

Social Inclusion Sector

Public Call (02-2021)

Support to Addressing COVID-19 Consequences in Substandard Settlements

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 excluded 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 excluded 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, Ćićevac, Ćuprija, 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, Lozница, Lučani, Ljig, Ljubovija, Majdanpek, Mali Zvornik, Malo Crniće, Medveda, Merošina, Mionica, Negotin, Niš, Nova Varoš, Novi Pazar, Osečina, Paraćin, Petrovac na Mlavi, Pirot, Požarevac, Požega, Preševo, Priboj, Prijeplje, Prokuplje, Rača, Raška, Ražanj, Rekovac, Sjenica, Smederevo, Smederevska Palanka, Sokobanja, Surdulica, Svilajnac, Svrliš, Šabac, Topola, Trgovište, Trstenik, Tutin, Ub, Užice, Valjevo, Varvarin, Velika Plana, Veliko Gradište, Vladimirci, Vladičin Han, Vlasotince, Vranje, Vrњачка 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.

The rights of Roma communities in substandard settlements in Serbia have been facing deep challenges for decades, which, as a form of long-term structural neglect, has led to deeper inequalities in the context of emergency. During the COVID emergency, housing/shelter implications have proven insufficient for the satisfaction of basic human needs and upholding human dignity. Namely, according to a mapping over the housing implications in mainly Roma substandard settlements,² the results claim that 11% of the settlements in Serbia (around 15,000 people) have no access to electricity or clean water, which endangers a number of key life actions, especially those related to health conditions. In a more general sense, at this moment, more than 150,000 people, mostly Roma, are estimated to live in substandard living conditions, according to UN methodology of assessment. This includes insufficient access to infrastructure and safe shelter, which affects the lives of particularly excluded groups at all times, with tremendously aggravated impact during the emergency.

In terms of education, according to UNICEF's survey on the socio-economic impact of Covid-19 participation of students in distance learning in the Covid period was high – 99% of students in primary and secondary education participated in distance learning by watching TV lessons and/or using various online platforms, or taking part in alternative forms of distance learning (e.g. receiving printed materials) while 17% of Roma students and 25% of Roma children need additional support in education and were not included in any form of distance learning, threatening to cause the deepening of inequality in learning. The most prevalent reason why Roma students did not participate in online learning was lack of internet access (40% of the cases) and unavailability of adequate devices (30% of the cases).

Many Roma face extreme poverty risks as a result of previous precarious working conditions as well as lack of income and resources. The crisis has substantially impacted the already poor economic capability of the Roma, especially those who are beneficiaries of social welfare, those who collect secondary raw materials or those who carry out work in markets, in cleaning services or generate income as musicians. In addition, due to lack of personal documents many of them were left out of the benefits programs that have been initiated to date by the government.³

With this Call for Proposal (CFP), the Programme will provide support to up to 10 (ten) social inclusion projects implemented in mandatory partnership of LSGs as a lead applicant and CSO as a partner or implemented independently by CSO as a lead applicant. The project proposals will serve as the response to Covid-19 consequences with the aim of addressing the recognised needs of citizens of Roma substandard settlements. In

² [Mapping of Substandard Settlements in Serbia OHCHR/SIPRU](#)

³ UN Serbia Covid - 19 Socio-economic Impact Assessment

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: Improve the access of citizens of Roma substandard settlements to their rights and needs through better provision of social inclusion policies and practices.

Specific Objective: Enhance access to the rights and fulfilment of the needs of at least 300 citizens living in Roma substandard settlements.

4. The Scope of Intervention

The Programme will directly support **up to ten (10) local social inclusion projects implemented by LSG as a lead applicant at its territory in mandatory partnership with a CSO, or implemented independently by CSO as a lead applicant** that will be addressing the rights and the needs of citizens living in substandard settlements alleviating the consequences of COVID-19 **at the territory of 59 LSGs that in accordance with the Mapping of Substandard Settlements in Serbia has at least one informal settlement at its territory with at least 100 citizens.**⁴ The projects will be selected, evaluated and approved in a **competitive process**, while the following **key thematic areas** will be addressed:

- Access to health and sanitation
- Support children in education (mentorship support including distance learning resources and school supplies)
- Formal or non-formal learning through vocationally-oriented training for youth up to 30 years of age
- Improvement of work safety for the most common occupations among citizens in substandard settlements (waste collectors, sellers on the market and musicians)
- Raising awareness on COVID-19 and fostering behavioral changes
- Support for livelihood recovery

5. Guidelines for the Applicants

5.1. General Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility criteria for LSG as an lead applicant:

⁴ Aleksinac, Aranđelovac, Bela Palanka, Blace, Bogatić, Bojnik, Boljevac, Bor, Bosilegrad, Brus, Bujanovac, Gadžin Han, Doljevac, Despotovac, Jagodina, Knjaževac, Koceljeva, Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Kruševac, Kučevac, Kuršumlija, Lajkovac, Lebane, Leskovac, Loznica, Lučani, Ljig, Ljubovija, Merošina, Mionica, Niš, Novi Pazar, Osečina, Paraćin, Pirot, Požarevac, Požega, Preševo, Priboj, Prokuplje, Raška, Smederevo, Smederevska Palanka, Surdulica, Svilajnac, Svrlijig, Šabac, Topola, Trstenik, Ub, Valjevo, Varvarin, Vladimirci, Vlasotince, Vrnjačka Banja, Vranje, Vladičin Han, Zaječar

- i. **Be one of 57 LSGs that are within the Region of Šumadija and Western Serbia and the Region of Southern and Eastern Serbia⁵ and that in accordance with the Mapping of Substandard Settlements in Serbia has at least one informal settlement at its territory with at least 100 citizens**
- ii. The LSG is expected to provide its financial contribution of a minimum of 10% out of the total value of the project eligible costs while in-kind contribution (e.g. costs for resolving/alleviating sanitation issue in informal settlement, like water supply, per diems for sanitation and health workers, etc.) will be under special consideration during the evaluation.
- iii. **Mandatory partnership between LSG (as a lead partner) and local CSO (as a project partner).** The partnership must be in a written form (Partnership Agreement or Letter of Intention for Partnership Agreement), signed by relevant signatories from both sides, and with clear division of tasks and responsibilities. It will be possible for one LSG to forge partnerships with up to two local CSOs, but the total grant budget for one municipality will remain the same.
- iv. One LSG as a lead applicant can submit only one project proposal. One applicant can be awarded only one grant.

Eligibility criteria for CSO as a partner:

- i. Only CSOs legally registered for a minimum of 2 (two) years with clear and provable track-record from the previous projects involving international donors and organisations.
- ii. CSO as a partner should be Roma-founded CSO, Roma Associations or other CSO with provable track-record from the previous projects addressing improvement of Roma status
- iii. CSOs from one LSG may forge a partnership with non-domicile LSG, under the condition that the other LSG has at least one substandard Roma settlement with at least 100 citizens and CSO has capacity for field work

Eligibility criteria for CSO as a lead applicant:

- i. Only CSOs legally registered for a minimum of 2 (two) years with clear and provable track-record from the previous projects involving international donors and organisations.
- ii. CSO as a lead applicant should be Roma-founded CSO, Roma Associations or other CSO with provable track-record from the previous projects addressing improvement of Roma status
- iii. CSO as a lead applicant could propose activities only for the territory of 59 LSGs that in accordance with the Mapping of Substandard Settlements in Serbia has at least one informal settlement at its territory with at least 100 citizens (please see footnote No. 4) regardless of CSO's seat. In case that proposed activities should be implemented out of the CSO seat, the additional capacity for the field work should be proved.

Please note that in case of CSO as a lead applicant, the partnership with LSG will not be mandatory.

⁵ Aleksinac, Aranđelovac, Bela Palanka, Blace, Bogatić, Bojnik, Boljevac, Bor, Bosilegrad, Brus, Bujanovac, Gadžin Han, Doljevac, Despotovac, Jagodina, Knjaževac, Koceljeva, Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Kruševac, Kučeva, Kuršumlija, Lajkovac, Lebane, Leskovac, Loznica, Lučani, Ljig, Ljubovija, Merošina, Mionica, Niš, Novi Pazar, Osečina, Paraćin, Pirot, Požarevac, Požega, Preševo, Priboj, Prokuplje, Raška, Smederevo, Smederevska Palanka, Surdulica, Svilajnac, Svrlijig, Šabac, Topola, Trstenik, Ub, Valjevo, Varvarin, Vladimirci, Vlasotince, Vrnjačka Banja, Zaječar

5.2. The Projects Selection

- The projects that will be awarded will be selected through a **competitive process**.
- 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 10 (ten) months**, and for a **minimum of 8 (eight) 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 150,000 (in RSD).

The minimum value of the grant per project is USD 13,000 (in RSD) and the maximum is USD 15,000 (in RSD).

5.5 Sustainability

The applicants are expected to demonstrate in the application in a clear and unequivocal way the continuation of intervention benefits after the grant formally closes.

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 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

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
- v. Procured IT equipment as the way of support for distance learning could stay as the ownership of the grantee who would give it to those in need (children, youth) with signed receipt for temporary using with the aim of long-term provision of equipment for different beneficiaries who are in the same need

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	15
1.1 Does the applicant have experience in project management? <i>Applicants with references on successful implementation of three or more projects (e.g. projects involving social protection services, international donors, etc.) will be awarded with five (5) points</i>	5
1.2 Did the applicant conduct, through participatory approach with the civil sector and other relevant stakeholders, an assessment of needs of excluded groups in local communities and on designing, proposing and implementing required solutions to those needs they would like to introduce? <i>Applicants with conducted assessment will be awarded with ten (10) points</i>	10
2 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. How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	10
2.3. Does the proposal contain specific added-value elements, such as promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, or addressing of multi-layered vulnerability (such as education, health, housing, social engagements, inter-ethnic/-cultural interaction) or innovation and best practices?	5
3 Effectiveness and Feasibility of the Action	15
3.1. Are the proposed activities appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected results?	5
3.2. Is the action plan clear and feasible?	5
3.3. Does the proposal contain objectively verifiable indicators for the outputs and outcomes of the action?	5

4 Impact of the Action	30
4.1. What is the number of people that is expected to benefit from proposed activities? <i>Projects with at least 30 beneficiaries will receive ten (10) points and additional ten (10) will be awarded for projects with more than 30 beneficiaries</i>	20
4.2. Could the intervention have a long-term impact on beneficiaries or the local community in the situation of the similar crisis?	10
5 Budget and Cost-effectiveness of the Action	15
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?	10
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 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 by Swiss PRO must be budgeted **without** VAT, i.e. – please list the amounts in the budget accordingly. Please list what you expect Swiss PRO to purchase and what would be your contribution (e.g. raw materials, etc.). Please note that your contributions to the project realisation must include VAT.
- **CSO Applicant Fact Sheet**, with registration, financial and other relevant documents (**Annex 4**)
- The Partnership Agreement or Letter of Intention for Partnership Agreement between an LSG as the Applicant and a CSO 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 original editable format. In case of discrepancies, signed, stamped and scanned version will prevail.
- The applicant must submit application forms **in 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 successful submission of email application.
- The email application must be sent with the **email subject** consists of the reference number and the title of the call for proposals (e.g. CFP 02-2021 – Support to Local Self-Governments in Addressing Covid-19 Consequences in Substandard Settlements) 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. Any 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 network/hardware/software related problems may lead to disqualification of application. Only applications received by the 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 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 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)
- 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 verifications 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. 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 COMPLETED⁶:

- Annex 1: Submission Form (Word format)
- Annex 2: Project Proposal Application Form (Word format)
- Annex 3: Budget (Excel format)
- Annex 4: CSO Lead/Partner Fact sheet

DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION:

- Annex 5: Application Checklist
- Annex 6: UNOPS Grant Support Agreement with General Conditions (template)
- Annex 7: Swiss PRO Grant Narrative Report (template)
- Annex 8: Swiss PRO Grant Financial Report (template)

⁶ Section 7.1 of the Call for Proposals