan and associated technical assistance.
1.5. Public Services

GAI continued to improve local public services facilitating identification of procedures that can be simplified and merged into single administrative points for more efficient service delivery.

GAI subcontractor Borealis Advisory (with Ms. Tatjana Pavlović Križanić) delivered an analysis for the establishment of three Single Administrative Points (SAPs) to the City of Kragujevac (Activity 1.5.A) in July. Feedback on the analysis by the City administration was delayed by elections. In early October, GAI met with the newly elected City councilors, who reconfirmed the City’s interest in implementation of SAPs. As a follow-up, the City organized a series of internal discussions with relevant service providers relating to implementation of SAPs for easier access to social protection benefits and registration of property ownership based on recommendations provided by GAI.

In Žablj, GAI agreed on a plan of activities with the Head of Administration and the directors of two public companies for the improvement of provision of services in this local government. The plan includes the implementation of a customer satisfaction survey that will provide the LSG with a baseline and enable identification of the most problematic services to be improved with GAI technical assistance. Žablj counterpart representatives have indicated that the main problems relate to waste management, quality of the water supply, and legalization of property built without building permits (Activity 1.5.B).

GAI has provided guidelines for the development of municipal apps to the municipality of Vrnjačka Banja and City of Novi Pazar (Activity 1.5.C). The guidelines include a step-by-step description of activities local leadership should take when deciding about mobile app development. Representatives of these two LSGs attended the training held by Mr. Lavin on development of apps by local governments. The training included full demonstration of the city app used by Tallahassee and description of the entire process of app development and evolution over time.
1.6 Whistleblower Protection

GAI subcontractor Pištaljka delivered the first online, two-day training on whistleblower protection for representatives of local public companies and institutions on October 20-21, 2020 (Activity 1.6.A). The training focused on the legal requirements, recommendations for organization of internal whistleblowing procedures at the local level and practical work of persons authorized to receive reports from whistleblowers. A total of 14 officials representing eight local public companies and institutions from six local government units participated. During the discussions similar difficulties in understanding the roles of authorized persons and duties with respect to investigation of whistleblowers claims were identified. Participants indicated the need for support in the development of adequate systems for internal whistleblowing in line with the Law on Whistleblower Protection, and their integration with other internal procedures in public companies (such as FMC and systems for reporting irregularities and claims from customers).

The City of Novi Pazar has appointed a person to work with Pištaljka on development of internal whistleblowing procedures, who also participated in the training (Activity 1.6.C.).
1.7 Selection of Local Governments – Third Call

On October 12, GAI published its third public call for local government units to submit their expressions of interest for cooperation with GAI. Based on this open call, GAI intends to select up to 12 enthusiastic and committed LSGs to cooperate with the project beginning in 2021. USAID will sign Memoranda of Cooperation with selected LSGs for selected areas of technical assistance. These Memoranda will form the basis for cooperation during the life of the project. Specific activities will be defined jointly by GAI and LSG representatives. The call was open until October 30, 2020 and GAI received 18 applications from interested local governments. In addition to publishing the public call on the GAI website, the call was sent directly to all LSGs, and shared with the Ministry for State Administration and Local Self-Government, with GAI consultants and subcontractors, as well as with focal points in the existing 13 counterpart LSGs, to be further shared with all other local governments. The public also was informed about the call to LSGs through a press release that was sent to national and local media.

5 More information and all documents relating to the call are available on GAI’s website.
### SELECTED MEDIA COVERAGE

**ON THIRD OPEN CALL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS EXPRESSION OF INTEREST TO PARTNER WITH GAI**

- USAID Invites Local Governments
- USAID Invites Local Governments to Apply for Support in Building Accountability
- USAID Invites Local Governments to Apply for Support in Fighting Corruption
- USAID Invites Local Governments to Apply for Assistance to Fight Corruption
- Open Call for Local Governments to Apply for USAID Assistance in Building Accountability and Fighting Corruption
- USAID Government Accountability Initiative
- Invitation to Local Self-Governments
- USAID Calls on Local Governments to Apply for Support in Fighting Corruption
- USAID Opens Call for Local Governments to Apply for Support in Fighting Corruption
- USAID Invites Local Governments to Apply for Assistance to Fight Corruption
- US Development Agency Calls on Local Governments to Apply for Support within the Government Accountability Initiative
- USAID Calls on Local Governments to Apply for Support in Fighting Corruption
- Open Call for Local Governments to Apply for Assistance to Fight Corruption
- USAID Opens Call for Local Governments to Apply for Support in Fighting Corruption
- Opens Call for Local Governments to Apply for USAID’s Support to Build Accountability and Fight Corruption
- Open Call for Local Governments to Join the Fight Against Corruption
- Applications for Government Accountability Initiative’s Support until October 30
- Call for Local Self-Governments to Join the Fight Against Corruption
II. Independent Oversight Institutions

Activities to support the independent oversight institutions were implemented as planned, using alternative strategies where needed due to COVID-19 restrictions. Focus was on further strengthening SAI’s performance audit skills, recommendation follow-up and the continued mentoring of SAI’s 13 performance audit teams by GAI. Support to the Agency for Prevention of Corruption (previously known as the Anti-Corruption Agency) was focused on enhancing cooperation with Misdemeanor Courts through harmonization of application of plea agreements. Also, GAI assisted the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection to mark Right to Know Day with an online forum focusing on access to information of public importance during the pandemic, and has begun assistance to the CPI to implement the recently adopted GAI-assisted communication strategy, focusing on raising awareness, youth engagement, and crisis communication.

2.1 Assistance to State Audit Institution

GAI sustained momentum in assistance delivery to the State Audit Institution, implementing support activities as planned, remotely, through online consultations with audit teams, meetings with SAI leadership and trainings. SAI implemented its newly adopted performance audit policies and procedures for ongoing performance audits. Financial and compliance auditors were trained.
on basic performance auditing with the aim to enhance SAI’s internal stakeholder contributions
to the annual selection of audit topics, performance audit design and exercise of quality controls
during the course of message development for draft audit reports.

GAI continued to mentor SAI’s thirteen performance audit teams on use of evaluation
methodologies, data, and evidence collection appropriate to audit objectives, through the
Development of Evidence for Message Development (Activity 2.1.C). GAI experts Mr. Stephen
Caldwell and Ms. Laurie Ekstrand held online mentoring sessions to improve sufficiency and
appropriateness of evidence and application of appropriate audit methodologies for the
development of key findings, conclusions, and recommendations in performance audit reports
throughout August and September.

SAI shared updated design matrices prepared by the ongoing performance audit teams.
Individual consultations with SAI sector heads and eight performance audit teams on
performance audit design, methodology, and sufficiency of evidence were held. Most
meetings were attended by the Auditor General and by the Head of Sector for Audit
Methodology and Development. In the first round of meetings and consultations, it became
evident that SAI performance audit teams had made significant progress in data collection,
presenting evidence gathered to date, and possible key findings of their audits. Despite
restrictions on travel and gatherings due to the pandemic, SAI audit teams maintained their pre-
planned audit timeframes to successfully convene message agreement meetings to meet reporting
deadlines.
GAI expanded SAI’s performance audit skills by holding Basic Performance Audit Training (Activity 2.1.E) for forty SAI financial and compliance auditors on August 24 through 28, online via Zoom. The training was designed to enable SAI auditors to gain basic understanding of the objectives and methods of performance auditing and to prepare them to better engage in performance audit planning and implementation. Led by GAI subcontractors Ms. Laurie Ekstrand and Mr. Stephen Caldwell, the training covered the main areas of performance auditing: scoping and design, sampling, evidence, collection methodologies, data analysis, elements of a finding, root cause analysis and development of audit report recommendations. Through individual and group exercises, scenario-based learning and discussion, the SAI auditors were introduced to the performance audit concept, standards and procedures to enable them to effectively contribute their expertise to the annual selection of audit topics, performance audit design and message development for reporting.

During October, GAI subcontractors Mr. Stephen Caldwell and Ms. Laurie Ekstrand facilitated internal stakeholder meetings designed to reach agreement on the messages for the ongoing performance audits (Activity 2.1.C). SAI delivered summaries of draft performance audit reports for review to help ensure that they are drafted with accurate and convincing findings, conclusions, and recommendations in accordance with evidence gathered. GAI’s COP participated in the meetings, providing comments on audit results. Consistent with GAI guidance, internal SAI stakeholders including the SAI Auditor General, sector heads, Sector for Audit Methodology and Development, and performance audit team leaders with relevant subject area expertise participated in all meetings.

GAI continued to review and discuss with SAI’s leadership the Institution’s current policy and practices for indexing and referencing draft reports (Activity 2.1.D). This fact checking procedure is currently missing in SAI’s quality assurance framework for audits. GAI subcontractor Mr. Stephen Caldwell developed a referencing example to guide performance audit teams and the
Sector for Audit Methodology and Development through the referencing process. The document was presented in timely fashion for the current performance audit draft reports to be reviewed by auditors independent of the audit team to assure quality controls, prior to issuance of the audit reports.

In the reporting period GAI initiated multiple discussions with SAI leadership on GAO practices to report on high risk areas, and obtained the SAI President’s concurrence to pursue development of a policy and procedures that will enable SAI to routinely produce a list of government functions and programs across government that present the highest risk of corruption. The list will also enable SAI, cognizant auditees, civil society organizations, and the public to track the progress of government in addressing the underlying deficiencies and SAI recommendations (Activity 2.1.G). GAI prepared and delivered to SAI sector heads a briefing paper on high-risk reporting to begin the development of a strategy to capture SAI’s past audit findings that should be included in development of the high-risk list. The paper discusses the objectives of reporting on high-risk and systemic deficiencies in government based on SAI’s ten years of experience auditing public funds in Serbia and recent performance audit findings and possible criteria for selection of high-risk areas.

**Strengthening SAI Auditors’ Fraud Risk Assessment Skills** – GAI’s subcontractor Mr. Stephen Lord prepared content for fraud risk assessment training (Activity 2.1.F) to be delivered to SAI leadership, Sector for Audit Methodology and Development, and PA team leaders in November 2020. Training materials, including number of case studies to guide auditors through fraud risk assessment framework, internal controls, and data analytics, have been developed. The goal of the training is to advance SAI’s capacities to assess risk of fraud within audited entities, and to improve detection and prevention of fraud in government spending.

2.2 Assistance to the Anti-Corruption Agency

In September 2020, the new Law on the Prevention of Corruption came into force, changing the name of the Serbian Anti-Corruption Agency to the Agency for Prevention of Corruption. The Agency’s mandate has remained the same, with its leadership stating on several occasions that it will turn its focus to corruption prevention.
ACA IT Capacity for Continuity of Operations – Considering the constraints associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, and having successfully implemented mitigation measures since the outbreak of the pandemic with other counterparts, GAI worked with the Agency to change the initially planned in-person training to online training, via Zoom.

In August, GAI sought to determine whether the Agency’s technical capacities were adequate for participation in online training. GAI learned that US Department of State’s International Narcotics & Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) had previously provided limited commodities to ACA, including some IT equipment. GAI met with Mr. Ivan Vasiljević, Assistant Director for ACA’s Department for General Affairs to assess the use of that donation as well as ACA’s IT capacities. Mr. Vasiljević informed GAI that the Agency’s computers, other than those donated by INL, were ten years old, unreliable, and lacked adequate audio/video capacities to support online work. The Agency had planned to completely renew its IT system, but its budget for 2020 was decreased by 20%, thus jeopardizing those plans. The twenty CPUs donated by INL in late 2019 or early 2020 are currently not being used by ACA, as they do not have monitors, operating systems, and audio & video capacities. ACA initiated a public procurement of twelve laptops for senior management’s use only and that acquisition is expected to be finalized by the end of this year.

As for software, the Agency uses an integrated information system – software with several modules that cover their work, including for oversight of financing political activities, for registries and records, for conflict of interest, etc. ACA plans to buy a license for specialized software called IBM i2 Analytics to be used by the Department for Oversight of Financing of Political Activities. The Agency does not use Microsoft products, even though the Government of Serbia has a special agreement with Microsoft. The Agency operates on LINUX and uses LibreOffice, which are not compatible with MS Office, and thus constrain the Agency’s ability to effectively exchange information with external stakeholder institutions. Acknowledging the readily apparent challenges, the Agency plans to transfer to MS Office in the near future. GAI informed INL of the findings and will continue to communicate with INL on possible collaboration to support the Agency.

Based on information collected, GAI informed the Agency that GAI will continue to facilitate in-person trainings ensuring social distancing and provide individual tables, as allowable by
government-imposed restrictions, or GAI will lease laptops for the training when in-person sessions are not advisable or allowed.

**Performance Measurement Assistance** (Activity 2.2.A) – Having fully prepared the training materials, tip sheets, and group exercises for the training to build the Agency’s various analytical and research skills, Ms. Laurie Ekstrand, Research Evaluation Specialist, delivered a two-week training on evaluation research methodologies. The training included a module on performance measurement, covering performance monitoring, measurement and evaluation; and presented the basic logic model explaining the relationships between the inputs, the activities, the process, the output, outcomes, and the longer-term effects – the impact.

During the second week, the delivered training and technical assistance was tailored to the Agency’s different departments – the first three days were attended by staff of the Department for Research and Analytics, where the discussions focused, besides the research ideas and quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection, also around data analysis and performance measurement. The fourth day of training this week was delivered to the Department for Prevention and Strengthening Integrity, with the attention on performance monitoring and evaluation. Consistent with Chapter 23 requirements for monitoring and evaluation of Serbia’s anti-corruption efforts, the Department focused discussion on how to measure government anti-corruption efforts. The main challenge presented by participants is the lack of indicators established by Government to evaluate progress of its own initiatives to mitigate corruption.

**Risk-Based Oversight of Asset and Income Declaration Statements** (Activity 2.2.B) – GAI subcontractor Mr. Stuart Gilman and GAI held online meetings with Ms. Snežana Tosić, Manager for International Cooperation at the Business Registers Agency, to continue collection of information on external institutions’ interactions with the Agency on asset and income declaration control. Having concluded all meetings with external stakeholders, Mr. Gilman delivered a draft assessment report on ACA’s current procedures to analyze asset and income declarations. The report examined the current practices of ACA’s Departments for Registries and Records and for Oversight of Officials Assets when verifying asset and income declarations, and their interaction with internal and external stakeholders. The assessment also provided recommendations for the improvement of ACA’s effectiveness in asset and income declaration control. Through an online meeting on September 14, Mr. Gilman’s key findings of the draft
assessment report were presented to the Agency’s Director Mr. Sikimić and next steps were discussed.

Mr. Gilman continued to work on a decision tree that will enable the Agency to address deficiencies identified in the assessment and conduct more effective reviews of asset and income declarations. The decision tree provides a step-by-step guide to examine declarations. On October 6, GAI received the new Declaration Form that the Agency recently adopted adjusted to the new Law on Prevention of Corruption. Mr. Gilman adjusted the draft analytical tool to include the revisions in the Declaration Form.

**Analytical Skills Building for ACA (Activity 2.2.C)** – As reported under Activity 2.2.A, Ms. Laurie Ekstrand, Research Evaluation Specialist, developed and delivered analytical skills and performance measurement training for the Agency. Since the Agency is composed largely of legal professionals with limited expertise in qualitative and quantitative evaluation or research, the training was designed to guide the Agency’s use of internal and external data to conduct cross-sectoral analyses, and design and execute research projects.

The training was delivered from September 21 to October 2 and was attended by approximately one-quarter of the Agency’s staff representing departments responsible for oversight. The first week of the training provided an overview of research design, data collection methods and analytics, and strategies for developing performance indicators to track progress in achieving ACA’s goals. The second week provided a series of tailored training and technical assistance to individual departments, including the Department for Research and Analytics, the Department for Asset Control, Department for Registries and Records, the Department for Control of Financing of Political Activities, and Department for Prevention and Strengthening the Integrity. The staff of Department for Research and Analytics participated in a three-day session during the second week focused on research ideas, quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection, research matrix and data analysis. The Department stated that they plan to focus initial research on two topics: 1) public officials’ understanding of the new Law on Prevention of Corruption, and 2) ACA administration of a corruption perception survey. The Department head also stated that the Design Matrix that Ms. Ekstrand shared will be adopted and used to plan their research. The fourth day of training was delivered to the Department for Prevention and Strengthening Integrity. Consistent with Chapter 23 requirements for monitoring and evaluation of Serbia’s
anti-corruption efforts, the Department focused discussion on how to measure government anti-corruption efforts when no indicators have been established to independently evaluate progress. The last day of the training was delivered on October 2 to the Department for Asset Control, Department for Registries and Records, and the Department for Control of Financing of Political Activities.

In response to questions raised during the two-week training, Ms. Ekstrand provided the Agency with additional reference materials, including a set of methodology guides on statistical sampling; developing and using questionnaires; designing evaluations; quantitative data analysis; and using structured interviewing techniques. Ms. Ekstrand also provided additional narrative and graphic information about stock and flow that can be used when deciding what to measure and what to report.

**Improved Conflict of Interest Prevention and Resolution (Activity 2.2. E)** – Upon the Agency’s request, the Conflict of Interest Manual that was developed with GAI support was modified to reflect the changes in the name of the institution made by the new Law on Prevention of Corruption that come into force on September 1 and to include its new logo.

**Enhancing Cooperation Between ACA and Misdemeanor Courts (Activity 2.2. F)** – On October 12, GAI facilitated a third roundtable between the Agency and the Misdemeanor Courts to discuss the Plea Agreement Guidelines prepared by the Agency. The roundtable gathered eleven Misdemeanor Court judges from Belgrade, Niš, Kragujevac, and Kraljevo, and twelve Agency representatives who discussed the provisions of the Guidelines, existing practice, and the challenges for the institution to become effective. The participants agreed that the incongruence of the Law on Prevention of Corruption and the Misdemeanor Law provided an incentive and preference for defendants to settle with the Misdemeanor Courts, which historically has offered milder penalties than the Agency. The Misdemeanor Law allows for milder penalties than those that ACA would impose. It is the opinion of GAI that, unfortunately, the agreement reached between the two bodies will reflect that the Agency will allow penalties “below the legal minimum” stated in the laws that govern the Agency. The reasoning was that it will eliminate the disincentive for defendants to opt for a Misdemeanor Court ruling.

Judge Ristanović, President of Belgrade Misdemeanor Court, reiterated the need for training of Misdemeanor Court judges to raise their awareness of the nature of these offenses, as well as
the need for specialization of Misdemeanor Court judges, in order to change the common practice of pronouncing warnings or issuing sanctions below the Courts’ suggested minimum, which is admittedly their prerogative.

The Misdemeanor Court judges provided suggestions for more precise definitions of certain provisions, and harmonization of language with the commonly used legal terminology in the Guidelines. The Agency will finalize the Guidelines based on the suggested edits and adopt them. It was agreed that the Guidelines will be published on the Agency website to inform the public about this mechanism.

Improved Interactions with PPOs (Activity 2.2.G) – On August 5, GAI held a planning session with Mr. Jovan Bozović, Assistant Director, Agency Department for Legal Affairs and Mr. Goran Roganović, Head of Unit for Legal Affairs aiming to explore the possibilities to enhance cooperation between the Agency and the public prosecutors’ offices. This activity is also envisaged in the Agency’s 2020 Operational Plan that GAI facilitated.

Mr. Bozović serves as the Liaison Officer to the PPO task forces, and as such serves as the focal point to refer information on suspicious criminal acts directly to the specialized public prosecutors. Mr. Bozović reiterated the need to optimize the Agency’s contribution to corruption investigations led by PPOs. He referred to a discussion he had with the Deputy RPPO earlier this year on the need to create a joint agreement on the manner of cooperation and data exchange that would regulate, among others, the Agency’s reporting to appropriate PPO channels, the Agency’s access to data, and the its handling of proactive proceedings as envisioned by the Law on Prevention of Corruption.

Mr. Bozović requested GAI support to facilitate a roundtable with the PPO to discuss and draft the content of such an agreement. He also noted the need for the agreement to reflect on criteria to distinguish when the Agency should proceed with administrative investigations versus when the Agency should forward the cases to PPOs for criminal proceedings. The agreement should ensure that when criteria are applied, the criminal investigation is not jeopardized. The roundtable will focus on mapping the processes and areas for improvement, particularly (1) developing the procedure for cooperation with the Prosecutor’s Office for Organized Crime and specialized anti-corruption units of the Higher Public Prosecutor’s Offices on cases and (2) the scope and limits of the Agency’s acting upon complaints. GAI subsequently developed a concept paper to
share with the RPPO and proposed dialogues between the Agency and representatives of the four specialized PPOs, presenting the above-mentioned areas.

New Request from ACA and the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government—Ethics and Integrity Officers – Early in Q3, the Agency and the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government (MPALSG) requested GAI support for the introduction of Ethics and Integrity Officers to Serbian public administration.

To advance key institutions’ expressed desire to build capacity of Ethics and Integrity Officers in the Republic of Serbia, GAI met with Ms. Marijana Obradović, Agency Assistant Director for the Department for Prevention and Integrity, and representatives from the Ministry for Public Administration and Local-Self Government Ivana Milinković, Head of Department for Labor System; Dragana Brajović, Senior Advisor; and Marija Pilipović, Head of Unit for Managing Public Administration Reform.

GAI considered the request and, following concurrence by USAID, the following support activities were presented to the Agency.

- Selection of counterpart public bodies (the Agency, CPI, Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, select Public Prosecutor’s offices, and selected LSGs) to participate in this pilot initiative to include GAI counterparts to develop position descriptions, selection criteria, selection and training of newly appointed Ethics and Integrity Officers.

- Analysis of the current position descriptions and related practices and procedures within the institutions that monitor the application of the Code of Conduct for Civil Servants, implementation of integrity plans, management of employees’ conflict of interest and compliance with the rules of internal alert.

- Development of tailor-made job descriptions and required qualifications for the Ethics and Integrity Officer position(s) for each institution, support for the selected institutions to amend their systematization acts, and advice to manage the selection process to fill the positions.

- Support to the Agency and MPALSG to develop a training program and if time allows conduct the training for newly employed Ethics and Integrity Officers.

This request from the Agency and the Ministry was submitted during the final phase of development of the Strategy for the Development of Public Administration 2021-2030, which
includes the measure titled *Introduction of Ethics and Integrity Officers in the Public Administration of the Republic of Serbia*. The draft Strategy has been submitted to the European Commission and the Support for Improvement in Governance and Management for review and the adoption by the Government is expected by the end of this year.

Late in Q3, the Ministry withdrew its request for assistance in this area. GAI will pursue alternative strategies to advance this critical component of ethical governance with the Agency.

2.3 Support to the Commissioner for Free Access to Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection (CPI)

During this reporting period, GAI supported CPI's desire to strengthen its authorities under the most recent Draft Law on Access to Information of Public Importance, with recommendations for its improvement. GAI also assisted CPI to implement numerous activities identified in the recently adopted Communications Plan to raise awareness of the government's duties and citizens' rights to access information of public importance, particularly during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, as CPI received numerous complaints of government denying or delaying request for information. An Informational Booklet on the integral relationships of personal data protection and free access to information was completed and readied for public distribution. To facilitate the work of the Commissioner and his team, GAI provided the CPI with a monthly subscription to an online video-conferencing platform.

**Support to the CPI on Legal Framework for Access to Information (Activity 2.3.A)** – Following the delivery of the comparative analysis of legal frameworks for oversight of free access to information of public importance, GAI subcontractor Ms. Anamarija Musa prepared an assessment of the current and the 2019 Draft Law on Access to Information of Public Importance as published by the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government. The assessment included recommendations to improve the current law and the draft law provisions related to the broadened list of bodies exempted from the CPI’s oversight, the proposed justifications for denial of requests for information based on commercial interests, and the lack of transparent procedures for appointment of the Commissioner. Ms. Musa underlined that there is an opportunity to introduce additional substantive changes to improve the implementation of the

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law, such as giving the CPI the powers to directly sanction public bodies, and to conduct inspections of access to information procedures as it currently can conduct for data protection.

Public Dialogue on Use of Public Information (Activity 2.3.B) – CPI adopted the GAI-supported Communication Plan to raise awareness on freedom of information of public importance. Ms. Gordana Mohorović, CPI Assistant Secretary General, confirmed CPI’s desire for GAI support to implement activities including numerous interviews in selected daily newspapers, print magazines and web portals. The objective is to enable the Commissioner to raise awareness of the public’s rights to access information of public importance, the benefits for society to obtain such information and how that access impacts the quality of citizens’ everyday lives. GAI and the CPI began scheduling guest TV and radio appearances on selected TV shows with national broadcasters; and recorded or live YouTube discussions on selected topics with the aim to bring the Commissioner’s messaging closer to youth. GAI also agreed to facilitate a roundtable on freedom of information with representatives of the public authorities of Serbia, CSOs, and journalists.

On September 24, during Annual Right to Know Week, GAI partnered with the CPI to organize an online Forum entitled Access to Information in Times of COVID-19 Pandemic. GAI engaged government representatives from the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government and the Ministry of Culture and Information,
civil society organizations and media representatives in a dialogue on practices and challenges experienced in Serbia imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Forum also explored experiences of countries in the region, and the roles CSOs and journalists play to enable and promote citizen access to information in times of crisis. The participants had the opportunity to discuss how access to and the free flow of information during the COVID-19 pandemic could be promoted and protected. The opening remarks were given by GAI COP and Mr. Marinović, the Commissioner. Key contributions were made during the Forum by Mr. Predrag Kon, epidemiologist and member of Serbia’s COVID-19 Crisis Team; Ms. Anamarija Musa, international expert on freedom of information and former Croatian Commissioner for Information of Public Interest; and Ms. Natalija Jovanović, Journalist, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN).

Forum participants agreed that reliable and timely information on pandemic-related topics was not always available to the public, including information on preventive measures and public spending. It was also concluded that there is no functional inspection mechanism to oversee the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance and that the competent authority, the Administrative Inspectorate, often fails to exercise its powers. Participants suggested improvements that would foster implementation of this right, such as proactive information sharing by public in times of endangered public health. The need for shorter deadlines for the provision of information of public importance was highlighted, including shorter deadlines for the Commissioner and the Administrative Court to act when public bodies fail to provide information during a public safety crisis. Importantly, it was concluded, information should be made available by local self-governments, particularly tailored for vulnerable groups.

GAI engaged the Executive Group to organize interviews and TV appearances for the CPI. On September 25, on International Right to Know Day, GAI and the Executive Group organized a live TV appearance of the Commissioner on N1 TV, announcing Right to Know Week. The
interview of the Commissioner was also published in the weekly magazine *Nedeljnik* on October 14, and the following interview was published on web portal *Mondo*, both covering the topic of importance of access to accurate and reliable information during COVID-19 pandemic.

**Integrated Manual on Personal Data Protection and Free Access to Information of Public Importance** (Activity 2.3.C) – GAI Subcontractors Ms. Anamarija Musa and Mr. Tihomir Katulić delivered the final draft of the Informational Booklet on Personal Data Protection and Access to Information of Public Importance, shared with CPI on October 21 for its review and acceptance. The Booklet describes the relationship between public access to documents and privacy and data protection and presents the complementary nature of personal data protection and free access to information. The Booklet is intended to serve as a guide for public bodies on how they should appropriately respond to a request for access to a document which contains personal data, as well as a tool for CSOs to better understand the two relevant laws. Ms. Musa and Mr. Katulić also delivered a shorter version of the Booklet for ease of use by wider audiences. The Booklet(s) have been sent for design and preparation for publishing.

**Youth Engagement: Personal Data Protection and Free Access to Information of Public Importance** – As reported under Activity 2.2.B, GAI has agreed with CPI to support awareness raising campaign and youth engagement activities. CPI’s YouTube channel was recognized as a platform for accessing and engaging youth, as young people extensively use this channel of communication.

On October 21, 2020, GAI facilitated training for CPI, delivered by Mr. Matija Medenica, Executive Group Creative Digital Strategist, on managing CPI’s YouTube channel and organizing YouTube live discussions. The training was attended by Ms. Gordana Mhorović, CPI Assistant Secretary General; Ms. Maja Veličković, Head of the Department for Cooperation and Training; Mr. Marko Milošević, Head of the Department for Cooperation and Support; and Ms. Marija Gladović, Senior Advisor. Participants were instructed on how to develop a YouTube live discussion strategy and content, and how to manage the online community and post relevant materials on the channel. GAI, the Executive Group and the CPI discussed content of the planned first YouTube live discussion and future support in this field. As previously agreed, the Executive
Group is preparing an outline of the webinar to assist CPI in conducting a live YouTube discussion, and will coach the CPI staff.

A guest appearance of the Commissioner in Radio S’s popular morning radio show “Budjenje sa Goricom i Draganom” was also organized. This show has high ratings as it is followed by a very wide audience, especially young people.

III. Adjudication of Corruption Cases

Support to the anti-corruption court units and public prosecutors’ offices in improved adjudication and prosecution of corruption cases has continued. The last training session on financial investigation for deputy prosecutors and law enforcement officers from specialized anti-corruption units was organized and more than a hundred misdemeanor court judges were trained on the new Law on Public Procurement. GAI submitted to USAID for concurrence its proposed selection of an IT company for development, design, and pilot testing of an Electronic Register of Corruption Cases.

3.1 Support to the Specialized Anti-Corruption Units

Support to the anti-corruption units intensified in this quarter, with GAI-developed trainings on misfeasance in public procurement and on the delineation of misdemeanor and criminal offenses.
GAI’s *Practicum for Investigation and Adjudication of Corruption Cases* formed the basis for these trainings. Trainings on whistleblower protection were also initiated. GAI also finalized the solicitation for the design and testing of an ERCC.

**Anti-Corruption Practicum Training** – In Quarter 2, GAI began implementation of a series of follow-up trainings based on the *Practicum for Investigation and Adjudication of Corruption Cases* (Anti-Corruption Practicum) for deputy prosecutors and law enforcement from specialized units. During 10-11 September in Belgrade, GAI, in cooperation with US Department of State’s International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau and the Judicial Academy, delivered the fourth and last two-day, advanced training on financial investigations. Nineteen representatives of the Higher Public Prosecutor’s Office in Belgrade, Ministry of Interior (Financial investigation Unit, Unit for Suppression of Corruption), Customs Administration, Tax Administration/Tax Police, and the Anti-Money Laundering Directorate participated in the workshop.

The event covered four thematic areas: improved interagency cooperation; access to open and closed databases; financial investigations and use of financial forensics with money flow analysis; and police operative work and mutual legal assistance.

Participants were able to work on a comprehensive case study (modelled after an actual closed case scenario from the specialized unit of Belgrade Higher PPO) and a set of practical exercises including drafting an investigative and implementation plan; income and expenditure table analysis; analysis of a report prepared by a financial forensic expert; and application of special investigative measures during the proactive investigation.

According to the evaluation results, participants deemed the main takeaways from the workshop to be the use of financial forensics in proactive investigations, utilization of open and closed databases of other state institutions as a reliable source of information, and developing strategies for
improved inter-agency cooperation and communication. Participants also evaluated the session of the workshop related to mutual legal assistance as very beneficial for their work.

**Status and Role of Financial Forensic Experts** – The 2018 Law on Organized Crime and Corruption introduced the possibility for prosecutors to rely on expertise provided by financial forensic experts during investigations. Building on the Anti-Corruption Practicum and expert roundtables held in 2019, GAI and Professor Rob McCusker, International Crime Criminal Justice Consultant, prepared a comparative analysis of the use of financial forensics in various legal systems, including those comparable to Serbia, taking into account the specific and relatively unique position of financial forensic experts in Serbia.

The study is comprised of three key sections: 1. Analysis of the Serbian legal system in terms of the status and role of the forensic accountant within criminal proceedings; 2. Analysis of comparable legal systems on the status and role of the forensic accountant within criminal proceedings; 3. Provision of recommendations on the potential refinement of the Serbian normative framework.

The comparative analysis is focused particularly on countries with a normative framework similar to Serbia’s that engage and use financial forensics, on a full or part-time basis, by the relevant state institutions (law enforcement, public prosecution). The focus was also on the legal status of a forensic accountant in adversarial criminal proceedings. The analysis reflects on the Serbian legislation and practice in part related to the position of experts (expert witness, professional consultant, forensic accountant), with recommendations towards possible refinement of the normative framework.

**Misfeasance in Public Procurement Training** – The 2019 Law on Public Procurement introduced new sets of instruments and procedural tools for conducting public procurement procedures, such as a new public procurement portal, electronic submission of bids, e-appeal, e-catalogue, and increased value thresholds, as well as new sets of competencies of state institutions in this
area. In response to the new sets of competences for the misdemeanor courts introduced by this Law, GAI subcontracted Mr. Filip Vladisavljević and Mr. Saša Varinac, experienced public procurement experts, to develop a training syllabus and materials and to provide trainings to misdemeanor judges.

The first training session of this kind was organized in Q2. During Q3, in cooperation with Judicial Academy and Appellate Misdemeanor Court, GAI continued with organization of the remaining trainings. The workshops were held in Belgrade (June 21-22, September 21-22), Novi Sad (September 24-25), Kragujevac (September 28-29) and Niš (October 1-2) for a group of 101 misdemeanor judges from appellate and first instance courts. Judges Nevenka Pančić and Radovan Bjelobaba from the Appellate Misdemeanor Court, delivered the opening remarks. Each training session covered the following thematic areas: overview of the most important amendments of the Law, legal issues relevant for conducting misdemeanor proceedings related to public procurement, and analysis of each public procurement misdemeanor offense.

The trainings addressed the immediate need for knowledge sharing among misdemeanor judges on the new sets of competences. The trainings will contribute not only to strengthening the principle of legality in public procurement procedures, but also to detecting and reducing common corruptive practices in public procurement. This support was designed to assist the misdemeanor courts to efficiently use the penalty provisions foreseen by the Public Procurement Law, whose enforcement thus far has not been consistent and systematic. In addition, knowledge gained will contribute to the new reporting requirements under the amended Action Plan for Chapter 23 that require tracking progress in the implementation of the new Law on Public Procurement. Among other issues, the tracking of numbers of initiated and
adjudicated cases for misdemeanor offenses is foreseen in order to establish a track record of reduction of irregularities and corruption in public procurement.

**Training on Delineation of Misdemeanor and Criminal Offenses** – During the training on misfeasance in public procurement, a session was dedicated to analyzing the delineation between the criminal offense – misfeasance in public procurement, identified in the Serbian Criminal Code – and the misdemeanor offenses identified the Public Procurement Law. The session also included an overview of the correlation and distinction between the criminal offense and misdemeanor offense. Building on the training on misfeasance in public procurement, this issue is particularly relevant in legal practice for misdemeanor judges, to prevent double jeopardy in public procurement related to both criminal and misdemeanor cases.

**Annual Judges’ Conference** – On a meeting held on September 2, Chief Judge Milojević formally informed GAI that this year’s Annual Judges’ Conference is cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. GAI will continue to work closely with SCC to allocate planned resources for the Annual Judges’ Conference to other types of technical assistance.

**Youth Engagement – Anti-Corruption Legal Clinic** – The Anti-Corruption Textbook was finalized by Mr. Jovan Nicić and Ms. Ana Arsenijević Momčilović, GAI subcontractors who served as the external associates of the Legal Clinic. The Textbook features ten articles prepared by lecturers who were engaged in the theoretical module of the Legal Clinic. The Textbook is intended for future generations of students of the Legal Clinic but also for professionals to acquire additional knowledge on the nature of corruption, international standards, and practice in this field, as well as on existing mechanisms for prevention and repression of corruption in Serbia. The first few articles in the Textbook provide insight into basic approaches to the fight against corruption globally and nationally, as well as the impact of corruption on human rights. The following articles deal with specific anti-corruption mechanisms, such as the whistleblowing and protection of whistleblowers, corruption risk assessment, and conflicts of interest of public officials. The reader is provided insights into the implementation of anti-corruption mechanisms in Serbia, through texts written by the practitioners. An overview of repressive corruption mechanisms was provided by representatives of the Special Departments for the Suppression of Corruption of the Higher Public Prosecutor’s Office in Belgrade and the Higher Court in Belgrade. Students who successfully completed the Legal Clinic on Anti-Corruption held from February to July 2020 were
awarded certificates of completion by Professor Ivana Krsitic, Coordinator of the Anti-Corruption Legal Clinic.

3.2 Electronic Register of Corruption Cases

GAI’s solicitation for the design and testing of the ERCC ended on August 3, 2020. Seven proposals were received. With the assistance of GAI subcontractor Mr. Goce Armenski, GAI evaluated the proposals in terms of technical approach/methodology, professional capacity, and previous relevant experience of the offerors. Based on the evaluation, GAI selected a company for design, development, and testing of an ERCC, and forwarded the proposed selection to USAID for technical concurrence.

On October 14, GAI met with Ms. Silvija Panović, Program Officer of the EU IPA 2015 (Component 2). GAI and Ms. Panović discussed progress in the implementation of the EU-supported roll out of SAPO case management system in all prosecutors’ offices in Serbia. It was agreed to continue to closely coordinate activities and exchange all relevant information between the projects to ensure complementarity of SAPO and ERCC.

Support to Standardized Use of Digital Video Conferencing Tools for Professional Training of Judges – On September 2, GAI met with Chief Judge Dragomir Milojević, President of the Supreme Court of Cassation, and Ms. Mirjana Puzović, Chief of Staff, as follow-up to an earlier request for the Chief Judge’s support to standardize and elevate greater use of digital video-conferencing tools for judges and court staff, in line with the provisions of the Law on Judges and the Law on Judicial Academy.

Judge Milojević welcomed GAI’s initiative and recommended that it should be dealt with under the auspices of the newly formed seven-member “COVID-19 Working Group” composed of representatives of the Supreme Court, High Judicial Council, Ministry of Justice and Judicial Academy, and shared with GAI the formal SCC decision on August 8, 2020 to establish the Working Group. As specified in the decision, the mandate of the WG is to “follow the operation of all courts in Serbia and implement the Plan for remedying the consequences of declared state of emergency and decisions on the application of emergency measures for the protection of citizens due to the pandemic of COVID-19 virus”. Judge Milojević emphasized that it is not necessary to adopt new legislation supporting the initiative, but rather work to expand or further
specify the scope of work of the Working Group. The Plan is still under review and will be provided to GAI upon completion. Judge Milojević supported GAI’s proposal to consider working on the initiative in synergy with the USAID/ROL project.

As a follow up to this meeting, GAI met with Ms. Sonja Milojević Pavlović, Senior Specialist for Judicial Reform Strategic Activities at USAID ROL Project. GAI provided Ms. Pavlović with a list of activities which GAI plans to conduct online in the near future including training on the ERCC and the standardized use of AVP application, and bi-annual meetings of judges from the specialized anti-corruption court units. Ms. Pavlovic forwarded the list for consideration to the COVID-19 Working Group.

**Other Technical Assistance**

*2020 Survey of Citizens’ Perceptions of Anti-Corruption Efforts in Serbia* – Since 2018, CeSID d.o.o. has been administering in November an annual, nation-wide Citizens’ Perception Survey of Anti-Corruption Efforts. The survey is to a random representative sample of approximately 1,200 adult citizens of Serbia, face-to-face via a 116-question questionnaire. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, GAI maintained communication with CeSID, through the tightening and relaxing of the countermeasures introduced by the Serbian Government in response to the pandemic, to ensure that the 2020 Survey would be conducted as envisaged. CeSID have agreed to conduct the Survey in November, with the existing methodology, to maintain comparability of content with previous surveys. CeSID is now conducting three surveys in the field, and feedback from surveyors is that most people are willing to take part. The timeframe for implementing the survey has been extended slightly, as it takes approximately 30% more time to meet the target number of responders. GAI and CeSID met on October 28 to consider an alternative methodology for online surveying of respondents, if the number of newly infected rises and restriction to movement is introduced in the coming weeks.
**PMP UPDATE**

- **Number of Persons Trained** – Indicator 1.1.3 Number of Public-Sector Employees and Representatives of Civil Society Organizations Trained on Good Governance Principles and Accountability. The target value for trainings in FY 2020 was significantly exceeded. The value was originally set at 775 trainees, however GAI suggested to USAID in subsequent communication that an increase to 1200 was possible. Both the approved and suggested new target have been surpassed, as GAI has trained 1692 persons in more than 80 separate sessions. The set value has been exceeded for two reasons. First, in FY 2020, with the COVID-19 pandemic countermeasures restricting movement and gatherings, many trainings were held online in a seven-month period, increasing the actual number of participants. Second, the LSGs, while awaiting the postponed elections and then the subsequently delayed formation of local governments, were not willing to move forward with new technical assistance activities but were eager to participate in trainings.

The disaggregated values, per trainee institution, are available in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution of trainee</th>
<th>Number of trainees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Audit Institution</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Corruption Agency</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissioner for Information of Public Importance</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosecutors</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Government Bodies</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOs</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>667</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additionally, as GAI partnered with the INL to deliver training on Financial Forensics, which was based on the *Practicum for Investigation and Adjudication of Corruption Cases* for deputy prosecutors and law enforcement from specialized units, an additional 55 (45 male and 10 female) trainees from law enforcement were trained, but were not originally captured by GAI’s targeted value of 1200 participants.

- **Mechanisms Adopted to Increase Public Engagement in Selected Local Self-Governments** – To meet Indicator 1.1.1.1 Number of policies or mechanisms adopted in line with procedures to increase public engagement in selected local self-governments, GAI worked with all thirteen selected LSGs to improve their openness to developing policies and creating mechanisms to increase public engagement. The target value for FY 2020 of eleven (11) was exceeded, as LSGs reported that they adopted more policies or mechanisms than originally considered possible.

The table below provides an overview of the actual number of GAI-supported mechanisms adopted by the LSGs in FY 2020, disaggregated by LSG and type of policy or mechanism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Government</th>
<th>Number Adopted</th>
<th>Type of Policies/Mechanisms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Sjenica          | 2              | • Procedure for selection of LAP monitoring body members  
                  |                 | • Rulebook on internal whistleblowing procedures |
| Vrnjačka Banja   | 4              | • Procedure for selection of LAP monitoring body  
                  |                 | • Operational Rulebook for LAP monitoring body  
                  |                 | • Annual Work Plan for LAP monitoring body  
<pre><code>              |                 | • Ethical Codex for LAP monitoring body |
</code></pre>
<p>| Sombor           | 1              | • Procedures for conducting Engaging Youth in Public Debate on Budget |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Mechanisms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Raška    | 5     | - Procedure for selection of LAP monitoring body  
|          |       | - Operational Rulebook for LAP monitoring body  
|          |       | - Annual Work Plan for LAP monitoring body  
|          |       | - Ethical Codex for LAP monitoring body  
|          |       | - Procedures for conducting public debates  
| Vranje   | 4     | - Procedure for selection of LAP monitoring body  
|          |       | - Operational Rulebook for LAP monitoring body  
|          |       | - Annual Work Plan for LAP monitoring body  
|          |       | - Ethical Codex for LAP monitoring body  
| Novi Pazar | 3   | - Operational Rulebook for LAP monitoring body  
|          |       | - Annual Work Plan for LAP monitoring body  
|          |       | - Internal Act on conducting public procurement  
| Total    | 19    | - Procedure for selection of LAP monitoring body – 4  
|          |       | - Operational Rulebook for LAP monitoring body – 4  
|          |       | - Annual Work Plan for LAP monitoring body – 4  
|          |       | - Ethical Codex for LAP monitoring body – 3  
|          |       | - Public debate – 2  
|          |       | - Internal Whistleblowing Act – 1  
|          |       | - Public Procurement Act – 1  

- **Number of Mechanisms Adopted by SAI** – The target value for FY 2020 of seven (7) mechanisms adopted for indicator 1.2.2.3 Number of mechanisms adopted by SAI to improve its capability to oversee government performance was exceeded. SAI confirmed it adopted nine (9) mechanisms developed with GAI support, namely: (1) Draft
Communication Strategy; (2) Enhanced mechanisms for messaging SAI Performance Audit reports to broader audiences; (3) Updated Performance Audit Manual; (4) Consistent application of evaluation methodologies throughout the course of Performance audits; (5) Adoption of Message Agreement as quality assurance mechanism for Performance audits; (6) Draft Recommendation Follow Up policy and procedure; (7) Application of standards to ensure more structured and measurable recommendations; (8) Development of structure for report writing in Background section; and (9) Improved mechanisms for SAI teleworking (introduced during COVID-19 pandemic).

- **Number of Mechanisms Adopted by ACA** – The target value for FY 2020 of five (5) mechanisms for indicator 1.2.2.4 Number of mechanisms adopted by ACA to improve its capability to conduct oversight was met. ACA confirmed the adoption of the following mechanisms developed through GAI support: (1) Operational Plan 2020; (2) Training Plan for Strengthening Analytical and Research Skills within the Agency; (3) Plea Agreement Guidebook Guidelines; (4) Risk-based Methodology for Prioritizing Asset Declaration Statements; and (5) Matrix for Research Design and Data Analysis.

- **USG-Supported Anti-Corruption Campaigns** – The target value of seven (7) USG-supported anti-corruption campaigns for indicator 1.2.2.5 Number of USG-supported anti-corruption campaigns for FY 2020 was met. GAI’s campaigns are aimed to raise awareness on the importance of accountability of government on all levels, which are delivered through, but not limited to communication to, broad audiences on anti-corruption efforts of government and the importance of good governance, and sharing information on best practices on corruption prevention and adjudication.

The implemented campaigns included:

1. **Public Participation in Budget Planning in Sombor** – An intensive awareness raising campaign was designed and implemented around the GAI-supported local budget planning engagement initiative, with individual messages and activities tailored to various target groups. Radio jingles were created and played on local radio stations, as well as posters and billboards in different ethnic languages, inviting the public to take part in the decision-making process. Local media shared reports on the events that were planned in local communities. With a set of outreach activities to bring the discussions to the local
communities, proposals were received from citizens in all 22 local communities in Sombor.

2. **Youth Engagement in Budget Planning in Sombor** – In a separate but complimentary awareness rising campaign, GAI targeted local high school students to participate in the budget planning process in Sombor. Posters, ballots, and promotional t-shirts were designed jointly with the students. The campaign was created with student parliament representatives who created the campaign slogan and decided on the poster and ballot designs. The campaign resulted in more than 2,700 students from 5 high schools representing more than 80% of Sombor’s high school bodies, contributing to budget planning. Particular interest on student engagement in the budgeting process was raised in the local media.

3. **Citizen Engagement in Dimitrovgrad** – GAI assisted Dimitrovgrad to raise interest among and involve identified target groups in the development of 2020 LED Program, as well as to institutionalize the public debate process, ensuring that all suggestions are reviewed and considered, and adequate feedback on the proposals is provided to all participants. Local media shared reports on the events that were planned in local communities. The success of this process has resulted in Dimitrovgrad’s expressed commitment to continue implementing this mechanism as a tool to increase public participation in planning the local budgets.

4. **Raising Awareness on the Importance of the Fight Against Corruption** – On December 9, 2019, GAI presented the results of its 2019 nationwide survey on Citizens’ Perceptions of Anti-Corruption Efforts in Serbia, to a large audience representative of state and local government institutions, independent oversight institutions, members of Parliament, civil society organizations and media. More than 25 media outlets reported on the event, including the national frequency broadcasters such as RTS and N1, carrying the messages on the importance of accountability and transparency at all levels of government. The event illuminated impressions of distinct segments of the population. For example, the majority of young people do not think Serbia is moving in the right direction; a majority feel that whistleblower protection should be one of the top priorities.
of government in combating corruption; and a majority of people do not rate very high the performance of bodies with the duty to fight corruption.

5. **SAI’s Strategic Communications of 2019 Performance Audit Reports** – GAI provided the State Audit Institution (SAI) leadership training with a well-recognized television journalist on presentation to the media. GAI then organized three press conferences in December on performance audit reports issued in 2019, to present their audit report findings and recommendations. SAI President Mr. Pejović identified the lack of internal controls as a recurring finding in audits and the main problem in governance. More than 30 media outlets reported on the event, including the national frequency broadcasters such as RTS and N1; the daily newspapers Politika, Danas, Blic, and Novosti; and numerous radio stations. The press conferences resulted in significant interest from the media and press with coverage of the reports into the first calendar quarter of 2020.

6. **University of Belgrade Legal Clinic** – GAI partnered with the Belgrade University Faculty of Law to design a “Legal Clinic” to engage young legal minds and raise their awareness of the mandates and operation of key institutions in government who combat corruption. The Clinic provided opportunities for the Law Faculty students to better understand accountability as well as the causes and means to fight corruption. GAI launched the Clinic with an international best practice lecture from US Judge Jennifer Boal and followed the session with engagement of representatives of GAI counterparts and partners to participate in a series of lectures. The Clinic was designed as a single semester program from February through June for a selected group of twenty students from the final year of studies and consisted of two modules. The first, a Theoretical Module, consisted of experts, largely senior officials from GAI counterparts, such as the ACA Assistant Director, legal practitioners from the specialized anti-corruption units in Higher Courts and the Higher Public Prosecutor’s Office, and the esteemed Professor Uglješa Zvekić, former Serbian Ambassador to the United Nations who gave lectures on selected topics. The second module, the Practical Module, was designed to be a mentorship program for students who, in pairs, conducted research on topics proposed by the lecturers and prepared texts and presentations on the selected anti-corruption topics. A textbook of the lectures has been produced for reference in future Legal Clinic and by practitioners.
7. Promoting the Right to Know – On September 24, within the Annual Right to Know Week promotion, GAI partnered with the CPI to organize an online forum entitled Access to Information in Times of COVID-19 Pandemic. GAI engaged government representatives from the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government and the Ministry of Culture and Information, civil society organizations and media representatives in a dialogue on practices and challenges experienced in Serbia imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic on free access to information of public importance. The forum also explored experiences of countries in the region, and the roles CSOs and journalists play to enable and promote citizen access to information in times of crisis. The participants had the opportunity to discuss how access to and the free flow of information during the COVID-19 pandemic could be promoted and protected. Mr. Predrag Kon, epidemiologist and member of the COVID-19 Crisis Team, Ms. Anamarija Musa, international expert on freedom of information and former Croatian Commissioner for Information of Public Interest, and Ms. Natalija Jovanović, Journalist, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) were noted speakers engaged by GAI.

GAI Learning Session – For the larger part of the reporting quarter GAI continued to use all opportunities to foster inter-component learning, fostering dialogues among GAI components during weekly staff meetings as well as using all opportunities of dialogue with counterparts to better understand and adapt to the changing situation in which GAI is delivering assistance. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, with the numbers of newly infected rising on a daily basis, GAI remains fully immersed in learning from the activities implemented, reflecting on challenges and successes, and brainstorming on how to benefit from lessons learned while re-designing delivery of planned support.

On October 19, GAI held an online learning session to sum up lessons learned, and each component presented activities implemented, linking the outcomes to GAI’s Theory of Change. Components answered the following questions: 1) What was supposed to happen? 2) What was reality? 3) What went well? 4) What did not go well? and 5) What should be changed? The results achieved were examined, GAI impact evaluated, and

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GAI’s current Theory of Change is available in GAI’s approved Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (AMELP).
sustainability was assessed. The success of cross component activities was particularly examined and benchmarked against GAI’s Theory of Change Mid-Term Outcomes.

Discussions also reflected the accomplishments and challenges of activity implementation during Q3 with the fluctuations and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, success of mitigation measures, results of the “comeback” of in-person activities and their benefits, as well as on feedback from counterparts and implementation partners/subcontractors.

GAI examined the learning questions and confirmed the answers agreed at previous sessions:

1. **What factors are most conducive to adoption of durable good governance measures at the local self-government level?**
   - Introduction of new policies and new procedures that become part of the business culture of the local governments is crucial. GAI’s tailored support is still relevant, matching local needs, providing ownership, and ensuring sustainability of the policies and procedures.
   - Particularly important is the introduction of transparency of the work of the LSGs and availability of information for the public, CSOs, and media.
   - It is important to improve the design and content of websites to make information easily accessible, but as important to change the corporate culture within the administration, change the understanding of LSG employees on the need for their access to information of public importance, as well as the need to make the information easily accessible and available in a timely fashion.
   - LSGs need to have the capacities, interest, willingness, and commitment to introduce and integrate new policies and measures.
   - With the proliferation of donor support to LSGs in the field of good governance and accountability, constant coordination and cooperation with other implementing partners is crucial, although more complex.
   - Increasing sustainability of GAI-assisted good governance measures (procedures) should be ensured by replicating successful interventions with the second group of LSGs.
2. Knowledge, understanding, and credibility of local experts and/or CSOs that GAI subcontracts is crucial to success and continual commitment of LSGs to activities.

2. **How can committed local self-governments be insulated from national political pressures?**
   
   - Personnel need to be trained to perform their jobs more efficiently, offering high-quality citizen-centric services.
   
   - Building transparent and accountable business environments in local governments is key. Assistance should focus on the development of accountable LSGs, with transparent procedures and an information-sharing culture.
   
   - Citizens need to know their rights and create a demand for accountable and transparent governance. Promoting the practice of good governance in committed LSGs, their work and the values they represent, will not only ensure that citizens know their rights and demand accountability, but will also strengthen the commitment of the LSGs.
   
   - Create networks to share knowledge and best practices with the other LSGs, so as not to succumb to political or other pressure.
   
   - Identify areas where they can work with CSOs to improve residents’ lives in their local communities, generate interest from residents, and jointly work on important initiatives.
   
   - Ensuring that the local governments are supported by credible and trustworthy CSOs. The public opinion of CSOs that GAI works with to assist LSGs is as important as their expertise. These further build trust with LSGs, fostering relationships that will last beyond GAI’s life span.

3. **How can IOIs continue to play an important role in government oversight during a time of changing leadership?**
o Develop key messages including good examples of institutional good governance and systemic weaknesses in government, and consistently communicate messages to external stakeholders in ways that targeted audiences can understand, own, and act upon.

o Strengthening open, accountable business cultures in the IOIs with the introduction of relevant methodologies, procedures, and models ensures they remain relevant and continue to improve performance of their duties.

o Enhancing relationships with external champions of good governance can strengthen the position of IOIs. For SAI this means strengthening relationships with the National Assembly Committees beyond the Committee on Spending, CSOs, and media. For ACA, it is continued support to improve the Agency’s interaction with the Misdemeanor Courts and PPOs to improve impact on accountable governance. For the CPI it is strengthening relationships with public administration bodies, CSOs, youth, and the media.

o Focus SAI and ACA resources on high-impact, high-value “targets” that will increase the public trust in IOIs and their impacts to combat corruption.

4. Why do IOI recommendations not lead to substantial concrete follow-up action?

• For SAI:
  
o Legislation constrains SAI’s ability to aggressively follow-up on recommendations made to an auditee. Current legislation limits the SAI follow-up with auditees to only one-time at the 6-month post-audit recommendation mark. Beyond that 6-month follow-up, SAI must initiate a new audit, which results in an inefficient use of SAI resources.

  o SAI’s communication of audit results and recommendations in a manner that convinces recipient auditees and the National Assembly of the need to take action and sustain improvements is lacking.
o SAI recommendations are often not written in a manner to enable measurable progress. SAI also lacks a consistent and reliable methodology used by all audit sectors to calculate measurable, financial, or qualitative benefits for government derived from auditee implementation of SAI recommendations.

- For ACA:
  o ACA lacks focused and aggressive follow-up on filings before the Misdemeanor Courts and prosecutors’ offices.
  o Consultations between ACA and the PPOs are insufficient to build relationships for decisive action on ACA filings.

- For CPI:
  o Public institutions, the Government, and the NA lack commitment to follow-up on CPI recommendations.
  o Legislation constrains the ability of the CPI to aggressively follow-up on recommendations/referrals.
  o CPI’s mandate is limited and does not include oversight over the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Interest.
  o New personal data protection legislation has not allowed enough time for public administration and public entities to learn and implement all the requirements.
  o Lack of citizen awareness on their rights to access information and personal data protection, so that they do not know when and how to effectively complain to the CPI.

5. **What are the key reasons for limited adjudication of corruption cases?**
   o The important decisions on the use of new procedural institutes introduced by the new Law on Organized Crime and Corruption are not harmonized because there is no body of court case law.
   o Specialization of the new units has not been fully implemented in practice.
Counterparts have limited resources: they lack IT equipment, case-management software, and staff.

6. Are the Serbian executive and judicial branches committed to fair, impartial resolution of corruption cases?

- CeSID’s public perception survey commissioned by GAI found for the past two years that people have very limited trust in government institutions’ commitment to address corruption. The public perceived low levels of commitment from PPOs (13%) to the President (32%). In other words, there is no single institution for which more than one-third of the public perceive that government is highly committed to fight corruption.

- Findings of the survey also indicate that citizens are losing confidence in the commitment and ability of institutions to fight corruption. Compared to the previous research cycle in 2018, when 19% of the respondents indicated that none of these institutions is sufficiently dedicated to the fight against corruption, in 2019 as many as 26% of citizens agreed with this statement.

- The Anti-Corruption Agency is one of the institutions with the highest drop in percentage points when it comes to citizens’ confidence in institutions’ ability to spearhead the fight against corruption. In late 2019, 7% of respondents see the Agency as a leader in the fight against corruption, which is six percentage points lower than in November 2018.

- The results of the 2019 survey show that 54% of respondents consider the Government to be ‘mostly ineffective’ or ‘not effective at all’ which is two percentage points higher than November 2018. Thus, more than one-half of Serbian citizens perceive that the institutions they believe should spearhead the fight against corruption are not effective enough.

- The work of law enforcement agencies is heavily reported on by the media, whereas the follow-up of the prosecution and courts is slow and has limited media coverage, revealing existing discrepancies in the close cooperation of the various bodies to combat corruption, as is envisaged by law.
Special attention was given to communication, and the Team noted that communication was challenging during the pandemic. In-house, distance working has made it even more necessary to heighten communication between components as well as with the other staff. The team agreed that as GAI’s activities move forward, stronger, and constant communication needs to be maintained across GAI components. External communication, in particular communication with the media about counterparts’ work, during the pandemic was extremely challenging. Media and especially local media had to adapt to the new situation, with pandemic-related news taking up most of the space.

Finally, GAI explored new ideas on cross-component cooperation, to better meet the mid-term outcomes as designed in the Initiative’s AMELP, and to better prepare for the design of GAI’s Work Plan for Year 4.

**MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES**

As was previously agreed, in August GAI delivered to USAID a six-month revision/update of the approved GAI Work Plan for Year Three (3). The changes proposed in the update reflected the COVID-19 pandemic impact to the delivery of assistance of support to counterparts. For most activities only delivery timelines were adjusted, while three activities have been diverted for consideration to be implemented in GAI Year Four (4). USAID approved the proposed adjustments on September 15, 2020.

On October 29, GAI submitted to USAID for consideration changes to the Initiative’s AMELP. The suggested changes to selected indicators reflect GAI’s learning process and continuing assessment understanding of counterparts’ operations and needs. They also have taken into consideration the potential risks of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
GAI has continued to implement established flexible work arrangements, both in-house and with subcontractors and counterparts, as the numbers of those newly infected by COVID-19 in Serbia has been steadily on the rise in this quarter. GAI’s Chief of Party returned to Serbia on October 7, after a prolonged absence from country, although always maintaining daily engagement with all project activities. The Chief of Party and all local staff have continued working full-time, attendant to all government-imposed restrictions on in-person gatherings, social distancing and protective measures, to exercise an abundance of caution during the epidemiological circumstances. The reliance on video conferencing tools to conduct daily business remains an ever-present benefit.

Constant communication with USAID on implementation progress and the impact of COVID-19 has been maintained. Proactive communication and information sharing with counterparts and subcontractors has continued to be key to sustaining momentum of project implementation.

Solicitations have been issued and contracted for short-term technical assistance using Firm Fixed Price Subcontracts to support technical assistance delivery to improve public services in Municipality of Žabalj, to develop rule-books for LSGs’ website maintenance and update, as well as the Third Open Call for LSGs to express interest to partner with GAI to increase accountability locally.

No changes to GAI’s permanent staff have been made.
PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR FOURTH QUARTER OF GAI YEAR 3 INCLUDING UPCOMING EVENTS

Local Government Accountability

- **Support for LAP Development and Implementation and Independent LAP Monitoring Body Capacity Building** – Support to three LSGs to implement specific measures envisaged by their LAPs will continue, as well as support to capacity building of independent monitoring bodies in seven LSGs. Based on the decision of the new leadership of the Stari Grad Municipality, GAI will assist this LSG to develop a LAP. GAI and Transparency Serbia will organize networking workshops for members of the independent LAP monitoring bodies as well as for LSGs representatives, to provide opportunities for sharing experiences and best practices.

- **Local Government Model Website** – A new website for the Municipality of Žabalj, according to the model developed in Y2, and based on the assessment of existing websites, will begin development. Also, assistance will be provided to the City municipality of Stari Grad to restructure their existing site or develop new.

- **Support for improvement of Information Booklets** – GAI will finalize technical assistance to two counterpart LSGs – the City of Sombor and municipality of Žabalj – to revise the structure and content of their Booklets in line with legal requirements and transparency best practices. These Booklets will serve as best practice models for other counterpart LSGs as well as for all other LSGs in Serbia. In addition, a methodology for structure and content of LSG information booklets will be developed.

- **Improving transparency of local public companies** – GAI will identify two counterpart LSGs to work on development of procedures for transparent disclosure of information of public companies.

- **Development and Implementation of Communication Strategies** – GAI will continue to assist the City of Niš to draft an integrated communication and public participation strategy to be developed as local public policy and adopted in highly
participatory manner. Also, GAI will provide support to the City of Novi Pazar to implement a communication strategy through support with development of a quarterly newsletter, improvement of social media use and development of short video materials for familiarization of the general public with specific functions of the city administration.

- **Public Procurement Law Implementation** – GAI will finalize work with four cities (Šabac, Novi Pazar, Kragujevac and Sombor) on the development of model internal acts for public procurement, aligned with the new Law on Public Procurement.

- **Development of Internal Procedures for Timely Disclosure of Information by LSGs** – GAI will provide technical assistance to three LSGs (Kragujevac, Novi Pazar and Vrnjačka Banja) to develop internal procedures for regular update and maintenance of websites.

- **Public Participation of High School Students** – GAI will support implementation of the selection of projects in 26 high schools to be funded by local budgets of five LSGs (Sombor, Sremska Mitrovica, Kragujevac, Novi Pazar and Dimitrovgrad).

- **Public Participation in Budget Planning** – GAI will initiate technical assistance to Kragujevac for revision of public engagement practices relating to the budget process.

- **Development of City Portal in Šabac** – GAI will seek consent of the newly elected city leadership to continue development of the city portal.

- **Financial Management and Controls (FMC) System in Novi Pazar** – GAI will intensify technical assistance to the City of Novi Pazar to introduce a financial management control system in the City Administration.

- **Improvement of Public Services in Žabalj** – GAI will conduct customer satisfaction survey and focus groups to assess quality of public services in Žabalj and provide technical assistance to improve three services, as has been agreed with the City leadership.

- **Workshops on Municipal Budgeting, Public Engagement and Services** – A second round of trainings for LSGs to learn about U.S. experiences to ensure sound budget management, public participation in budgeting, and providing efficient services to citizens will be held. Specific topics for trainings will be identified based on counterpart LSGs feedback.
• **Open Budget Portal Development for Kragujevac** – As has been agreed, GAI will support the development of a budget portal for the city of Kragujevac, based on the model that was created for Vranje.

• **Capital Investment Planning** – Pending the decision of Dimitrovgrad municipality, GAI may initiate technical assistance for capital investments planning.

• **Whistleblower Protection** – As the activities initially planned for the second quarter have been postponed within Year 3, GAI will continue the implementation of planned activities mostly online:
  
  o **Trainings for Local Public Companies** – GAI and Pištaljka will deliver the next round of training on the implementation of internal whistleblower systems in local public companies from LSGs across Serbia.
  
  o **Establishment of a Network of Authorized Persons at the Local Level** – Work will continue on the establishment of a network of persons authorized to receive whistleblowers’ reports in LSGs and local public companies, to facilitate the exchange of information relating to the legal framework and skills required for the work with whistleblowers.
  
  o **Development of an Internal Whistleblower Protection System in Novi Pazar** – The assistance will be intensified to enable the revision of the LSG’s internal whistleblowing procedures and their alignment with the recommended model developed by GAI and Pištaljka in Y2.

• **The Third Open Call for New Counterpart LSGs** – GAI will select the third and final group of LSGs to join the Initiative and facilitate the signing of Memoranda of Understanding with USAID.

**Independent Oversight Institutions**

• **Basic Performance Audit Training for Financial and Compliance Auditors** – GAI will complete the Basic Performance Audit training for SAI financial and compliance auditors who previously did not receive such training. This training is focused to enhance SAI’s internal stakeholder contributions to the annual selection of audit topics, performance audit design and quality controls during message development.
• **Fraud Risk Assessments in Audits** – GAI will initiate fraud risk assessment training for SAI. The training is aimed to better prepare and position SAI for participation in corruption task forces envisioned by the March 2018 Law that allows for institutions to appoint liaisons to task forces.

• **Enhancing Utilization of SAI Performance Audit Reports by External Stakeholders** – Having discussed with SAI strategies to enhance the understanding by external stakeholders, including the public, of SAI’s key findings and the necessity for action on recommendations, GAI will develop specific activities for stakeholder engagement. The strategies will be consistent with SAI’s recently adopted Communication Strategy, that GAI has previously supported. Strategies will be designed to enable SAI’s more effective, post-election engagement with National Assembly Committees to increase utilization of SAI audit products and recommendations and enhance the impact of SAI’s work on legislation and government regulation and performance. The tasks will also include identification of strategies to support SAI’s interface with academia and CSOs and a productive engagement with professional associations, to inform audit planning and amplification of SAI report recommendations to improve governance.

• **Enhanced Income and Asset Declaration Oversight** – Having developed a risk-based methodology for examining asset and income declarations, GAI will hold a five-day training session on the use of the methodology and the associated decision tree for use by Agency staff.

• **Model Acts of Misconduct** – GAI will assist the Agency to develop and implement training for representatives of public bodies on how to use the model acts for drafting internal rules.

• **Enhancing the Agency’s Cooperation with PPOs** – GAI will organize a roundtable between the Agency and the PPOs to focus on mapping the processes and areas for improvement.

• **Conflict of Interest Manual** – Focus will be given to the promotion of the Manual and on educating public officials and representatives of public administration bodies on conflict of interest. Also, GAI will organize a roundtable with the Agency to review its existing strategies to resolve conflict of interest situations and formulate recommendations for improvement.
• **Personal Data Protection and Free Access to Information Booklet** – Having finalized the text and design of the booklet, in Q4 GAI will liaise with the CPI publishing and promotion.

• **Communication Strategy Implementation for the CPI** – GAI will continue to create and facilitate opportunities for the Commissioner to engage with the media to raise the public’s awareness of freedom of information and data protection. Activities will include the organization of guest TV/radio appearances for the Commissioner, as well as interviews with selected media.

• **CPI Youth Engagement** – GAI will especially focus communication efforts on supporting the CPI to develop and better utilize their YouTube channel in a campaign designed to inform and engage youth.

**Adjudication of Corruption Cases**

• **Internal Whistleblower Protection Training for PPO** – The training that was designed for PPOs on internal whistleblower, ethics, and integrity with Pištaljka will be initiated in the coming quarter.

• **Working Meeting of Anti-Corruption Court Judges** – GAI will support the organization of a working meeting of presidents of the Specialized Court Units for Suppression of Corruption and the presidents of four Higher Courts in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš, and Kraljevo to discuss issues related to jurisdiction and organization of work of specialized units. The meeting is planned to be organized in November.

• **Misfeasance in Public Procurement Training** – GAI will liaise with the Public Procurement Office to design and organize trainings for the anti-corruption units in PPOs on the new Law on Public Procurement and the functionalities of the new Procurement Portal.

• **Development of ERCC** – The subcontracting phase for design and testing of an ERCC will be finalized in the coming quarter. Shortly after the award, a kick-off meeting is planned to be organized with the selected subcontractor, the ERCC Working Group and MOJ.

• **Comparative Legal Study on the Status and Role of Financial Forensics** – GAI and subcontractor Mr. Rob McCusker will present the study during an online roundtable,
which will gather legal professionals from Serbian counterparts. The roundtable design envisages that the presentation will be followed by a discussion which will aim to foster use of financial forensics in complex financial criminal cases, and legal reasoning in the court case law.

**Other Technical Assistance**

- **2020 Survey of Citizens’ Perceptions of Anti-Corruption Efforts in Serbia** – GAI and subcontractor CeSID will conduct the survey as planned in November. If the numbers of COVID-19 infected persons rise and restrictions on movement are imposed, mitigation methods for conducting a nationwide survey of Citizens’ Perceptions of Anti-Corruption Efforts in Serbia will be implemented. The Survey findings will be presented to the public in December 2020, to mark the International Anti-Corruption Day.