



Szám:/Nr.: **Ref.Nr: DGII.283.2020 662713**

Professional report on Local Government Best Practice Program – Hungary 2020

The Local Government Best Practice Program has been published continuously since 2008 by the Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities (TÖOSZ) in cooperation with the Centre of Expertise for Good Governance of Council of Europe.

We called the attention of the local governments to the call for proposals through our website, E-Newsletter, direct e-mails and because of new and disadvantaged situation caused by COVID-19 pandemic, we have organized five online workshops, conferences on the program in the topic of the actual call for application. The call, the official documentations as well as the project proposals - similarly to the previous years were uploaded to our website:

<http://legjobbonkormanyzatigyakorlatok.hu/aktualis-palyazati-felhivas/>

Activity 1: Preparation the BPP implementation

Duration: from 1th of January 2020 until publishing the call for application of BPP Hungary 2020 (2th of May 2020)

Preparations were made from the beginning of the year, but the pandemic caused by COVID-19 changed all the plans. On 16 of March the Steering Committee of the program decided on the adaptation the program implementation to the new circumstances. With this decision, we want to confirm that we continue to believe in the power of local communities, the power of local democracy, the empowerment of local governments, and we do every effort we can to help our local authorities address the new challenges. Program operators wanted to do their best to make this capacity building tool work, even in new ways. Many professionals work from home and, with the help of modern technology, there is still the opportunity for local governments to learn from each other. A number of well-established methods and innovations have been created at Hungarian municipalities. In our modified program, we wanted to make these live tools available to local governments.

We want to create a forum for those who are not at the forefront of the health and social fight right now, but want to help them the most by working from home to prevent, mitigate local economic damage and prepare for post-epidemic economic, welfare and they are planning reconstruction. Many uncertainties made the situation even more difficult. The Steering Committee and the organizations participating in it (Ministry of the Interior, e-Democracy Foundation, Ministry of Human Resources, Homo Oecologicus Foundation, Ministry of Innovation and Technology, Hungarian Village Association, Hungarian Association of Municipalities, Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities, National Union of National Guard), encouraged municipalities to take advantage of each other's innovations by joining an online knowledge program; learn from each other, think together for common goals.



One main topic was announced for application in Hungarian BPP in 2020:

Recovery and reconstruction to mitigate damage caused by the epidemic - proven innovations in local government

There were five sub-topics to apply for, all of which focus on good practices that have already been successfully applied and will be useful in recovery and re-starting after the epidemic:

1. Good practices for local economic recovery and attraction of municipal investments
2. Good practices in social inclusion - effective local methods to combating poverty
3. Local Public Security Good Practices
4. Municipal good practices in elderly care
5. Innovations of local governments - well-functioning activities already carried out within any municipal competence (outside the four topics above)

SC decided on the schedule of the program in 2020:

- Announcement of the 2020 call for proposals: 4 May 2020
- Deadline for submitting applications: 2 July 2020
- During the application phase, there were 5 online conferences in the 5 application topics: We organized a Zoom conference that anyone could join between May 1st, 2020 and July 2st, 2020.
- Written evaluation of proposals received: 1 August 2020
- Expert reviews and interviews on the spot / online meetings: 30 September 2020.

A significant change from the previous methodology was that, if the epidemiological situation continues to warrant, online on-the-spot meeting will be carried out. This means that applicants were expected to allow a half-day conference call via the Internet with key persons pre-designated by the experts. Intensive professional exchange of half-day, accurate agendas, and online mediation with the local responsible nominated by the applicant allowed all Steering Committee members and experts to be involved in the on-site "visits".

- Offline / online preparatory training for the short listed applicants in October 2020
- Final (offline or online) closing conference on 25th of November 2020
- Online or offline local professional days for winners between 25th of November 2020 and 31th of March 2021

Prizes:

- Certificates and permanent signboards for local governments and for the Mayors
- Grant agreements with different amounts. The grant could be used only for the aim of the relevant best practice, with reporting deadline of 28th of February 2021.
- Every local governments winning the prize of BPP in 2020 will have opportunity to take part at Change management knowledge program of TÖOSZ with support of Ministry of Innovation and Technology.



Learning program

During the application period we will organize 5 online (Zoom) conferences in the 5 topics. These conferences will be open for joining for everyone and they will take place between 1th of May and 1th of June.

The duration of these conferences will be maximum 2-3 hours. We ask for presentation of prepared experts, who will have presentations in maximum 10 minutes on the relevant framework condition of municipal operation area fixed in the call for application of BPP program 2020. After them moderated discussion will be held. The aim of the conferences is to clarify the topics of BPP 2020 program, speak about the future possibilities, plans and provide inspirations and collect them from each other.

Due to the new global crisis, a new local element will be added to Hungarian BPP 2020 : through our international network of local governments we present effective local responses and solutions of local governments in other European countries; and we are also promoting domestic results.

Our goal is to help municipalities with a living knowledge base for better efficiency and new solutions.

Means of evaluation:

- following documents will be ready: renewed application form, final text of the call after wide-range and open consultation with target group and stakeholders, call for experts, contract with experts, translated professional material for the online conferences

Target groups:

- citizens, NGOs, local and regional governments, experts, government bodies, international organization and sister organizations, local and regional governments from abroad

Activity 2: Publishing, dissemination of the call, collecting the applications

Duration: 2th of May 2020, application deadline: 2 July 2020

Specific objectives: increasing the awareness of the program, involvement of local governments and other target groups

Detailed description: Steering Committee published the call <http://legjobbonkormanyzatigyakorlatok.hu/aktualis-palyazati-felhivas/> ith a press release and wide-range communication campaign will start based on detailed plan elaborated by experts, coordinated by project manager and coordinator.

Means of implementation:

- Publishing the call online and offline: Facebook, Internet, e-mails, newsletters of members of Steering Committee, Board meetings of LGAs, newspapers...etc.: <http://xn--tosz-5qa.hu/news/577/136/A-LoGY-Program-2020-evi-palyazati-felhivasa/>
- Finding the most relevant Best Practices of Hungarian LGs at the relevant fields



- A training was held for future applicants on how to write and introduce the best practice both in written and in the max. 3 minutes videos

Topics and dates of online conferences:

1. Best practices in local development and attraction of investment – 21 May 2020
2. Local safety – 28 May 2020
3. Best practices of social inclusion and fighting against poverty – 4 June 2020
4. Best practices of elderly– 11 June 2020
5. Innovations in operation of local governments – 18 June 2020

The online conferences were organized via ZOOM, and after the conferences detailed reports were shared among the participants. Overall, it can be stated that the online conferences were held with considerable interest. A total of 283 people indicated their participation in the five conferences. The highest interest was in Elderly Care (72), while the lowest (42) was in topic of Fighting against poverty.

Five groups of participants could be defined:

- elected representatives of local governments
- representatives of ministries
- experts and staff of offices of local governments
- NGOs
- members of Steering Committee, Expert Panel, experts and staff of TÖOSZ

Traditional conferences in this field were previously attended by mayors. The majority of the 98 elected municipal representatives who took part at current online conferences were mayors (83), but we also met two municipal and 10 city deputy mayors, as well as a municipal committee chair and 2 city council members.

The majority of mayors (67) were villages, while 14 city and two cities with county rank mayors also participated in the program. Of the latter two, Mayor András Cser-Palkovics of Székesfehérvár expressed his opinion on the topic of Economic Recovery in a video comment, while Mayor Péter Márki-Zay of Hódmezővásárhely spoke at the Innovation Conference. However, none of the mayors of the capital districts participated in the program, nor did the chairmen of the county assemblies.

Ministries typically attended the conferences only with their invited speakers, while the Ministry of Innovation and Technology, together with the speaker, was represented by 8 people in the topic of Economic Recovery.

7 CEOs, 2 deputy CEOs and 43 experts from Mayors Offices represented at the conferences the municipal offices. In addition to local government interests, representatives of some university researchers (National University of Public Administration, University of Miskolc, Bratislava University of Economics) and other domestic and international organizations (Initiatives France-Europe Centrale et Orientale / IFECO) also appeared in the institutional circle.



Overall, representatives of institutions and agencies accounted for the second largest group of applicants, 33%.

We were able to meet a total of 28 registrants who indicated their intention to participate on behalf of a non-governmental organization. The vast majority of them, 21, represented some kind of civil guard organization on the topic of Public Security. It is worth noting that 5 of them are leaders of a county civil guard organization.

Topic of the conferences	Elected representatives	Ministries	Offices, institutions	NGOs	Operators of the program	Total
Economic recovery, local development	19	8	13	3	13	56
Public safety	11	1	3	22	11	48
Fighting against poverty	10	2	17	1	12	42
Elderly care	26	1	40	0	5	72
Innovations	32	1	19	2	11	65
Total	98	13	92	28	52	283

From the 283 registered participants a total of 132 were women, it means 47% of the participants. The highest proportions (65%) of women were in Elderly care and Fighting against poverty (55%) and the lowest in Public security (27%). (48% were women applicants in the Economic Recovery topic and 34% in the Innovation Program.)

12% of cities, 30% of cities with county rank, and 35% of metropolitan districts visited at least one conference.

Means of evaluation:

- target number for applications: 30 results: 27 applications were received
- participants of online conferences: 50 / conference, result: 287 participants

Target groups:

- citizens, NGOs, local and regional governments, experts, government bodies, international organization and sister organizations, local and regional governments from abroad

Activity 3: Evaluation the application

Duration: 2th of July 2020 – 17th of July 2020-written evaluation, 17th of July– 12th of October local verification visits – presentation / dissemination training was held 19th of November <http://xn--tosz-5qa.hu/news/446/136/Felkeszulten-varjak-a-dontot-a-versenyzo/>

Specific objectives:



- Though transparent and objective evaluation of the applications increase the level of trust and credibility of the project

Detailed description: based on written applications and short videos, Selection Panel have proposed, Steering Committee have decided on short listed applications (from 27 19 application were selected), which have controlled by in-field verification visits in this year online. Because of the fact that only one application was received in economic recovery topic, the Steering Committee decided to add this application into the topic of municipal innovations.

Means of implementation:

- Selection Panel evaluated the applications and proposed the short-list (on 12th of October) <http://legjobbonkormanyzatigyakorlatok.hu/news/43/59/A-LoeGY-Program-idei-doentosei/>
- Steering Committee decide on short-listed applications together with Selection Panel (on 12th of October)
- Selection Panel visit on spot the 19 applications from the short list, summaries the experiences (17th of July – 30th of September)
- Steering Committee and Selection Panel decide on the finalists -altogether 13 applications (on 12 October)

Means of evaluation:

- selection of short-listed applications – written reports on evaluation process
- two meetings of Selection Panel (17 July, 12 October))
- implemented local verification visits (19)- verified by written reports

Target groups:

- citizens, NGOs, local and regional governments, experts, government bodies, international organization and sister organizations, local and regional governments from abroad

Activity 4: Final conference and competition of presentations

Duration: 25th of November online via ZOOM

Specific objectives: twofold: sharing knowledge, information and select the “winners”

Detailed description: we have followed the BPP toolkit for organization of the final conference, specified by the Steering Committee of the program.

Means of implementation:

- information campaign on the program and conference
 - high level participation of key speakers (Centre of Expertise, State Secretaries, leaders of organizations of Steering Committee)
 - prepared presentations from the applicants
 - well organized event with suitable arrangements
- <http://legjobbonkormanyzatigyakorlatok.hu/news/44/59/Meghivo-a-Legjobb->



oenkormanyzati-Gyakorlatok-Program-online-zaro-konferenciajara-2020-november-25/

- <http://legjobbonkormanyzatigyakorlatok.hu/news/45/59/LoeGY-Program-2020-ime-a-nyertes-oenkormanyzatok-listaja/>

Means of evaluation:

- 107 participants from local and regional governments

Target groups:

- citizens, NGOs, local and regional governments, experts, government bodies, international organization and sister organizations, universities, researchers, local and regional governments from abroad

Activity 5: Prizes and winners.

The following results were born in the four topics.

Best practices in the field of fighting against poverty

First Prize Eger City Innovative community-based crisis management in support of social integration (1700000 HUF and possibility for participation of 6 persons at Change management knowledge program of TÖOSZ/ 2 days workshops

Second Prize: Budapest XIII. District „You are not alone, call the Previ Studio!”, (1200000 HUF and possibility for participation of 4 persons at Change management knowledge program of TÖOSZ)

Best practices of public safety

First Prize: Arló Let's do something together for local public safety (1000000 HUF and possibility for participation of 6 persons at Change management knowledge program of TÖOSZ)

Second Prize: Kunsziget For the safety of Kunsziget in this challenging new situation ((800000 HUF and possibility for participation of 4 persons at Change management knowledge program of TÖOSZ)

Third Prize: Budapest XIII. District We will not leave you without a word! (500000 HUF and possibility for participation of 2 persons at Change management knowledge program of TÖOSZ)

Best practices of elderly care

First Prize: Nyíregyháza The role and importance of social benefits in elderly care (Cooperation between the local equity care fee and the home care system in Nyíregyháza) (900000 HUF and possibility for participation of 6 persons at Change management knowledge program of TÖOSZ)

Second Prize: Kozármisleny For the protection of our elderly –Emergency working group in Kozarmisleny (700000 HUF and possibility for participation of 4 persons at Change management knowledge program of TÖOSZ)



Third Prize: Alsómocsolád New ways to good quality of life in old age (450000 HUF and possibility for participation of 2persons at Change management knowledge program of TÖOSZ)

Best practices of innovation

First Prize: Szada World Day of Light in Szada- the municipality and civilians together for the community in difficult situations (900000 HUF and possibility for participation of 6 persons at Change management knowledge program of TÖOSZ)

Second Prize: Budapest XV. District An innovative digital assistance platform during the COVID-19 epidemic (700000 HUF and possibility for participation of 4 persons at Change management knowledge program of TÖOSZ)

Third Prize: Budapest IV. District Animal Rescue League in Újpest, especially during the emergency (450000 HUF and possibility for participation of 2persons at Change management knowledge program of TÖOSZ)

Special prize was given to Eger City based on the votes of the audience.

Activity 6: Management, coordination and communication

Duration: From 1th of January 2020 until 15th of December 2020

Specific objectives:

- Hungarian BPP is based on wide-range Partnership which desires high level coordination and management (For example for state support for Prizes from the Ministry we always apply and meet often administration obstacles.)
- TÖOSZ provides coordination, management for the Program several years as own contribution, because TÖOSZ is committed to the usefulness and advantages of BPP. Smooth and successful implementation of the permanent objective of the management structure.
- Printed publications help very much to share information on the program and the results, the best practices.

Detailed description:

- Secretary-General of TÖOSZ leads the professional work of the Secretariat. His deputy dr. Erika Steiner is responsible for capacity building programs. Katalin Kolin-Sabján and Mónika Balla Lüttmerdingné is responsible for management and coordination. Communication and organization tasks are fulfilled by the whole Secretariat. The Secretariat has got a well separated and well function system of tasks and responsibilities. Communication expert will help the designing the communication and dissemination strategy, plans and control the implementation of them.

Means of implementation:



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„Best Practices Program for Local governments in Hungary

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- Call for expert will be published for communication.
- Head of Secretariat will elaborate together the very detailed work system of BPP 2020 within the TÖOSZ Secretariat.

Means of evaluation:

- Final questionnaire of BPP 2020 will reflect the quality of management, coordination and communication of the program implementation. Feedback will serve as basis for further development of the program in 2021.

Target groups:

- citizens, NGOs, local and regional governments, experts, government bodies, international organization and sister organizations, local and regional governments from abroad

Budapest, 16th December 2020

Dr Ferenc Gyergyák

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