

Sector 1 – Good Governance and Social Inclusion

Citizens Involvement Fund Grants **Call for Project Proposals**

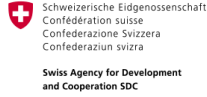
1. BACKGROUND

European PROGRES is a multi-donor Programme, financed by the European Union (EU), the Government of Switzerland and the Government of Serbia, designed to support sustainable development in the South East and South West Serbia. The Programme has been conceptualised jointly with the European Integration Office of the Government of the Republic of Serbia (SEIO), which has responsibility for monitoring implementation and providing assistance and facilitation. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has been granted with an initial budget of 17.46 million Euros and has the overall responsibility for the Programme implementation.

Through a multi-sector approach this Programme will contribute to sustainable development of underdeveloped areas and creation of more favourable environment for infrastructure and business growth by strengthening local governance, improving vertical coordination, planning and management capacities, improving business environment and development, as well as enhancing implementation of social inclusion and employment policies.

The Programme works towards achieving four main results, while good governance principles are interwoven as a cross cutting aspect of the entire intervention:

1. Strengthened local governance, planning and management capacities through introduction of new, or improvement/elimination of existing procedures and processes in line with the principles of good governance
2. Increased competitiveness of local economy through improved business environment and management/organizational capacities of small and medium enterprises/agricultural cooperatives
3. Improved access to employment, offering equal opportunities to both men and women, and social inclusion of most vulnerable and marginalised groups through development and implementation of local policies resulting in reduced migration from South East and South West Serbia
4. Effects of Serbia's European accession communicated to general public.



Final beneficiaries, but also the key stakeholders and financial contributors of this Programme are 34 municipalities from the third and fourth group of development level, which have responsibility of taking ownership of activities implemented in their territory:

- Novi Pazar, Ivanjica, Nova Varoš, Priboj, Prijepolje, Raška, Sjenica and Tutin, in the South West Serbia
- Prokuplje, Blace, Žitorađa, Kuršumlija in the Toplica District
- Leskovac, Bojnik, Vlasotince, Lebane, Medveđa and Crna Trava in the Jablanica District
- Vranje, Bosilegrad, Bujanovac, Vladičin Han, Preševo, Surdulica and Trgovište in the Pčinja District
- Brus in Rasinska District
- Aleksinac, Gadžin Han, Doljevac, Merošina and Svrljig in Niški District
- Babušnica, Bela Palanka in Pirotski District
- Knjaževac in Zaječarski District.

Other beneficiaries include municipality-founded institutions and public utility companies, civil society organisations (CSO) and media in the participating municipalities. It is the inhabitants of the South East and South West Serbia who will feel the biggest benefits of the Programme.

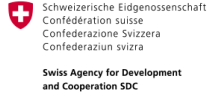
2. INTRODUCTION

One of the important interventions of the Programme relates to providing means and mechanism for fostering, forging and supporting partnerships among local self-governments (LSGs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) at local levels, in order for some relevant and pressing issues, that were affecting the citizens' quality of life, to become more effectively and efficiently addressed.

To that end, the programme had provided funds and other support in 2014 including technical, for 20 LSGs-CSOs partnership projects. Most of these projects were focused on support to marginalised and vulnerable groups and addressed the needs of Roma, people with disabilities, youth and women.

In a recent survey conducted by the Programme on cooperation between CSOs and LSGs in the AoR¹, more than 80% of LSGs and 37% of CSOs evaluated their cooperation as frequent. However, almost 60% of the LSGs say that cooperation is initiated from both sides, but only 20% of CSOs agrees with this opinion. These findings suggest that sustained effort in fostering partnerships between local CSOs/NGOs and LSGs is necessary in order to make this approach for addressing

¹ For more information, please visit: <http://www.europeanprogres.org/biblioteka/sr/48/Istrazivanja-studije-i-publikacije/>



the needs of citizens, especially those from vulnerable and marginalised groups, enduring and stable.

The European PROGRES is now looking into scaling up its interventions in this matter, by providing opportunities to the local partners to expand further their partnership experiences in responding to the needs of their communities. It aims at supporting even more substantial partnerships among LSGs and CSOs, by relying on ever more increasing importance of LSGs for local but also for overall development, by engaging and employing the existing assets of the civil sector, such as diversity, expertise, knowledge and different skills, in reaching the common objective – a sustainable socio-economic development.

3. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE INTERVENTION

The importance and the responsibilities of local authorities for the overall development of a country has been increasingly recognised and validated throughout the world in the last twenty-five or so years.

In the *Agenda for Change*², the European Commission urges the EU to work more closely with “... civil society and local and regional authorities as their role in development grows”, while working to “strengthen its links with civil society organisations, [other] social partners and local authorities” and consider available “ways of mobilising [available] local authorities’ expertise” for development.

Another important EU document³ points to and emphasises the significant expertise local governments have “*not only in terms of service delivery but also as catalysts for change, conflict prevention, decentralisation and confidence-building in the development process*”. In other words, one of the key responsibilities of local governments is to support sustainable, democratic and inclusive local socio-economic development, thus significantly contributing to a country’s overall development.

This catalyst role of LSGs involves what many authors on local governance are calling “*territorial coalitions*”⁴ that are striving to include key local actors, such as civil society and its organisations, the private sector, educational institutions, and others. Here the importance of citizens’

² The European Commission, “*Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: An Agenda for Change*”, 2011

³ The European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of European Union, “*The European Consensus on Development*”, 2005

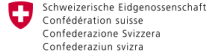
⁴ The Government of Serbia, The Office for Cooperation with Civil Society, The Office’s Strategic Framework for Cooperation with Civil Society 2011-2014, *Strategic Axis 5: “The objective is to maximize the effects of reforms at local level through synergetic actions of LSGs and CSOs”*.



Republic of Serbia



Programme Funded by EU



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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Implementing Partner



engagement through their CSOs in partner LSGs⁵ to – among other, provide improved, more efficient public services, to strengthen democracy and local governance by assisting local authorities in switching from often only vertical accountability dimension, to a more horizontal and downward one, by reification of the good governance principles of accountability, transparency and participation into practice, becomes evident.

The idea of having this multi-actor approach to local socio-economic development is still relatively definitely underutilised in Serbia today. This approach, which involves genuine partnerships among local governments and civil society organisations, stemming from mutual recognition of the necessity of acting together in the best interest of the citizens, especially of those from the vulnerable and marginalised groups, has proved in the previous programme to yield significant and substantial benefits to the local communities.

European PROGRES is thus going to continue providing the LSGs and CSOs with this outstanding and viable opportunity to develop and establish relevant partnerships at local level from which the whole communities, and all tiers of society, but especially the impoverished, vulnerable and marginalised, will have their lives changed for the better.

4. OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the CIF intervention is to promote and initiate establishment of new or improve existing practices in resolving agglomerated issues and problems at local level, while observing good governance, gender equality and social inclusion aspects of the process.

The immediate objective of the CIF intervention is to improve citizens' quality of life by tackling pressing issues, identified in collaboration between local governments and citizens and their organisations and associations.

5. SCOPE OF THE INTERVENTION

The Citizens' Involvement Fund will award projects selected, evaluated and approved in a transparent and structured process, which are addressing the following key thematic areas:

1. Empowering vulnerable groups through employment, education and training, with particular focus on women, Roma and people with disabilities

⁵ "European Economic and Social Committee recommends to EC to use IPA funds especially in supporting the number of partnerships among the CSOs, but also among the CSOs and public authorities [in Serbia]", The Role of Civil Society in EU-Serbia Relations, European Economic and Social Committee, Brussels, 2013

- a. Creation of permanent, full employment for vulnerable and marginalised citizens through innovative and sustainable solutions, with a strong social dimension and impact

2. Improve equal access to public services and increase employability of vulnerable and marginalised citizens

- a. Improve availability of, increase equal access to and enhance efficiency, effectiveness and equitable distribution of public services (including health, education and social services) to vulnerable and marginalised citizens
- b. Increasing employability of vulnerable groups, including young Roma, especially young Roma women, through organisation of vocational education and/or trainings at accredited institutions/organisations

3. Inter-ethnic dialogue and inter-cultural cooperation

- a. Development and promotion of inter-ethnic and inter-cultural dialogue aiming at increasing community cohesion, especially among young people
- b. Improvement of inter-ethnic relations in regard to functioning of the public institutions/organisations
- c. Development, adoption and implementation of measure(s) for (re)building trust, confidence and tolerance among different ethnic communities
- d. Further strengthening of municipal Interethnic Relations Councils' capacities and competencies

4. Improving Good Governance at local level by addressing transparency in budgeting, awarding/funding and monitoring/reporting on financing local CSOs

- a. Improve transparency in budgeting, allocating and funding local CSOs from LSGs financial sources, thus improving overall level of Good Governance in municipality.

6. GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

A. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- i. Eligible to apply for the CIF are fully registered citizens' non-for-profit organisations or associations (CSOs), or local self-governments (LSGs) and their institutions and organisations.

- ii. The CIF appertains to the 34 municipalities participating in European PROGRES (*see above for the full list*). Only CSOs legally registered for a minimum of 1 (one) year with the seat in one of the said municipalities will have a possibility to apply for the CIF. Organisations with a seat outside of European PROGRES Area of Responsibility (AoR) are not eligible for this Call.
- iii. **Only a partnership**, formalised through a **legally binding** agreement, between at least one CSO and an LSG or a CSO and an LSG's institution or organisation, may apply with a project for this fund. The Centre for Social Work will be eligible to apply only as partner organisation. A partnership **must have** a lead partner agreed between the partners and stipulated in the partnership legal document. The lead partner is submitting the application to European PROGRES. The lead partner enters the contractual arrangements with UNOPS, as the organisation which is implementing European PROGRES. The Partnership Agreement/Contract, stipulates roles and responsibilities of each partner and must be submitted with the application.
- iv. Partnerships must secure a **financial** contribution of at least **10%** of the value of the donors' participation. A mutual agreement on this, clearly stating each partner's contribution(s), must be submitted with the application. Only actual funds transferred to a separate account, once the contract is being signed and immediately before European PROGRES transfers its funds to the same account, are considered as "financial contribution".
- v. The Lead Partner and all other participating partners must have clear records from previous projects involving international donors and organisations.
- vi. One partnership may apply with more than one project, but only one grant may be awarded to one partnership, regardless who appears as the lead partner in application.
- vii. Submitted project proposals **must be** linked to relevant and valid local strategic documents and to corresponding action plans.

C. DURATION OF PROJECTS

The implementation of the CIF projects will last for a **maximum of 10 (ten) months**, and for a **minimum of 7 (seven)**, from the day the grant contract is signed.



D. THE GRANTS

European PROGRES will provide **up to EUR 15,000 per project**. The total value of a project (counting in the applicant's financial contribution) cannot exceed EUR 25,000.

European PROGRES does not have an obligation to spend all funds available for this activity (EUR 345,000) and will fund only quality projects that meet specific criteria, selected in a transparent and competitive process.

E. SUSTAINABILITY

The applicant is 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.

F. NON-ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES AND EXPENDITURES

Following projects and/or activities will weigh low in evaluation and below listed expenditures will not be considered eligible:

- 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 hardware/software purchases without true foundation in project rationale
- viii. Items from the budget, including office costs, fees or salaries, already funded by other sources (other projects, other organisations – public or civic, etc.)
- ix. All costs originating before the project beginning or accrued after project closure

G. THE SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be selected based on assessment of their various aspects, including the following:

1. Relevance of the proposal to the objectives of the Call
2. Sustainability of the proposed project
3. Planned outcomes and envisaged impacts of the project
4. Operational and financial capacity of the applicant
5. Methodology proposed
6. Partnership arrangement/contract
7. The Proposed Budget and its Cost-Effectiveness

F. SUBMITTING THE PROJECT PROPOSALS

Project proposals **must** be submitted in English, and **must** contain following application files:

- Proposal Submission Form
- Application Form
- Detailed project budget proposal (as a separate Excel document) composed of three parts (overall budget, sources of funding and narrative budget)
- Logframe (as a separate Excel document)
- Detailed Work Plan (as a separate Excel document)
- CSO Fact Sheet (attached to this Call) regardless of whether the CSO applies as lead or partner organisation
- Partnership Agreement/contract

Other necessary documents are listed in the *List of Required Documents* (attached to this Call). Failing to submit either of these documents will mean **immediate** disqualification of the application.

Any major inconsistency in the application form (e.g. the amounts mentioned in the budget are inconsistent with those mentioned in the application form) may lead to the rejection of the application.

Project proposals **must** be submitted as 1) one printed copy of all application files, and 2) in electronic form, all application files, on a CD. Printed copies of application

files have to be bound and **must have** original stamps and signatures on appropriate places. Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

The applicant should submit **all supporting documents** (organization's statute, bank statements, reference lists, pro-forma invoices, etc.) **also in electronic form as scanned documents**.

In case project proposal refers to infrastructure works, the applicant **must** submit relevant technical documentation as well (permits, technical design, Bill of Quantity etc.).

7. THE PROJECT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

The project proposal **must** contain the following (*the full application form is attached to this Call*):

I. Context and Problem Analysis, backed by available and relevant data

II. Budget Proposal. Brief overview in the Application Form: state how much funds the project will need, how much will be financial contribution of the partner etc. A detailed budget proposal *must* be submitted as a separate Excel file and presented in a clear and intelligible way. All amounts must be presented in RSD.

All expenses (except costs of fuel, land-line telephone, electricity and public heating – if applicable) that should be funded by European PROGRES presented in the budget **must not** include VAT. European PROGRES considers as financial contribution **only** contribution in money paid to the project account by the partnership. *In-kind* contributions will be appraised but will **not** be eligible as financial contributions and **should not** be presented in the budget.

III. Project Strategy. Description of how your project is going to address the problem, what strategies are going to be used, what major activities are planned and how these activities are going to contribute to achieving the project objective.

IV. Log frame. In a separate file (*the form is attached as Annex 3*)

V. Detailed Work Plan. The Detailed WP for the whole implementation period presented in a clear and intelligible way, with timelines that include weeks and months, *must* be submitted in a separate Excel file (*example attached as Add-On*).



VI. Details on Partnership. Description of roles and responsibilities of each partner, operational modalities, and financial responsibilities and contributions; strategy for sustaining the partnership will be specially considered.

VII. Institutional Profile. Description of the lead organisation, including registration details, contact information, casting of the roles within the partnership, relevant experience on similar projects with international donors and organisations. *CSO Fact Sheet* is attached to this Call and is to be submitted as a separate file.

VIII. Project sustainability. Describe the main preconditions and assumptions during and after the implementation phase. Provide a detailed risk analysis and possible contingency plans. This should include at least a list of risks associated with each activity proposed accompanied by relevant corrective measures to mitigate such risks. Describe how you plan to secure sustainability of the project after the implementation ends. This can include aspects of necessary measures and strategies built into the action, follow-up activities, and ownership by target groups etc. Please make distinction between: *Financial sustainability* (financing of follow-up activities, sources of revenue for covering all future operating and maintenance costs etc.), *Institutional level* (which structures would allow, and how, the results of the action to continue be in place after the end of the action? Address issues about the local "ownership" of action outcomes) and *Policy level* where applicable (what structural impact will the action have - e.g. will it lead to improved local policies, codes of conduct, methods, etc.).

IX. Evaluation Strategy. Project proposal must have a proposal for evaluation strategy, with outlined set of indicators.

8. BRANDING AND VISIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

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

These requirements cover the written and visual identity of European PROGRES, 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 European PROGRES.

During a project implementation, the lead partner must organize at least one event to present project results. The concept for this event should be outlined in the project proposal.

9. MONITORING, REPORTING AND EVALUATION

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

The following reports will be expected from the grantee:

- Monthly progress reports (after first month and thereafter)
- Final report assessing and analysing project implemented, its outputs and outcomes.

All reports include narrative and financial aspects. These reports will be considered public information.

European PROGRES will monitor implementation and 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 project milestones and findings from the Programme's audits.

10. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Successful project proposals **must demonstrate** awareness of good governance requirements, sensitivity to gender and social inclusion issues. The applicant **must** clearly indicate how vulnerable and marginalised groups will be involved in and/or benefit from the project.

11. DOCUMENTS ATTACHED TO THIS CALL (ANNEXES)

1. Application Checklist
2. Proposal Submission Form
3. Grant Application Form
4. Project Budget
5. Logframe Form
6. Work Plan
7. CSO Factsheet
8. The List of required registration and supporting documents (Serbian version)
9. Scoring Criteria
10. European PROGRES Reports (Grant Narrative and Grant Project Financial)
11. UNOPS Grant Support Agreement with General Conditions – Template



Republic of Serbia



Programme Funded by EU



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Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



Implementing Partner

EUROPEAN
PROGRES

12. SUBMISSION DEADLINE AND EUROPEAN PROGRES OFFICES ADDRESSES

All proposals must be **received** by European PROGRES via registered mail or in person at the addresses below, **by 16:00 hours, Wednesday 4 May 2016**. The application **must** be submitted in a sealed envelope and marked with the reference number and the title of the call for proposals (CFP 03-2016 - Citizens Involvement Fund 2) together with the full name and address of the applicant and labelled with “NE OTVARATI PRE ZVANIČNOG OTVARANJA POZIVA”.

European PROGRES

Ćirila i Metodija 23
18000 Niš

or

Kragujevačka 1
36300 Novi Pazar

or

Kneza Miloša 52
17000 Vranje

Applications that are received after the deadline or via email **will not be considered**.