



Sector 1 – Good Governance and Social Inclusion

Support to Local Gender Equality Mechanisms in Implementation of Activities from GE LAPs

Call for Project Proposals 8/2016

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

It is a well-established that gender discrimination is one of the main causes of poverty and a major obstacle to equitable and sustainable development. In the public discourse in Serbia today, certain related terminology such as gender, gender equality (GE), gender mainstreaming, and others are far from being widely recognised, understood and adopted in society. Gender Equality issues are often reduced to “women rights”; few in Serbia today recognise that those are important for society as a whole. Many studies in the last few decades clearly demonstrate a direct link between the levels in gender equality a society has achieved, and its positive level of economic and social development.

Related issues such as women participation in political processes or their representation in public institutions and organisations are still not resolved in a satisfactory way. Employment and career structures in the public sector still favour men above women, and overall there is 16 % less of employed women compared to men (42% compared to 58% of men)¹. In a predominantly male culture such as it is in Serbia, there is still unacceptably high social tolerance towards gender based violence. Family violence is still out of full focus of the society, although there are some positive movements in that respect in the recent years, although women are still widely stereotyped in

¹ Statistical office of the Republic of Serbia: Men and Women in the Republic of Serbia, 2014



media, public and political life. Service delivery systems and services are more accessible to men than to women.²

The Government of Serbia adopted the Law on Equality of Sexes in 2009 and the National Strategy for Gender Equality for the period 2016-2020³ in January 2016. In 2016, a new draft of the Law on Equality of Sexes was developed, but due to the widespread criticism it was withdrawn from the parliamentary procedure.

At the beginning of 2016 Serbia launched the results of its Gender Equality Index⁴ making it the first non-EU country to produce such an assessment. With a score of 40.6 points out of 100 Serbia is almost half way towards gender equality, but significantly below the EU average of 52.9. With the Law against Discrimination, and international conventions Serbia is obliged to adhere to (such as European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life and Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women-CEDAW), they are making the legal framework for combatting gender inequalities in Serbian society. More needs to be done to sensitize citizens for these important issues.

Gender sensitivity is not about pitting women against men. It helps them determine which assumptions in matters of gender are valid and which are stereotyped generalizations. Gender awareness requires not only intellectual understanding and effort but also sensitivity and open-mindedness to change one's views and limited perspectives and values.

3. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE INTERVENTION

The EU and the Swiss Government provided support to 34 municipalities in the past year to establish and capacitate local Gender Equality Mechanisms (GEMs). As the direct consequence of that support, 34 municipalities from the AoR have (re)established local mechanisms for gender equality (GEM) and strengthened their institutional capacities and position within the LSGs' structures.

Also, the municipalities and GEMs were supported in updating existing or developing new Gender Equality Local Action Plans, with participation of over 100 participants, in various stages of the process. By the end of 2015, in total 26 LAPs were revised/updated or developed, and adopted by local assemblies, with 4 more expected to be adopted in the first quarter of 2016.

² Conclusions of the Evaluation of the National Plan of Action for the Implementation of the National Strategy for Improving and Promoting Gender Equality 2010-2015

³ <http://www.mgsi.gov.rs/lat/dokumenti/nacionalna-strategija-za-rodnu-ravnopravnost-za-period-od-2016-do-2020-godine-sa-akcionim>

⁴ <http://eige.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/serbia-first-eu-candidate-country-produce-gender-equality-index>

Local GEMs in the South and South West Serbia are endeavouring to subsist and endure local political realities and many fluctuations they bring about, once too often. Sustained support to local GEMs in these impoverished municipalities, in times when legal framework and institutional support from the national level are yet to be finalised and adopted, is crucial for their survival as entities in charge of promoting and advancing Gender Equality agenda at local level. Now is time to provide them with an opportunity to test and materialise the ideas, skills and knowledge they have developed in this process.

4. THE OBJECTIVES

The Objective of this Call is to assist local GEMs in (re)affirming and to further assert their roles within the respective local governments, through preparation and execution of relevant GE-related activities.

5. THEMATIC SCOPE OF THE CALL

The Call will include support to projects in the following areas:

1. Improvement of the position of men and women in specific areas, as defined in respective municipal Local action plan for gender equality (GE LAP) (e.g. education, agriculture, sport, participation of women in decision-making processes, economic empowerment of women, etc.)
2. Implementation of activities from GE LAPs pertained to further institutional strengthening and capacity development of GEMs
3. Promotion of the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life
4. Introduction of Gender Responsive Budgeting

The project proposals and the envisaged topics and activities, **must** have support and come from the Municipal Local Action Plan for Gender Equality.

6. GUIDELINES FOR THE APPLICANTS

A. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- i. **Eligible** to apply in this Call **are local Gender Equality Mechanisms**, i.e. their founding bodies (local assemblies), in capacity to enter contractual arrangements with the Programme. In charge of project implementation

must be local GEMs, i.e. GEM member appointed by the founding body as the Project Manager

- ii. This Call is for established and functioning GEMs from the **34 municipalities**, that are participating in European PROGRES (please, *see above for the details*), **that have** an adopted, updated and valid Local Action Plan (**LAP**) for GE
- iii. One GEM may apply with more than one project, but only one grant may be awarded to one GEM
- iv. Two or more GEMs may cluster and apply with one project, on the topic of mutual interest. One GEM must be a leading body in the sense of the **i.** from the above. Partnership is not obligatory, but it will be awarded with extra points during evaluation.
- v. Projects submitted *must* be linked to relevant and valid local strategic documents and/or to corresponding GE local action plans.

B. THE GRANTS

The GE projects will be selected through a **competitive process**. European PROGRES will award **up to 25 projects** based on their relevance, expected outcomes/impacts and sustainability of the proposed intervention.

The worth of a grant per awarded GEM will be a **minimum of EUR 1,500** and a **maximum of EUR 3,000** (in RSD).

The GEMs may or may not use the assigned funds from their local budgets to contribute to the overall project budget. However, any financial participation will bring **additional points** in the project evaluation process.

European PROGRES does not have an obligation to spend all funds available for this activity and will fund only quality projects that meet specific criteria.

C. DURATION OF PROJECTS

The implementation of projects will last for a **maximum of six months**, from the time of signing the contract with the Programme.

D. 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 aimed at filling up any funding gaps from on-going activities
- ii. Activities that can be more appropriately funded from other funding sources, including related local budget lines
- iii. Activities where a substantial part of the budget covers recurrent costs and/or personnel costs
- iv. Travel, catering and/or conference services costs not founded in project rationale
- v. Projects focused on research, or promotional activities with no *specific* outcomes
- vi. Extensive hardware/software purchases without true foundation in project rationale
- vii. Items from the budget, including office costs, fees or salaries, already funded by other sources (other projects, other organisations – public or civic, etc.)
- viii. All costs originating before the project beginning or accrued after project closure

F. THE SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be selected based on assessment of the following:

1. Relevance of the Proposal to the Objectives of the Call
2. Methodology proposed for the project
3. Expected outcomes and anticipated impacts
4. Sustainability of the proposed activities
5. The Proposed Budget and its Cost-Effectiveness

G. SUBMITTING THE PROJECT PROPOSALS

Project proposals has to be submitted in Serbian (in English only if possible), and **must** contain following application files:

- Application Form
- Detailed project budget proposal (as a separate Excel document)
- Detailed Work Plan (as a separate Excel document)



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

7. THE PROJECT PROPOSAL STRUCTURE

The project proposal **must** contain the following:

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 from the local GE budget line (not a condition) 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 joint project account. *In-kind* contributions will be appraised but will **not** be eligible as financial contributions.

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. Detailed Work Plan. The Detailed work plan 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.

V. Project sustainability. Describe the main preconditions and assumptions during and after the implementation phase. 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. 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.).

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

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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 RPOGRES, 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 RPOGRES.

During the project implementation, the implementing partner must organize *at least one event* to present project results. The concept for this event should be outlined in the project proposal and budgeted appropriately.

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

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

Mid-term and final financial reports must include an audited or certified financial statement and align expenses with activities and milestones.

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.

10. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS



Republic of Serbia



Programme Funded by EU



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



Implementing Partner

EUROPEAN
PROGRES

When vulnerable and marginalised groups are involved in project implementation, the implementer must clearly indicate how these groups will be involved in and/or benefit from the project.

11. SUBMISSION DEADLINE AND EUROPEAN PROGRES OFFICES ADDRESSES

Deadline for the application is 10 October 2016. All proposals must be **received** by European PROGRES via registered mail or in person at the addresses below, by 17:00:

European PROGRES

Ćirila i Metodija 23

18000 Nis

or

Kragujevacka 1,

36300 Novi Pazar

or

Kneza Milosa 52,

17500 Vranje

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