



Gender Equality Sector Call for Proposals (CFP 03-2020)

Support to Local Self-Governments in Strengthening Gender Equality Mechanisms

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 Serbia¹ regions 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 (LGs), 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, Arandelovac, 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, Svrlijig, 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

The protection of women from discrimination and respect for gender equality are the basis for the full realization of human rights established by international documents, confirmed by the Republic of Serbia. The process of our country's accession to the European Union requires respect for the highest international standards arising from these documents in the realization and protection of basic human rights.

There is a legal and strategic framework for gender equality in Serbia. [Law on Gender Equality](#) ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 104/09) regulates the creation of equal opportunities for exercising rights and obligations, taking special measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination based on gender and the procedure of legal protection of persons exposed to discrimination. [National Gender Equality Strategy](#) for the period from 2016 to 2020 is complementary to the Strategy for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia in 2013 ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 60/13) identified women as one of the nine vulnerable social groups that are particularly at risk of discrimination and discriminatory treatment. The [Law on Local Self-Government](#) ("Official Gazette of the RS", No. 129/2007, 83/2014 - other law, 101/2016 - other law and 47/2018) defines in Article 20 the competence of the local self-government to take care of the realization, protection and promotion of human and minority rights as well as gender equality. The [Law on Local Elections](#) ("Official Gazette of the RS", No. 129/2007, 34/2010 - CC decision, 54/2011, 12/2020, 16/2020 - authentic interpretation and 68/2020) prescribes a quota of 40% the underrepresented gender on the electoral lists, paving the way for greater participation of women in local decision-making.

In addition to the solid framework that regulates this area, its improvement is currently stagnant². Annual Reports of the European Commission for Serbia³ show stagnation or deterioration of key aspects that are being monitored. Rural women and Roma women remain among the most vulnerable groups, and gender-based violence remains a major problem, with an emphasis on the role of the media in supporting gender stereotypes. Globally, the coronavirus pandemic has affected women more, increasing their unpaid work, violence rates as well as economic uncertainty that has particularly affected single parents⁴. In this regard, work on gender equality issues at the local level is extremely important for increasing the resilience of local communities.

[The Gender Equality Index in the Republic of Serbia](#), which monitors the achievements in achieving equality in six different domains, indicates a slight improvement in the position of women in the job market in terms of increasing activity and employment rates, but the gender gap remains pronounced, as well as the fact that women's employment still lags behind men's employment.

[A special report of the Ombudsman](#) on the representation of women in decision-making positions and positions and activities of local Gender Equality Mechanisms (hereinafter referred to as: GEM) in local self-government units in Serbia, based on submitted data from 143 local self-government units, indicates that gender equality policies are lacking at the local level. There is a noticeable lack of sex-disaggregated data, women are under-represented in decision-making positions, their essential participation in decision-making is lacking, as well as proper coordination and implementation of the legislative and strategic action framework. GEMs are not established in all LGs, despite the provisions of the Law on Gender Equality, which prescribes these mechanisms. On the other hand, the law neither established a mechanism for supervising the execution

² [Non-paper on the state of play regarding chapters 23 and 24 for Serbia](#)

³ [Annual Report of the European Commission for Serbia](#)

⁴ [United Nation. The Impact of Covid-19 on Women](#)

of this provision, nor a penal provision for non-execution. In a large number of LGs, GEMs do not act sufficiently in accordance with the objective for which they were established, but their activities are mostly promotional, educational and non-binding. A particularly problematic aspect of local GEMs is the lack of continuity after local elections.

Within this Call for Proposals (CFP), the Programme will provide support to a maximum of 30 LGs in strengthening GEMs at the local level in order to promote gender equality, as well as the general improvement of local good governance practices that contribute to gender equality.

3. Objectives of the Intervention

Overall objective: Contribute to the institutional strengthening of local GEMs in promotion and advocacy of gender equality in local communities.

Specific objective: Contribute to improving the operational capacities of local GEMs to actively address gender equality policies and gender issues in the community.

4. The Scope of the Intervention

The Programme will support a **maximum of thirty (30) local GEMs' projects (as lead applicants) focused on one of the following areas:**

- 1. Promotion of gender equality and the European Charter for Equality between Women and Men in Local Life;**
 - Effective inclusion of men in gender equality issues;
 - Gender perspective in local institutions, organizations and media;
 - Increasing the level of public awareness, especially of young people, about gender equality and eliminating gender stereotypes;
- 2. Improving the status of women in the local community in some of these areas:**
 - Combating gender-based violence;
 - Improving women's health;
 - Activities aimed at the issues of multiple discrimination and improving the quality of life of vulnerable, marginalized and women with disabilities;
 - Economic empowerment of women;
 - Improving the status of rural women;
- 3. Improving women's participation in the decision-making process:**
 - Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at the local level;
 - Support for women's participation in local communities;
- 4. Improving the knowledge and competencies of local GEMs:**
 - The contribution of GEMs in strengthening gender attitudes in LGs' activities;
 - Support to networking activities of local GEMs to increase achievements and impact;
 - GEMs' capacity building (training, workshops, etc.).

5. Guidelines for the Applicants

5.1. General Eligibility Criteria

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

- i. Be one of **96 local self-governments** within the Region of Šumadija and Western Serbia and the Region of Southern and Eastern Serbia⁵.
- ii. To have established and appointed an active GEM (Commission, Council, person nominated for gender equality issues) that will implement the project. LG submits the project proposal while the local GEM is in charge of the project implementation, i.e. the member of the GEM who has been appointed project manager.
- iii. The project application/proposal must be in line with **relevant national and local legislation and/or strategies** (eg. laws, bylaws, strategies, action plans, etc.), and show a clear contribution to the achievement to the objectives of the national and local strategic documents and action plans for gender equality.
- iv. One applicant can submit **only one project proposal**.
- v. One GEM can submit a project proposal in partnership with another GEM. In case of inter-municipal or inter-institutional cooperation or partnership between a GEM from one LG (as lead applicant) and another GEM from another LG (as project partner), the partnership must be formalized in writing (Partnership Agreement or Letter of Intent to conclude a Partnership Agreement), which will be signed by both parties, with a clear division of tasks and responsibilities. The total value of the project in that case must not exceed the sum of the individual projects when the GEMs are applying separately.

5.2. The projects selection

- The projects that will be awarded will be selected, evaluated and approved through a **competitive process**.
- The quality of the project proposal, meaning - the quality of the information provided in the Application Form (description of the issues addressed by the project, measures/activities to be undertaken during the project implementation, expected results and impact), will be the only basis for

⁵ Aleksandrovac, Aleksinac, Arandjelovac, 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, Kuršumljija, 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, Piroć, 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.

the decision that the Programme Evaluation Commission will be making. Projects identified in local action plans for gender equality will have priority over other project proposals.

- 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 (*please, see below in Section 6 for the evaluation table and 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 the awarded project activities will last from 6 (six) to eight (8) months from the day the grant contract is signed.

5.4. The Grants Amount

The overall amount available under this Call for Proposals is USD 120,000.

The minimum grant amount per project is USD 3,000 while the maximum is USD 4,000. The potential contracting will be done in USD, and the payment to the beneficiaries will be in RSD.

When preparing the project budget, the financial participation of the local self-government is not necessary. However, each financial contribution will earn additional points during the evaluation process (*please, see below in Section 6 for the evaluation table and criteria*)

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. Development of planning and strategic documents;
- iii. Projects aimed at filling up any funding gaps from on-going activities;
- iv. Activities that can be more appropriately funded from other funding sources;
- v. Activities where a substantial part of the budget covers recurrent costs and/or personnel costs;
- vi. Travel, catering and/or conference services costs not founded in project rationale;
- vii. Budget items already financed from other sources (other projects, other organizations - public or civil, etc.);

- viii. Bank commission expenses;
- ix. Extensive hardware/software purchases without a true foundation in project rationale;
- x. Projects focused on research or promotional activities with no specific outcomes;
- xi. All costs originating before the project beginning or accrued after project closure.

5.7. Other important considerations

- i. All expenses (except the costs for 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**:

The Selection Criteria	Points
1. Operational Capacity	20
1.1 Does the applicant have experience in project management, especially in the field of gender equality? <i>Ten (10) points will be awarded to applicants with references on the successful implementation of three or more projects.</i>	10
1.2 Has the applicant adopted the Local Action Plan for Gender Equality? <i>Applicants who provide proof that they have a valid Local Action Plan will be awarded an additional five (5) points.</i>	5
1.3 Does the applicant have adopted the European Charter for Gender Equality? <i>Applicants who submit proof of this receive one (1) point.</i>	1
1.4 Does the applicant have a defined gender objective in some other strategic documents (eg. LAP on Employment, LAP on Roma integration, etc.) <i>Applicants who submit proof of this receive one (1) point.</i>	1
1.5 Do you have internal procedures, regulations, etc. which regulate gender equality issues? <i>Applicants who submit proof of this receive one (1) point.</i>	1
1.6 Has your LG participated in any type of technical assistance related to gender equality?? <i>If participating, the applicant receives additional two (2) points.</i>	2

2. The Relevance of the Action	28
2.1 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the Call for Proposals?	10
2.2 Did the applicant take into account the results of a gender analysis when designing the proposed Action?	3
2.3 Proposed inter-municipal or inter-institutional cooperation? Applicants who propose cooperation receive two and a half (2.5) points for each item.	5
2.4 Does the proposal contain specific added-value elements, such as addressing of multilayered vulnerability (by integrating education, health, housing, social engagements, inter-ethnic/-cultural interaction) or innovation and best practices?	5
2.5 How clearly defined and strategically selected are the participants (beneficiaries, target groups)? Are their needs clearly defined and does the project proposal respond to the identified needs and in an appropriate manner?	5
3. Effectiveness and Feasibility of the Action	22
3.1 Are the proposed activities appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected results?	5
3.2 How the activities of the proposed intervention will be maintained after the completion of the project?	10
3.3 Is the Work Plan clear and feasible?	3
3.4 Does the proposal contain objectively verifiable indicators for the outputs and outcomes of the action?	4
4. Impact of the Intervention	20
4.1. What is the number of people who are expected to benefit from the implementation of the project? <i>The project proposal with at least 5% of beneficiaries in relation to the target group of the population receives ten (10) points. (For example, the total number of the target group of young people in the local self-government is 2,000, the projected 5% of users are 100 young people.)</i>	10
4.2. Does this project contribute to the improvement of institutional capacities for the promotion of gender equality?	10
5. Budget and Cost-effectiveness of the Action	10
5.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	3
5.2 Does the project budget provide for the financial contribution of the project applicant?	2
5.3 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory?	5
Total	100

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

The eligibility costs verification based on the supporting documents requested by the Programme, will only be performed for the applications that have been selected according to their score (equal or above 60 points) and within the available funds.

7. Application Procedure

7.1. Application forms and supporting documents

The applicant has to submit the following application forms either **in Serbian or English language**⁶:

- **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 by Swiss PRO funds must be budgeted **without** VAT, i.e. – please list the amounts in the budget accordingly. Please note that your contributions (if applicable) to the project realisation must include VAT.
- **The Work Plan**, including human and other resources breakdown (**Annex 4**).
- **Partner Factsheet (Annex 5)** - in the case of a partnership
- **Decision on the establishment/appointment of the GEM** (Council/Commission for Gender Equality); If the GEM is the person to whom the GE jobs have been assigned, please send the relevant act or systematization of jobs.
- Decision on the adoption of the LAP for Gender Equality (if applicable).
- **The Partnership Agreement or Letter of Intention for Partnership Agreement** in the case of inter-municipal or inter-institutional cooperation.
- **Additional documentation that may be submitted with the application files:** relevant local official documents (eg. guidelines, rules, regulations, etc.) and other, as appropriate or on request.
- The project proposal can be submitted in Serbian. If the Evaluation Committee approves the project proposal, the project applicant must translate all relevant application documentation into English, as it becomes part of the UNOPS contract, and according to UN rules, such documentation must be in English.
- After approval of project proposals, where it will be assessed whether the budget is acceptable and whether the costs are real, budget adjustments can be made at the request of UNOPS in order to comply with the project proposal.

⁶ Applicants may submit all application documents in English if this is feasible at this stage of the process.

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 versions will prevail.
- Submit application documentation **in Serbian or English**.
- 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 emails, with each email not exceeding 15 MB size thresholds. Each part of the application should be numbered in the email subject field (email subject/number).
- **Applications must be submitted to the following email address:** rsoc.applications@unops.org
Automatic notification of the delivery would follow upon the successful submission of the email application
- **In the subject of the e-mail**, state the reference number and name of the Call for Proposals (eg. Public Call CFP 03-2020 - Support to Local Self-Governments in Strengthening Gender Equality Mechanisms), including the name of the local self-government as the applicant.
- **Requests for clarification** should be sent no later than ten days before the deadline for submission of applications (02 October 2020) to the following email (address: rsoc.cfp.clarifications@unops.org). Responses will be published no later than seven days (06 October 2020) before the application deadline.
- **The deadline for the submission of applications is extended until 23 October 2020.**
- Applications must be received **before midnight-local time** on the closing date of the Call for Proposals. 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 emails different from those 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 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.

10. Additional consideration

Successful project proposals **must demonstrate** awareness of good governance requirements and gender sensitivity through internal criteria for beneficiaries as well as reporting using gender-disaggregated data. The project applicant **must** clearly indicate how vulnerable groups will be involved in the project and/or how they will benefit from the project.

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.

11. Indicative timeframe

Activity	Timeframe/ Deadline
Launching of the Public Call	10 September 2020
Info Sessions for the Call	17 - 22 September 2020
Deadline for Submission of Applications	23 October 2020
Information on the Evaluation Results	November 2020
Signing of Agreements	December 2020

12. List of Annexes

DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED⁷:

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

DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION:

- Annex 6: Application Checklist
- Annex 7: UNOPS Grant Support Agreement with General Conditions (template)
- Annex 8: Swiss PRO Grant Narrative Report (template)
- Annex 9: Swiss PRO Grant Financial Report (template)

⁷ Chapter 7.1 of the Call for Proposals.