



Social Inclusion Sector Public Call (02-2020)

Support to LSGs in Implementation of Social Protection Services

1. Background

The “Enhancing Good Governance and Social Inclusion at Local Level in Serbia” Programme (Swiss PRO) will improve local capacities primarily in **99 local self-governments** in Šumadija and Western Serbia, and South and Eastern Serbia regions¹ to apply good governance (GG) principles in local policies and regulations and thus increase social cohesion. The Government of Switzerland has allocated USD 6.9 million for the Programme, with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) responsible for its implementation, in cooperation with the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM).

The Programme has to fulfil **two main goals**:

1. To contribute to the enhancement of organisations and officials’ knowledge and skills
2. To positively change the scope and quality of public services rendered to citizens, especially to those from vulnerable groups.

Both goals will lead to improved regulations, institutional, technical and human capacities for the enhancement of e-services. In addition, capacity building will be provided to local civil society organisations (CSOs) as well as institutions dealing with social inclusion and gender equality.

Overall, this will contribute to the improved rule of law at the local level, increased accountability, transparency and efficiency and effectiveness of the local governments (LSGs), and ultimately improvement of quality of life of citizens, especially vulnerable citizens.

The Programme will coordinate its activities with the key line-national-level institutions while observing the national strategies, laws and relevant development documents, which will contribute to sustainability, ensure national ownership and develop national capacities. The content and the scope of the Programme will significantly complement the European Union Support to Municipal Development – EU PRO Programme.

¹ Programme Area of responsibility: Aleksandrovac, Aleksinac, Aranđelovac, Arilje, Babušnica, Bajina Bašta, Batočina, Bela Palanka, Blace, Bogatić, Bojnik, Boljevac, Bor, Bosilegrad, Brus, Bujanovac, Crna Trava, Čačak, Čajetina, Čičevac, Čuprija, Despotovac, Dimitrovgrad, Doljevac, Gadžin Han, Golubac, Gornji Milanovac, Ivanjica, Jagodina, Kladovo, Knić, Knjaževac, Koceljeva, Kosjerić, Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Krupanj, Kruševac, Kučevo, Kuršumlija, Lajkovac, Lapovo, Lebane, Leskovac, Loznica, Lučani, Ljig, Ljubovija, Majdanpek, Mali Zvornik, Malo Crniće, Medveđa, Merošina, Mionica, Negotin, Niš, Nova Varoš, Novi Pazar, Osečina, Paraćin, Petrovac na Mlavi, Pirot, Požarevac, Požega, Preševo, Priboj, Prijepolje, Prokuplje, Rača, Raška, Ražanj, Rekovac, Sjenica, Smederevo, Smederevska Palanka, Sokobanja, Surdulica, Svilajnac, Svrljig, Šabac, Topola, Trgovište, Trstenik, Tutin, Ub, Užice, Valjevo, Varvarin, Velika Plana, Veliko Gradište, Vladimirci, Vladičin Han, Vlasotince, Vranje, Vrnjačka Banja, Zaječar, Žabari, Žagubica, Žitorađa.

2. Justification of the Intervention

On its way to the EU accession, Serbia has a very important task, and this is a contribution to the social inclusion process in its society. In accordance with the European Commission Report for 2019, Serbia is moderately prepared in the area of social policy and should ensure adequate financial and institutional resources for social policies to more systematically target the young, women and long-term unemployed, and improve the adequacy of social benefits for people below the poverty threshold. In order to fulfill the requirements and to follow the EU trends, Serbia needs further development and improvement of the institutional framework and a methodology for monitoring the social inclusion policies and practices at the local level.

The previous Social Protection Development Strategy (2005 - 2008) had recognised the need for further decentralisation of the social protection system, which was to be supported by the transfer of competencies and rights in the field of social protection to local level by relevant laws (first of all, the Law on Social Protection, the Law on Financial Support for Families with Children, the Law on Financing LGs and the Law on Budget System). Having in mind the announced adoption of the new Strategy for Social Protection, the assessment of existing needs for improving the social protection system and capacity of local capacities are actualised.

In the [Assessment of Institutional Capacity of Local Governments in Social Protection and Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups](#)², conducted in 2018 on a sample of 31 municipalities, the key findings generally indicate the modest capacities of the assessed LSGs, especially in terms of inclusion of vulnerable groups, provision of integrated and inter-municipal services, monitoring and evaluation of local strategic social inclusion policies as well as pluralism of services and potential to cover diversified vulnerable groups. The only satisfactory result was related to transparency in the procurement of services in accordance with the normative framework. The main recommendations for further LSGs' capacity building were related to improving the strategic framework, assessing the needs for services for vulnerable groups, setting up new or improving the existing social protection services and formulating integrated social welfare/inclusion framework.

Aiming to contribute to greater accountability of the LSGs in ensuring social inclusion at the local level through enhanced social protection services (SPS) as a response to the needs of vulnerable groups, in the first phase of this intervention, the Programme provided technical assistance (TA) to 82 LSGs. Namely, TA was related to capacity building in improving the strategic framework including monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms, in assessing the needs for SPS of vulnerable groups, implementing the innovative approach and integrated policy system. The TA was conducted in the form of training, mentorship support, and dissemination of produced methodologies/tools for capacity building.

² The Assessment of 31 municipalities was conducted within the Swiss PRO Programme, in cooperation with the Centre for Social Policy

With this Call for Proposal (CFP), the Programme will provide support to up to 20 LSGs in the implementation of social protection services with the aim of addressing the recognised needs of local vulnerable groups as well as improving overall local good governance practices. In this way, the Programme will contribute to the overall national objective for efficient use of existing and development of new resources through accessible, quality and diverse services, in order to improve the quality of life of vulnerable groups.

3. Objectives of the Intervention

Overall objective: To contribute to the establishment of relevant, efficient, effective and sustainable social protection system at the local level.

Specific Objective: To enhance access to and relevance of social protection services at the local level benefitting at least 500 beneficiaries from the vulnerable social groups.³

4. The Scope of Intervention

With the aim of addressing the needs of the local population from the vulnerable groups, the Programme will directly support **up to twenty (20) local projects from LSGs (as lead applicants) for one of the following:**

- **Establishing new standardised local social protection service (SPS) that is currently not being provided;**
- **Extending the reach of the existing standardised local SPS in an LSG in order to cover a larger number of beneficiaries, while maintaining or improving the already achieved level of quality in service delivery;**
- **Piloting innovative local SPS, based on its feasibility for later on mainstreaming.** Explanation of the innovative approach in the development and provision of SPS:
 - ✓ Innovation is the application of a new idea that preferably encompasses a cross-sectoral approach to SPS provision, or the improvement of existing practices, processes or services that bring new benefits, quality and availability to the vulnerable groups;
 - ✓ Innovative intervention in SPS may lead to increased quality and scope/reach of beneficiaries, with fewer resources, including financial;
 - ✓ Innovative approach might investigate introducing new beneficiaries as a target group who are not covered with existing standardised SPS.

³ As the main target group, the Programme will consider people with disabilities, rural and other vulnerable women, social welfare beneficiaries, Roma and any other individual/group with multi-layer vulnerability. Swiss PRO Programme will be considering the following social groups, both from urban and rural areas, as vulnerable groups that will also be taken into account, where relevant: elderly (especially those over 65 years of age); children and youth (15 to 24 years of age); one-parent families; long-term unemployed; ethnic and religious minorities; refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and returnees; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) people; and extreme-poverty stricken people in general.

5. Guidelines for the Applicants

5.1. General Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for support, an applicant must fulfil the following criteria:

- i. **Be one of 96 local self-governments that are within the Region of Šumadija and Western Serbia and the Region of Southern and Eastern Serbia⁴**
- ii. The project proposal must be **in line with relevant national and local legislative** and/or policy documents, including the process of public procurement of SPS providers.
- iii. The LSG is expected to provide its financial contribution of a minimum of 10% out of the total value of the project eligible costs.
- iv. It will be possible for one LSG to forge partnerships with another LSG or Centre for Social Work (CSW) or both. CSW as a project partner must be mandated for the territory of LSG as a lead partner. **In case of inter-municipal cooperation or a partnership between LSG (as a lead partner) and CSW (as a project partner)**, the partnership must be in a written form (Partnership Agreement or Letter of Intention for Partnership Agreement), signed by both partners, and with a clear division of tasks and responsibilities.
- v. One LSG as a lead applicant can submit only one project proposal. One applicant can be awarded only one grant.
- vi. One LSG could be a project partner in inter-municipal cooperation and submit own separate application. In this case, the separate project proposal should address different action.

5.2. The Projects Selection

- The projects that will be awarded will be selected, evaluated and approved in a **competitive process**.
- The project proposals should:
 - ✓ propose sustainable actions, meaning that the applicant will need to demonstrate how the established or improved services will continue to be delivered upon completion of the project as well as how benefits on a long term basis will be ensured for the beneficiaries.
 - ✓ demonstrate an ability to include men and women equally in project planning, implementation, and benefits, as appropriate to the scope of the Call and to the project
 - ✓ demonstrate an ability to underpin good governance principles⁵ in the programming of the activities, as appropriate to the content of the project proposal

⁴ Aleksandrovac, Aleksinac, Aranđelovac, Arilje, Babušnica, Bajina Bašta, Batočina, Bela Palanka, Blace, Bogatić, Bojnik, Boljevac, Bor, Bosilegrad, Brus, Bujanovac, Crna Trava, Čačak, Čajetina, Čičevac, Čuprija, Despotovac, Dimitrovgrad, Doljevac, Gadžin Han, Golubac, Gornji Milanovac, Ivanjica, Jagodina, Kladovo, Knić, Knjaževac, Koceljeva, Kosjerić, Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Krupanj, Kruševac, Kučevo, Kuršumlja, Lajkovac, Lapovo, Lebane, Leskovac, Loznica, Lučani, Ljig, Ljubovija, Majdanpek, Mali Zvornik, Malo Crniće, Medveđa, Merošina, Mionica, Negotin, Niš, Nova Varoš, Novi Pazar, Osečina, Paraćin, Petrovac na Mlavi, Pirot, Požarevac, Požega, Preševo, Priboj, Prijepolje, Prokuplje, Rača, Raška, Ražanj, Rekovac, Sjenica, Smederevo, Smederevska Palanka, Sokobanja, Surdulica, Svilajnac, Svrlijig, Šabac, Topola, Trstenik, Tutin, Ub, Užice, Valjevo, Varvarin, Velika Plana, Veliko Gradište, Vladimirci, Vlasotince, Vrnjačka Banja, Zaječar, Žabari, Žagubica, Žitorađa.

⁵ Accountability, transparency, participation, non-discrimination and efficiency

- Swiss PRO Programme does **not** have an obligation to spend all funds available for this activity and will fund **only** quality projects that meet specific criteria, based on their relevance, expected outcomes/impacts and sustainability of the proposed intervention.
- The project proposal will be dismissed if it was not submitted according to the requirements, or is incomplete, or is submitted after the deadline. This decision will be final.

5.3. Duration of the Projects

The implementation of activities from the projects will last for a **maximum of up to 12 (twelve) months**, and for a **minimum of 10 (ten) months**, from the day the grant contract is signed. However, **the active provision of social protection services (SPS) must last at least 9 (nine) months**.

5.4. The Grants Amount

The overall amount available under this Call for Proposals is USD 268,000.

The maximum value of the grant per project is USD 13,400.

5.5 Sustainability

The applicants are expected to demonstrate in the application in a clear and unequivocal way how the project will continue to function after the grant formally closes. The sustainability will weigh decisively during the project proposal evaluation.

5.6 Non-eligible activities and expenditures

Following activities and expenditures will not be considered eligible for funding by the Programme:

- i. Projects that do not explicitly tackle the topics listed above
- ii. Projects aimed at filling up any funding gaps from on-going activities
- iii. Activities that can be more appropriately funded from other funding sources
- iv. Activities where a substantial part of the budget covers recurrent costs and/or personnel costs
- v. Travel, catering and/or conference services costs not founded in project rationale
- vi. Projects focused on research or promotional activities with no specific outcomes
- vii. Extensive procurement of the equipment that is not grounded in the objectives of the Call and without a specific outcome
- viii. Extensive hardware/software purchases without a true foundation in project rationale
- ix. Extensive costs for promotional activities
- x. Items from the budget, including office costs, fees or salaries, already funded by other sources (other projects, other organisations – public or civic, etc.)
- xi. All costs originating before the project beginning or accrued after project closure

5.7. OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- i. All expenses (except costs land-line/mobile telephone, electricity and public heating – if applicable) planned to be funded from Swiss PRO's contribution presented in the budget must NOT include VAT
- ii. All planned project costs must be presented in dollars (USD)
- iii. In-kind contribution cannot be displayed in the project budget
- iv. Any major inconsistency in the application (e.g. the amounts mentioned in the budget are inconsistent with those mentioned in the application form, etc.) may lead to the rejection of the application

6. The Selection Criteria

Technical evaluation of the received proposals will be conducted in line with the following selection criteria:

| CRITERIA | MAX POINTS |
|--|------------|
| 1 Operational Capacity | 20 |
| 1.1 Does the applicant have experience in project management, especially in social inclusion area? <i>Applicants with references on the successful implementation of three or more projects (e.g. projects involving social protection services, vulnerable groups, international donors, etc.) will be awarded five (5) points</i> | 5 |
| 1.2 Did the applicant conduct needs assessment of vulnerable groups in local communities, prioritisation of needed SPS and on designing, proposing and implementing required solutions to those needs they would like to introduce? | 10 |
| 1.3 Does the applicant spend earmarked transfer for SPS in 2019? <i>Only for those LSGs who are eligible for earmarked transfer i.e. LSGs from II, III and IV group of development</i> | 5 |
| 2 The Relevance of the Action | 30 |
| 2.1. How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the Call for Proposals? | 10 |
| 2.2. Did the applicant include an integrated/cross-sectoral approach in addressing the proposed action? (e.g. connections among local institutions from key social areas, such as education, employment, social protection, and health) | 10 |
| 2.3. Proposed inter-municipal cooperation | 5 |
| 2.4. Does the proposal contain specific added-value elements, such as the promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, or addressing of multi-layered vulnerability (by integrating education, health, housing, social engagements, inter-ethnic/-cultural interaction) or innovation and best practices? | 5 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 3 Effectiveness and Feasibility of the Action | 25 |
| 3.1. Are the proposed activities appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected results with a clear and feasible action plan? | 5 |
| 3.2. How the provision of SPS introduced will be maintained after the completion of the project. If the provision of SPS will not be relevant upon completion of the project, please explain? | 10 |
| 3.3. Does the proposal contain objectively verifiable indicators for the outputs and outcomes of the action? | 5 |
| 3.4. Does the proposal contain a proper way of monitoring of SPS? | 5 |
| 4 Impact of the Action | 15 |
| 4.1. What is the number of people expected to benefit from social protection services? <i>Projects with at least 25 beneficiaries will receive ten (10) points and additional two (2) will be awarded for projects with more than 25 beneficiaries (maximum 12)</i> | 12 |
| 4.2 Does this project contribute to the enhancement of institutional capacities for providing SPS and addressing SP issues? | 3 |
| 5 Budget and Cost-effectiveness of the Action | 10 |
| 5.1. Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget? | 5 |
| 5.2. Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory? | 5 |
| TOTAL POINTS | 100 |

Only the applications that have been given a minimum total score of 60 points will be considered for selection.

7. Application Procedure

7.1. Application forms and supporting documents

The applicant has to submit the following application forms **in the English language**:

- **The Application Submission Form (Annex 1)**
- **The Project Proposal Application Form (Annex 2)**
- The Detailed **project budget proposal** in a table format (**Annex 3**). *Please note*, that all purchases that are to be made from the Swiss PRO contribution must be budgeted **without** VAT, i.e. – please list the amounts in the budget accordingly. Please list what you expect to be purchased from Swiss PRO contribution and what would be your contribution (e.g. raw materials, etc.). Please note that your contributions to the project realisation must include VAT.
- **Logical Framework (Annex 4)**
- **The Work Plan**, including human and other resources breakdown (**Annex 5**)

- **The Partnership Agreement or Letter of Intention for Partnership Agreement** in case of inter-municipal cooperation or between an LSG (as a lead applicant) and CSW (as the project partner) must be submitted.
- Additional documentation that may be submitted with the application files: recommendations, relevant support letters, evidence of previously implemented projects, and similar.

7.2 Where and how to send the application

- The Application Form must be **submitted via e-mail in PDF format (signed, stamped and scanned)** and in original editable format, in Word and Excel files. The signed, stamped and scanned versions must contain exactly the same application documents as the electronic versions in the original editable format. In case of discrepancies, signed, stamped and scanned version will prevail.
- The applicant must submit application forms **in the English language**.
- The total email size of the application should **not exceed 15 MB**, as that is the maximum allowed email message size by the UNOPS server. If the application is larger than 15 MB, documents should be sent in a series of e-mails, with each e-mail not exceeding 15 MB size thresholds. Each part of the application should be numbered in the e-mail subject field (e-mail subject/number).
- **Applications must be submitted to an e-mail address** below:
rsoc.applications@unops.org
Automatic notification of the delivery would follow upon the successful submission of the email application.
- The email application must be sent with the **e-mail subject** consist of the reference number and the title of the call for proposals (e.g. CFP 02-2020 – Support to Local Self-Governments in Implementation of Social Protection Services) including the name of the applicant.
- **Requests for clarification** should be submitted to the e-mail address below:
rsoc.cfp.clarifications@unops.org
- **The deadline for the submission of applications is 22 May 2020. Applications submitted after the deadline will be rejected.**
- Applications **must be received before midnight-local time** on the closing date of the Call for Proposal. Applicants are kindly advised to timely submit the application as late deliveries due to slow internet connection or other networks/hardware/software related problems may lead to disqualification of the application. Only the application received by UNOPS mail server before the deadline would be accepted.
- Applicants must verify that their Application is complete using the Checklist. **Incomplete applications may be rejected.**
- Applications sent by any other means (e.g. by fax or by post or by hand delivery) or delivered to other e-mails different from the stated in CfP will be rejected. **Hand-written applications will not be accepted.**

- UNOPS reserves the right to inquire original versions of submitted documents from applicants where/when original documentation is required or any specific document required by the Evaluation team.

8. Branding and Visibility

The grantee will be expected to comply with communications and visibility requirements as set by Swiss PRO. The Programme will provide the grantees with adequate guidelines and other information prior to the beginning of the project implementation.

These requirements cover the written and visual identity of Swiss PRO, the donors, and the implementing agency, and they apply to print, electronic and any other material, presentation, banner, invitation, sign, plaque or goods purchased with the funds provided by the donors and managed by Swiss PRO.

9. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

The grantees must monitor their own projects and prepare relevant records, including photos, which must be included in all reports.

The following reports will be expected from the grantee:

- Monthly progress reports (after the first month and on every 5th of the next month) in Serbian
- The milestone report after 80% of the first tranche spent, including financial aspect, and must be produced in English
- The final report assessing and analysing the implemented project, its outputs, and outcomes, submitted 30 days after finalisation of the project. The Final Report includes narrative and financial aspects, including photos, and must be produced in English. These reports will be considered public information.

Swiss PRO will monitor implementation and will audit grantees. The grantee can be evaluated at any time during the project implementation and subsequent actions may be taken according to the assessment's findings. The payment schedule will be linked to the project milestones and findings from the Programme's verification visits.

10. Additional consideration

Successful project proposals **must demonstrate** awareness of good governance requirements and sensitivity to gender through its internal criteria for the beneficiaries as well as reporting gender-disaggregated data.

Good governance aspects, as cross-cutting in all activities of the public sector, refer to proactively working on increasing the overall local governance, by improving the public sectors', including the local self-governments' accountability and transparency in its decision making and daily work; its strive towards increased and improved citizens participation in the said processes; its care for the excluded and fight against any form of discrimination; and its constant improvement of its efficiency and efficacy in public services delivery.

The focus on improving policies and practices that are providing for gender equality in both demand and supply ends of the public services delivery needs to be evidence-based. In that regard, collecting gender-disaggregated data is the first and needed step towards achieving the set gender-related objectives.

The applicant **must** clearly indicate how vulnerable and marginalised groups will be involved in and/or benefit from the project.

11. Indicative timeframe

| Activity | Timeframe/ Deadline |
|---|---------------------|
| Launching of the Public Call | 3 March 2020 |
| Info Sessions for the Call | 9 – 19 March 2020 |
| Deadline for Submission of Applications | 22 May 2020 |
| Information on the Evaluation Results | June 2020 |
| Signing of Agreement | July/August 2020 |

12. List of Annexes

DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED⁶:

- Annex 1: Submission Form (Word format)
- Annex 2: Project Proposal Application Form (Word format)
- Annex 3: Budget (Excel format)
- Annex 4: Logical Framework (Excel format)
- Annex 5: Work Plan
- Annex 6: Partner Factsheet

DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION:

- Annex 7: Application Checklist
- Annex 8: UNOPS Grant Support Agreement with General Conditions (template)
- Annex 9: Swiss PRO Grant Narrative Report (template)
- Annex 10: Swiss PRO Grant Financial Report (template)

⁶ Section 7.1 of the Call for Proposals