

**Public Call for  
Provision of Technical Assistance to LGs for Inter-municipal Cooperation  
in provision of Social Protection Services  
(CEI PRO 03/2023)**

## 1. Background

The UN Joint Programme “PRO - Local Governance for People and Nature” contributes to improvement of the well-being and quality of life of citizens through improved local governance, social inclusion and environmental protection in 99 cities and municipalities in two regions: Šumadija and Western Serbia and Southern and Eastern Serbia<sup>1</sup>. With the support of the Government of Switzerland through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in the total value of EUR 9 million, the Joint Programme is implemented by the United Nations Serbia agencies - UNOPS, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNEP, in the period from 01 January 2023 to 31 December 2026.

To achieve the Programme’s Objective, the intervention will focus on three key outcomes:

1. Local self-governments (LGs) improve capacities and apply good governance principles in practice (Pillar Good Governance);
2. LGs and other relevant local actors improve capacities and develop evidence-based local social protection policies (Pillar Social Inclusion);
3. LGs improve capacities and apply environmental governance processes in practice (Pillar Environmental Governance).

The key stakeholders, but also direct users of support at the local level, will be local governments (cities and municipalities), including their administrations/staff, organisations, and local institutions (Centres for Social Work - CSWs, Primary Health Centres, pre-school institutions and schools), local Civil Society Organisations – CSOs. The final users of support will be the citizens from participating LGs from the Region of Šumadija and Western Serbia, and the Region of Southern and Eastern Serbia.

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<sup>1</sup> The following cities and municipalities are eligible for this Public Call: Aleksandrovac, Aleksinac, Arandelovac, Arilje, Babušnica, Bajina Bašta, Batočina, Bela Palanka, Blace, Bogatić, Bojnik, Boljevac, Bor, Bosilegrad, Brus, Bujanovac, Crna Trava, Čačak, Čajetina, Čičevac, Čuprija, Despotovac, Dimitrovgrad, Doljevac, Gadžin Han, Golubac, Gornji Milanovac, Ivanjica, Jagodina, Kladovo, Knić, Knjaževac, Koceljeva, Kosjerić, Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Krupanj, Kruševac, Kučevo, 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.

All Programme activities will be undertaken in partnership with the Government of Serbia, especially the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governments (MPALSG), the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs (MLEVSA), the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP), and the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM).

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.

On its way to the EU accession, Serbia has a very important task, and this is contribution to the social inclusion process in its society. In order to fulfil the requirements and to follow the EU trends, Serbia needs further development and improvement of the institutional framework and a methodology for monitoring the social inclusion policies and practices at the local level. At the legislative and policy levels, Serbia needs to adopt a new Law on Social Protection (current is from 2011), and to develop and adopt a new Social Protection Strategy (the draft is available since 2019).

According to the assessment on the [Mapping of Social Protection Services under jurisdiction of LGs](#) the provision of social protection services within LGs is not at satisfactory level in terms of their variety, sustainability, availability, efficiency, and quality. The situation in terms of providing adequate care has significantly worsened since the breakout of the COVID 19 pandemic. The main challenges in the social protection are lack of pluralism of service providers, lack of pluralism of coverage of beneficiary groups i.e. introduced services for three or less beneficiary groups, lack of innovative and integrated services, lack of inter-sector cooperation in the needs assessment process or in provision of services and lack of institutional mechanisms for implementing social protection policy such as Social Policy/Protection Council, Council for Improvement Roma Status and Council for Improvement Status of Persons with Disabilities. Overall, the offer of services is very modest, with a relatively small number of users while a greater number of services is not sustainable, since most LGs spend small budget funds for these services.

## **2. Justification of the Intervention**

The strategic commitment of the Republic of Serbia goes in the direction of decentralisation of services in the field of social protection, so it is therefore necessary not only to strengthen the capacities of all institutions, but also to network them at the level of one district or primarily through inter-municipal cooperation (IMC). Such a cooperation including joint financial aspects will allow much greater efficiency and effectiveness in the social services creation and delivery which will contribute to a larger number of users and their improved quality of life.

To address this and support the LGs in strengthening capacities that would lead to establishment of IMC for provision of social protection services in accordance with the Article 88 of the Law on Local Self-Government, the Programme will provide technical assistance (TA) to selected LGs.

### 3. Objectives of the Intervention

**Overall objective:** to contribute to adoption of more efficient and effective institutional and organisational arrangements for provision of social welfare services in participating LGs.

**Specific Objective:** to increase capacities of LGs and other relevant local actors<sup>2</sup> to establish IMC in provision of social protection services, with focus on priorities and needs of LB groups.

### 4. The Scope of Intervention

The scope of this Public Call is related to **provision of TA up to 10 (ten) LGs** for the following:

- to reassess its current needs and interest for joint delivery of social protection services, potential type of cooperation i.e. type of social protection services as well as the current status and opportunities with potential partner LG.
- to support development of new or enhancing the existing LGs capacities for creating an IMC by applying good governance aspects of IMC in terms of process of negotiation with potential partner LG, protocols for the exchange of information, technical or institutional management, agreements on financial implications as well as other issues of importance for initiating IMC within the social protection area;
- to support preparation of relevant templates for establishing of IMC (local regulations, protocols, normative acts, etc);
- to support development of mechanisms and tools for monitoring of joint delivery of services and evaluation of their results which will be used by the LGs in the years to come

The TA is to last up to 10 (ten) months from the day the selected LG is informed it has been selected for provision of the TA. **All costs of the TA will be borne by the Programme.**

This Public Call is the first phase of the broader Programme intervention, which will also include publishing of Call for Proposals for provision of grant scheme as the second phase. Namely, in the second phase the Programme will award at least 2 (two) IMC projects for joint delivery of social protection service with **up to USD 40,000 per project**. Only LGs that participated in TA will be eligible to participate i.e. those that signed relevant IMC Agreement with the aim of establishing one new or expanding/improving the existing social protection service on the territory of at least two LGs. In project proposals, the applicants will elaborate on their mutual needs/priorities and common interest to jointly deliver social protection service, sustainability as well as on good governance aspects of its IMC. The IMC will be expected to provide their financial contribution of a minimum of 20% out of the total value of the grant. The implementation of these projects will last up to 12 (twelve) months and LGs will be monitored by the Programme in regards to their adhering to and implementation of the results from the TA.

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<sup>2</sup> CWS, and relevant CSOs as service providers, and to other public entities from education, employment, and health sectors

## 4.1 The Process

### a) *Submission of application documents:*

- Submission Form
- Intervention Application Form
- Written expressed willingness and acceptance of the Programme's TA for IMC (Letter of Interest)

*Application document templates are attached to this Public Call<sup>3</sup>.*

### b) *Provision of technical assistance (TA)*

The Programme will provide **up to 10 (ten) months of TA, to up to 10 (ten) selected LGs**, consisting of the following:

- Assessment of current needs and interest for joint delivery of social protection services in each participating LGs, potential type of cooperation i.e. type of social protection services as well as the current status and opportunities with potential partner LG;
- Mentorship support for the following:
  - execution of tailor-made plan for capacity development of each ten selected LGs with the aim of developing new or enhancing the existing LGs capacities for creating an IMC by applying good governance principles in the pertained processes;
  - support to improving the knowledge and capacity of LGs for IMC in terms of technical or institutional management as well as financial implications;
  - support in preparation of relevant templates for establishment of IMC (local regulations, protocols, normative acts etc);
  - support in developing mechanisms and tools for monitoring of joint delivery of services and evaluation of their results which will be used by the partner LGs in the years to come
- Workshop for presentation of legal basis for joint implementation of social protection services, the entire process of negotiation with potential partner LG and establishment of IMC as well as other issues of importance for initiating IMC within the social protection area.
- Lessons learned workshop along with recommendations for future local actions

The TA will be considered as completed upon verification from the Programme. Upon verification, the LG in question will be eligible to apply for grants from the Second Phase (as described above). For this, separate Calls will be developed and publicly announced in due time.

## 5. Guidelines for the Applicants

### 5.1. General Eligibility Criteria

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

- a) **Be one of 96 cities and municipalities<sup>4</sup>** that can apply for the support from the PRO Programme.
- b) The applicant has **submitted a written, official documents that is willing and ready to work on local governance improvements** pertained to the topic of the Call, with expert and TA and support of the Programme, which would have no financial costs for the applicant.

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<sup>3</sup> For more information please see Section 7. Application Procedure of this Public Call

<sup>4</sup> Please see the list of LGs in the footnote 1

## 5.2. The Selection of LGs

- The LGs that will be provided with TA and awarded will be selected through a **competitive process, while considering operational capacity of applicant(s), relevance and needs for TA, as outlined in the criteria section which will be described in the Application form.**
- PRO Programme does **not** have an obligation to spend all funds available for this activity and will select for Phase 1 only those LGs that meet specific criteria.
- The application 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.
- Geographical representation will be considered during the selection of the LGs in order to contribute to more equal representation of LGs from two target regions. Namely, in the case of several equally scored LGs the priority will have a LG from the region with fewer selected applicants.

## 5.3. Sustainability

The further application of TA impact will be monitored in the Second Phase, as described above.

## 6. The Selection Criteria

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

1. Operational capacity
2. Relevance of the Intervention

Technical evaluation of the received applications for this Public Call will be conducted in line with the following selection criteria.

CRITERIA FOR THE FIRST PHASE	MAX POINTS
<b>1 Operational Capacity</b>	<b>25</b>
1.1 Does the applicant have experience in project management? <i>Applicants with references on successful implementation of at least three projects involving social protection services or international donors - 5 points; More than three projects – additional 5 points</i>	10
1.2 Did the applicant have some institutional mechanisms for implementing social protection policy (such as Social Policy/Protection Council, Council for Improvement Roma Status and Council for Improvement Status of Persons with Disabilities) or to support coordinated service provision (intersectoral working bodies/teams)? <i>Established one mechanism - 5 points; Established more than one mechanism – additional 10 points</i>	15
<b>2 Relevance of the Intervention</b>	<b>75</b>

2.1. Did the applicant conduct an assessment of the needs of particular LB groups in local communities in need for IMC in service delivery and on designing solutions to those needs to be introduced? <i>Conducted assessment of needs of one particular LB groups - 5 points; Conducted assessment of needs of more than one particular LB groups – additional 10 points</i>	15
2.2. Whether IMC in social protection service delivery has already been considered with potential partner LG or even a negotiation process has been initiated? <i>At the level of consideration – 10 point; At the level of initiation of the negotiation process - additional 10 points</i>	20
2.3. In case of IMC service(s) provision in the local communities, how many beneficiary groups would be covered? <i>One LB group - 10 points; Two or more LB groups - additional 10 points</i>	20
2.4. Is there a need for the establishment of IMC in order to join forces due to only geographical reasons or as well as to strengthen service delivery through cooperation between two LGs of different levels of development? <i>Only geographical reason – 10 points; To strengthen cooperation between two LGs of different levels of development – additional 10 points</i>	20
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>100</b>

Only the applications that have been given a minimum total score of 60 points will be considered for selection. The PRO Programme reserves the right to request clarifications related to application before the finalisation of the selection process.

## 7. Application Procedure

### 7.1 Application forms and supporting documents

The applicant has to submit the following application forms **in English language**:

- Application form (**Annex 1**)
- Intervention Submission Form (**Annex 2**)
- A letter expressing readiness to work on local governance improvement pertained to the topic of the Call (template of the Letter of Interest **in Annex 3**)

Please note that only the above listed documents will be evaluated. It is therefore of the utmost importance that these documents contain all relevant information concerning the action.

Additional documentation that may be submitted with the application files: copy of current valid regulations, evidence of previously implemented projects, and similar.

Failing to submit either of these documents will mean **immediate** disqualification of the application.

## 7.2 Where and how to send application

- The Application Form must be **submitted via e-mail in PDF format (signed, stamped and scanned)** and in original editable format, while using Word and Excel. 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 versions will prevail.
- The applicant must submit application forms **in the English language**.
- The total email size of the application should **not exceed 20 MB**, as that is the maximum allowed email message size by the UNOPS server. If the application is larger than 20 MB, documents should be sent in a series of emails, with each email not exceeding 20 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](mailto:rsoc.applications@unops.org)  
Automatic notification of the delivery would follow upon 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 Public Call (e.g. Public Call CEI 03/2023 – Provision of Technical Assistance to LGs in Improving Social Protection) including the name of the applicant.
- **Requests for clarification** should be submitted to the e-mail address below:  
[rsoc.cfp.clarifications@unops.org](mailto:rsoc.cfp.clarifications@unops.org)
- **The deadline for the submission of Applications is 23 June 2023. Any Applications submitted after the deadline will be rejected.**
- Applications/proposals **must be received before midnight-local time** on the closing date of the Public Call. 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 UNOPS mail server before the deadline would be accepted.
- **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 ones stated in the Public Call 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. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

The Programme will monitor activities implemented by selected and awarded LGs, and will require from LGs to prepare relevant records.

## 9. List of Annexes

### **DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED<sup>5</sup>:**

- Annex 1: Submission Form (Word format)
- Annex 2: Intervention Application Form (Word format)
- Annex 3: Letter of Interest (Word format)

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<sup>5</sup> Section 7.1 of the Public Call