

CASE STUDY: MINISTRY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED EXPENDITURES FOR LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN ELECTION PERIOD

I: INTRODUCTION: Local infrastructure works are one of the most common mechanisms for which it is determined to be used in election periods for achieving political advantage and influencing the will of voters, which is particularly conspicuous in the north of the country, which is a very underdeveloped area.

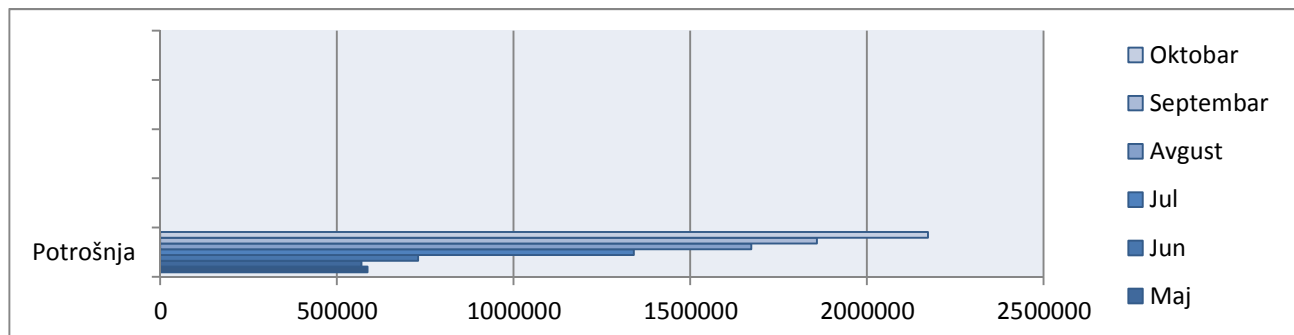
Before the October parliamentary elections, the Ministry of Sustainable Development significantly increased the expenditures for the local infrastructure through the capital budget, as shown in the study below.



Image: Asphalt road

II: 4.5 MILLION SPENT IN PRE-ELECTION PERIOD: During the three pre-election months, i.e. from mid-July to mid-October 2016¹, the Ministry of Sustainable Development spent approximately €4.5 million for building local infrastructure and facilities², which is 58 percent more than it was allocated for this purpose in three and a half months preceding the calling of the parliamentary elections, i.e. in April, May, June and the first part of July 2016.

According to the official data, from 12 July 2016 when the parliamentary elections were called until the end of July, the Ministry of Sustainable Development spent approximately €600 thousand for the local infrastructure and buildings, whereas in August it set aside €1.6 million, in September €1.8 million, and by 16 October, when the elections were held, an additional sum of €460,000. Immediately after the parliamentary elections were finished, i.e. by the end of October, an additional €1.6 million was spent.



Graph 1: Ministry of Sustainable Development spend the most in election period

¹ Parliamentary elections in Montenegro were announced on July 11, 2016, and held on 16 October 2016

² Statements of account of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism are published on its website, link <http://www.mrt.gov.me/rubrike/spi/spi-inovina/137510/Analiticke-kartice-Ministarstva-odrzivog-razvoja-i-turizma-i-Direkcije-javnih-radova.html>

At the same time, the official data of the Ministry of Finance³ show that the Ministry of Sustainable Development's total budget earmarked for this purpose in the three and a half months preceding the announcement of the parliamentary elections amounted to €2.6 million. So in April 2016, a sum of €586,000 was spent, in May €570,000, June €730,000, and in the first part of July - until July 12 – an additional sum of €737,000. MANS has no information how much the Ministry spent in the first three months of 2016 for construction of the local infrastructure and facilities.⁴

The official data indicate that the infrastructure works which were carried out during the election period were mainly related to construction or reconstruction of local roads, town squares and urban roads, construction of riverwalks, as well as buildings.

The Directorate of Public Works, which is under the Ministry of Sustainable Development, which minister during the election period was a prominent official of the ruling Democratic Party of Socialists Branimir Gvozdenovic, implements the capital budget for local infrastructure and construction works,.

More funds planned for municipalities in 2016

In the election year of 2016 the estimated capital budget for modernization of local roads and urban roads was €300,000 higher than budget allocated in 2015, which was a non-election year.

Modernization of local roads from the capital budget in the election year is carried out in the municipalities Gusinje, Andrijevisa, Plav, Rozaje, Mojkovac, Savnik, Danilovgrad and Pluzine, as well as in the old royal capital Cetinje.

Urban roads were reconstructed in Pljevlja, Zabljak, Plav, while the construction of water supply system in Rozaje and rehabilitation of municipal solid waste landfills in Beranselo in the Municipality of Berane, where waste disposal has been a long-standing problem of the local population, was funded from the capital budget.

*Author: MANS Investigation Center
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³ Source of the data is the SAP system, which is kept electronically, and it refers to the total spending of the State Treasury of the Ministry of Finance; NGO MANS received this data from the Ministry of Finance on the basis of the Law on Free Access to Information

⁴ NGO MANS requested information from the Ministry of Finance's SAP system for January, February and March 2016, but they were not submitted in the required form, so MANS filed a complaint to the Agency for Protection of Personal Data and Free Access to Information and in November 2016 the legal process was in progress