



Social Inclusion Sector Public Call (01-2021)

Support to LSGs in Implementation of Social Protection Services as Adequate Response to Covid-19 Consequences

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, Arandelovac, Arilje, Babušnica, Bajina Bašta, Batočina, Bela Palanka, Blace, Bogatić, Bojnik, Boljevac, Bor, Bosilegrad, Brus, Bujanovac, Crna Trava, Čačak, Čajetina, Čićevac, 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 [World Health Organization \(WHO\) declared](#) on 11 March 2020 the outbreak of the viral disease COVID-19 had reached the level of a global pandemic. The WHO went on to call for governments to take urgent action to stop the spread of the virus.

In Serbia, the State of Emergency (SoE) was declared on 15 March 2020 and resulted in the introduction of strict containment measures for the citizens, especially for the elderly (65+ years of age), including suspension of international air travel, closure of borders, bans on public gatherings, school closures, and a curfew. During the SoE the social protection services were primarily restrictive (bans on visits, cessation of work), and thus became even less accessible while the scope of the demand for services has increased dramatically, especially in terms of the prohibition movement. Support for certain groups, such as the homeless, was almost completely absent while the impact of the crisis on other specific groups has not been documented (victims of trafficking, addicts or prisoners, for example). Since schools, day care centers and personal assistants stopped working, children with disabilities were left without support outside the family circle. In some instances, volunteers, neither trained nor screened, have taken the place of professional staff, as a kind of parallel provision. There are also indications that the number of victims of domestic violence has increased throughout the period of crisis. CSOs have faced considerable difficulties in terms of continuity of services, and many finding protocols introduced being insensitive to their needs.²

Although the national and local governments took various measures as an effort to alleviate the impact of the crisis, especially on vulnerable groups, still, the key findings from the survey conducted by Swiss PRO³ showed that LSGs and Centres for Social Welfare (CSWs) actually do **not have developed special measures** for dealing with emergencies towards particularly vulnerable social groups who are already at risk, now should tackle the many social and economic dimensions of this crisis. In this regard, the special focus in recovery action must be on women, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, national minorities and other vulnerable groups.⁴ The need for immediate **support to the local social protection system** is immense, especially in provision of social services like home care for the elderly, especially in rural areas, care for PWDs (both children and adults) including personal assistance, and similar. In many cases, these are beyond the currently available resources and capacities of local social services providers. That is why this immediate intervention will be vital for so many vulnerable citizens in the need for assistance.

Finally, according to the mapping data from the [Mapping social care services and material support within the mandate of LSG](#)⁵, conducted in 2020, the key findings generally indicate the modest capacities of the LSGs, especially in terms of provision of care services. Namely, social care services were provided in 137 out of 145 municipalities and cities. Approximately one in five LSGs provided only one service, usually home care for adults and the elderly. More diverse and complex services intended for a larger number of beneficiary groups were available only in some of the major cities, while municipalities with two to three established services prevailed.

² [Social Protection in the Western Balkans Responding to the Covid 19 Crisis July 2020](#)

³ Swiss PRO/UNOPS RSOP Survey on Socio-Economic effects of Covid-19 on Programme beneficiaries (LSGs, CSOs, public entities, CSW), conducted in May 2020 on a sample of 62 LSGs, 24 CSOs, 8 public entities and 8 CSW

⁴ [United Nations Report, March 2020, Shared Responsibility Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19](#)

⁵ The mapping was conducted by the Centre for Social Policy in cooperation with the SIPRU Team

With this Call for Proposal (CFP), the Programme will provide support to up to 20 LSGs in the implementation of social protection services as the response to Covid-19 consequences with the aim of addressing the recognised needs of local vulnerable groups who affected the most during the crisis. In this way, the Programme will contribute to achievement of the overall national recovery framework to reduce social impact on the most vulnerable groups.

3. Objectives of the Intervention

Overall objective: To contribute to the improved LG's capacities in planning and delivery of social protection services and social inclusion measures focused on alleviating COVID-19 effects

Specific Objective: To enhance access to and relevance of social protection services at the local level benefitting at least 1000 beneficiaries from the vulnerable social groups.⁶

4. The Scope of Intervention

With the aim of addressing the needs of the local population from the vulnerable groups that are affected the most during the Covid-19 crisis, 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;

⁶ 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. The most important is justification that the target group for the project proposal is determined as the one who is the most affected by the crisis caused by Covid-19 epidemic.

- ✓ Innovative approach might investigate introducing new beneficiaries as a target group who are not covered with existing standardised SPS.

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 LSGs that are within the Region of Šumadija and Western Serbia and the Region of Southern and Eastern Serbia⁷ that belongs to II, III or IV group of development and currently have up to three or less social protection services in place. Please note that in case that all mentioned criteria are fulfilled, the LSGs that are awarded on previous Programme Call for Support to LSGs in Implementation of Social Protection Services⁸ are eligible to apply but only for different proposal of social protection service than they awarded for**
- 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. 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.
- iv. One LSG as a lead applicant can submit only one project proposal. One applicant can be awarded only one grant.
- v. One LSG could be a project partner in inter-municipal cooperation and submit its own separate application. In this case, the separate project proposal should address different actions.

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:
 - ✓ be based on previous local needs assessment of particular vulnerable groups in terms of impact of Covid-19 consequences

⁷ 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, 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.

⁸ Arilje, Babušnica, Bela Palanka, Žagubica, Ivanjica, Krupanj, Loznica, Mionica, Medveđa, Novi Pazar, Prokuplje, Požarevac, Raška, Ražanj, Rekovac, Svilajnac, Surdulica, Sjenica, Topola, Užice and Šabac

- ✓ 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 principles⁹ in the programming of the activities, as appropriate to the content of the project proposal
- 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 8 (eight) months.**

5.4. The Grants Amount

The overall amount available under this Call for Proposals is USD 380,000.

The maximum value of the grant per project is USD 19,000.

When preparing the project budget, the financial participation of the LSG is not necessary. However, financial contribution of at least 10% of donor`s funds or more 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. 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

⁹ Accountability, transparency, participation, non-discrimination and efficiency

- 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 the 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 in terms of Covid-19 consequences, prioritisation of needed SPS and on designing, proposing and implementing required solutions to those needs they would like to introduce?	15
2 The Relevance of the Action	25
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)	5
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	17
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 during the crisis?	5
5 Budget and Cost-effectiveness of the Action	13
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
5.3. Does the project budget provide the financial contribution of the project applicant of at least 10% of the donor`s funds?	3
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.
- **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 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 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** consisting of the reference number and the title of the call for proposals (e.g. CFP 01-2021 – 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 26 February 2021. 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 emails different from 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 70% 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	25 January 2021
Info Sessions for the Call	1 - 5 February 2021
Deadline for Submission of Applications	26 February 2021
Information on the Evaluation Results	15 March 2021
Signing of Agreement	3 May 2021

12. List of Annexes

DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED¹⁰:

- Annex 1: Submission Form (Word format)
- Annex 2: Project Proposal Application Form (Word format)
- Annex 3: Budget (Excel format)

DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION:

- Annex 4: Application Checklist
- Annex 5: UNOPS Grant Support Agreement with General Conditions (template)
- Annex 6: Swiss PRO Grant Narrative Report (template)
- Annex 7: Swiss PRO Grant Financial Report (template)

¹⁰ Section 7.1 of the Call for Proposals