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### **NOVI SAD, TEMERIN, BEOCIN & SREMSKI KARLOVCI JOIN BUSINESSES AND CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS IN USAID PROJECT TO BOOST THE REGION'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**SREMSKI KARLOVCI (July 5)** – The mayors of Novi Sad, Temerin, Beocin and Sremski Karlovci, together with business and civil society leaders, today agreed to jointly plan, implement and monitor economic development projects in their communities.

Today's signing of the Inter-Municipal Cooperation Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding creates a "Novi Sad cluster" of communities, businesses and civil society organizations designed to pool the municipalities' expertise and resources to create a stronger environment for investment and growth.

It is part of a new five-year, \$22 million Sustainable Local Development Project (SLDP) sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Through this project, 12 inter-municipal partnerships ("clusters") will be formed throughout Serbia, each comprised of at least three municipalities, one local business organization, and one local civil society organization.

"Municipalities that pool their resources, share their expertise, and build on each other's successes are stronger, grow faster, and are best positioned to successfully compete for investment, business and jobs," U.S. Ambassador to Serbia Mary Burce Warlick told participants at Karlovacka Gymnasium where the signing event took place.

"In today's global economy, Serbian municipalities can no longer afford to view themselves as adversaries in their efforts to attract international investment, but rather as partners in a larger, highly-integrated, and more sophisticated marketplace," Ambassador Warlick said.

Novi Sad, Temerin, Beocin, and Sremski Karlovci have identified several inter-municipal initiatives for cooperation that will impact the lives and livelihoods of their communities. These include the development and linkage of tourist attractions; improvement and promotion of business and industrial zones; cooperation in water supply and waste water treatment; development of the fiber optic cable network; improvement and development energy projects; as well as enhancement of conditions for small- and medium-enterprise development.

The Novi Sad cluster is the second of the partnerships formed through the USAID project. The remaining 10 clusters will be launched over the next 18 months.

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