



Ministry of European Integration
REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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LOCAL DEVELOPMENT
PRO+

Public Call for implementation of integrated projects deriving from the twelve territorial strategies supported by the EU PRO Plus

CFP 002-EUPROPLUS-2023

1. Background

The European Union Local Development Programme - EU PRO Plus contributes to more balanced socio-economic development in Serbia by enhancing territorial development management, supporting economic growth, and improving social infrastructure and social cohesion in 99 local self-governments in two regions: Šumadija and Western Serbia, and Southern and Eastern Serbia. The European Union (EU) provided 40 million Euros through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) 2020 to fund the Programme, which has been implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) over a period of 42 months.

There are three result areas that the Programme aims to achieve in targeted municipalities:

- Result 1: Improved development planning and introduction of the Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) concept
- Result 2: Enhanced economic growth
- Result 3: Improved social infrastructure and social cohesion

Building on the momentum created by its three predecessors¹, the EU PRO Plus Programme focuses on four cross-cutting aspects: good governance, digitalisation and innovation, environmental and climate change aspects and gender equality. In addition, EU PRO Plus has, through its activity related to COVID assistance, strengthened the capacities of the public national health system to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and other national health emergency situations.

The direct beneficiaries of EU PRO Plus are the Ministry of European Integration, 99 local self-governments (LSGs), local administration structures, regional development agencies, other business support organisations, local SMEs, and civil society organisations (CSOs). The final beneficiaries are the inhabitants of 99 municipalities.

All programme activities are undertaken in partnership with the Government of Serbia, and respect the national policies and priorities, in order to ensure national ownership and to help develop national capacities. The EU PRO Plus Programme is based on the National Priorities for International Assistance in the Republic of Serbia until 2025 (NAD). It is crucial for economic and social development and the EU integration process, and particularly contributes to the preparation for the fulfilment of the requirements under Chapter 22 of the EU acquis - Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments.

The EU PRO Plus Programme will support implementation of the integrated projects derived from

¹ EU PROGRES (2010-2014), European PROGRES (2014-2018) and EU PRO (2018-2021) Programmes

territorial strategies under this Call in an effort to enhance national, regional and local capacities for management of integrated and sustainable territorial development (ISTD) while considering the features of EU territorial instruments. It will contribute to the fulfilment of the requirements of Chapter 22 of the EU Acquis that relates to the Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments.

2. Justification

The [EU PRO Plus Description of Action](#) foresees Programme assistance in implementation of activities contributing to socio-economic development deriving from integrated territorial strategies. Its pilot grant scheme considers the EU models for territorial investment, adjusted to the context of Serbia and to the potential and capacities of the targeted areas. The piloting of the grant scheme should enhance the preparedness of local self-governments for the absorption of future cohesion funds.

This activity is aligned to the [EU Cohesion Policy Objectives for 2021-2027](#) and relevant EU initiatives such as the [New European Bauhaus](#), as well as the related national strategies, including the [Strategy of Sustainable Urban Development of the Republic of Serbia until 2030](#) and the [Smart Specialisation Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2020 to 2027](#). It aims to pilot the applicable aspects of the EU cohesion policy while taking into account local context and the feasibility of development and implementation of activities and projects deriving from territorial strategies.

The five new policy objectives set with the [EU Cohesion Policy for 2021-2027](#) relate to (1) a more competitive and smarter Europe; (2) a greener, low carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy; (3) a more connected Europe by enhancing mobility; (4) a more social and inclusive Europe; and (5) Europe closer to citizens by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories.

Further, the [New European Bauhaus](#) is closely linked to the [European Green Deal](#) and is meant to accelerate the green transition in various sectors of the economy such as construction, furniture, fashion, as well as other areas of daily life. The aim is to provide all citizens with access to goods that are circular and less carbon-intensive, that support the regeneration of nature and protect biodiversity. The New European Bauhaus principles come back in projects, places, practices, and experiences that are inspired by art and culture, responding to needs and improving quality of experience beyond functionality (i.e. beautiful), are in harmony with nature, the environment, and our planet (i.e. sustainable) and encourage dialogue across cultures, disciplines, genders and ages (i.e. inclusive). Thus, this Call looks for the kind of cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary projects which would relate to the principles of the New European Bauhaus initiative.

The Call is also aligned to the priority areas of intervention in the [Strategy of Sustainable Urban Development of the Republic of Serbia until 2030](#), which include brownfield locations and industrial zones, informal settlements, inner city urban areas, areas with concentration of social problems, areas with environmental issues, and cultural heritage sites.

The Call also envisages alignment with the [Smart Specialisation Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2020 to 2027](#) following the recommendation given for territorial strategies in the [Urban Agenda for the EU](#). The call promotes linkages with the four main priorities identified in the Strategy: (1) Food for Future; (2) Information and Communications Technology; (3) Future Machines and Manufacturing Systems and (4) Creative Industries.

Since 2022, the EU PRO Plus Programme has been providing technical assistance to twelve territories selected through a competitive [Public Call for the Development of Territorial Strategies](#). The selection of [twelve territories](#) was based on the criteria prescribed in the Call, namely the classification of the lead local self-governments as larger urban centres, the establishment of partnerships with regional development agencies (RDAs) for drafting the strategy, spatial continuity, socio-economic characteristics, etc. This Call for implementation of territorial strategies is therefore a part of the larger effort of the EU PRO Plus Programme for building capacities at local, regional and national levels for management of ISTD.

3. Objectives of the Call

The **overall objective** of this Call for Proposals is to contribute to socio-economic development through improved development planning, and to introduce the integrated territorial investment concept in the Regions of Šumadija and Western Serbia, and Southern and Eastern Serbia.

The **specific objective** of the Call is to help address territorial / sustainable urban development challenges through implementation of integrated projects deriving from territorial strategies, and build the capacities of the local and regional stakeholders to identify, implement, monitor and evaluate integrated territorial sustainable development programmes, projects, and activities.

4. Scope

The Call for Proposals is open for projects proposed by the [twelve territorial strategies](#), including five Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) and seven Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) developed in line with the EU territorial instruments, supported by the EU PRO Plus Programme through the [Public Call for the Development of Territorial Strategies](#).

The applicants should develop project proposals based on the strategic projects identified through the planning process and reflected in the territorial strategies, which comply with the eligibility criteria of this Call. The proposed projects should, therefore, include actions that imply an integrated and participative approach to the development of society and economy. Likewise, the proposed activities must be implemented within the territory covered by the strategy.

The scope of support is divided into two LOTs differentiating between the following:

- **LOT1** relates to implementation of infrastructure and other works and/or procurement of equipment and supplies in combination with soft measures. The soft measures under this LOT should enable broad consultation, participation, co-creation, awareness raising, network creation, capacity building and training. The soft measures should amount between 10% and 30% of the total eligible cost, in line with Section 5 (Financial Allocations, Cost Share Distribution and Eligibility of Costs), all contributing to the objective of this Call.
- **LOT2** focuses on supporting development of documentation relevant for increasing the level of maturity and readiness for implementation of strategic/ priority projects within territorial strategies. It may relate to both wider (ITI) or narrower (SUD) territories and comprise support in development of feasibility studies, social impact assessments, environmental impact assessments, master plans, participatory designs and operation and management studies. The soft measures under this LOT should enable broad consultation, participation, co-creation, awareness raising, network creation, capacity building and training.

Additionally, all project proposals must contribute to the achievement of one or more indicators for the objectives framework defined as a minimum standard for territorial strategies targeting urban areas presented in Annex J².

If the project envisages investment activities in the form of building new or rehabilitating existing infrastructure, those activities should be carried out exclusively on state-owned or municipal property backed with appropriate documentation.

Proposed projects under any of the above described LOTs should fall within at least one of the five thematic areas, which reflect the [EU Cohesion Policy Objectives for 2021-2027](#) and relevant EU initiatives, as well as the related national strategies, as described above.

- 1. Identity of the urban area.** This thematic area focuses on strengthening the identity and on improving the quality of urban areas by exploiting their strengths (cultural and architectural heritage, potential for development of sustainable tourism), improving their accessibility, and by reducing the negative effects of urbanisation by preventing, including but not limited to addressing issues of illegal construction. Strengthening and improvement of management of urban-rural linkages is also covered by this topic.
- 2. Green and energy transition and urban mobility.** This thematic area deals with improvement of energy efficiency. It refers to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, improved usage of renewable energy sources and development of smart energy systems, networks and storage. It also deals with issues related to adaptation to climate change especially in the context of disaster risk prevention and strengthened resilience to climate change through a nature-based approach. The actions included are dealing with equal access to sanitation, water supply and improvement of sustainable water management, improvement of waste management, the protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, and the reduction of all forms of pollution. Sustainable multimodal urban mobility is encouraged through this theme, as well as development of smart, safe, sustainable and intermodal networks, including local mobility networks, in support of the transition to a net zero carbon economy.
- 3. Innovative and smart economy.** This thematic area deals with using the advantages of digitalisation for citizens, companies, research institutions and public administration for development. This also implies the actions strengthening digital connectivity and strengthening of research and innovation capacities and application of advanced technologies, strengthening the sustainable growth and competitiveness of enterprises and jobs creation. The thematic area also addresses development of competences for Smart Specialisation Strategy Serbia (4S), industrial transition and entrepreneurship, within the quadruple and quintuple helix of innovation (economy, academia, public and civil sector - institutional participants). Promotion of the transition to a circular and resource-efficient economy and a net zero carbon economy is also a key dimension in this thematic area.

² The Objective framework indicators set is designed to provide a monitoring of implementation of specific objectives of territorial strategies at the national level. As the targets for indicators at the national level are not set yet, the applicant should set target/s for particular indicator/s for their project proposal independently in order to describe the output or the outcome of the project. In case that there is no defined indicator for a particular project in the objective framework, the applicant should propose an appropriate indicator.

- 4. Social well-being.** This thematic area deals with the principles covered by the [European Union Pillars of Social Rights](#) and includes development of social infrastructure, which contributes to improved effectiveness and inclusiveness of labour markets and access to quality employment with dignified working conditions. It also promotes social entrepreneurship, social inclusion and social innovation. It deals with the issues of improvement of equal access to inclusive quality education, social protection services, resilient health systems, cultural services, programmes, sports and recreation services, contents and facilities. Activities under this thematic area also promote socio-economic inclusion of marginalised communities, low-income households and disadvantaged social groups, including people with disabilities, through integrated action that includes housing and social services. Initiatives and activities creating stimulating environments for youth are also within the scope of this thematic area.
- 5. Urban and Territorial Development Governance.** This thematic area deals with strengthening of the system for urban/territorial governance by supporting the creation or improvement of governance institutions, processes and mechanisms at multiple levels, or multiple sectors. It also contributes to strengthening the transparency of decision-making processes within an urban area, as well as enabling governance for support to community-led initiatives and initiatives developed through a participatory approach. Finally, it contributes to improvement of inter-municipal cooperation through institutional cooperation.

Approach

Considering the contribution of this Call to Integrated and Sustainable Territorial Development (ISTD), the following aspects need to be taken into account when developing the project proposal.

Integrated approach. Integration is one of the key elements of the ISTD approach. It has two dimensions: vertical, through cooperation of all levels of government and local stakeholders as well as via the alignment of policies, objectives, projects and resources, and horizontal, through thematic/sectoral and territorial integration. The territorial dimension of integration, whilst important for all types of territories, is particularly relevant for urban areas - wider territories (ITI). Thus, integrated projects are in the focus of this Call. The projects that will be considered as integrated are those which are:

- multi-sectoral (cover more than one sectors) and/ or
- multi-funded (from various funding sources) and/ or
- “umbrella” projects (the projects that span or influence several LSGs within urban areas - wider territories).

Participation. Participative approach is of utmost importance in order to engage stakeholders in planning and implementation of projects. It recognises the needs of stakeholders and implies citizen engagement, marginalised groups’ reaching and representation, co-creation and multi level dialogue. Such processes enable driving change in terms of investments and enhancing quality of life. The applicant should devise and incorporate participation methods and techniques in the project proposal, in order to get the added value and secure co-responsibility and the ownership of the actions.

Environment. Promotion of nature-based solutions, use of local, environmentally-friendly,

recycled/recyclable/reusable and easy to maintain materials, along with sustainable building practices, are supported by this Call. Responsible use of resources should be promoted and consistently applied during the course of the action. Proposed actions must comply with the EU and the national framework on environmental protection and prevent potential impact on climate change and no harm to any of six environmental objectives, as defined in Article 17 of the [Taxonomy Regulation](#).

Gender Mainstreaming. The non-discriminative and gender-balanced approach should be provided throughout the process of design and implementation of the action, enabling equal access of men and women of all ages to all project activities and benefits. Gender disaggregated reporting is an integral part of project reporting. The applicants are strongly encouraged by this Programme to include female members and direct representatives of the target groups in the Project team, thus respecting gender equality and anti-discrimination principles.

Further to the gender mainstreaming and environment, it is strongly suggested to incorporate additional elements, such as gender equality, equal opportunities, rights of minorities, rights of local population, innovation or replication of proven best practices, etc.

Sustainability. The applicant must describe the main preconditions and assumptions during and after the implementation phase. A detailed risk analysis and possible contingency plans must be developed. This should include at least a list of risks associated with each activity proposed accompanied by relevant corrective measures to mitigate such risks. A good risk analysis would include a range of risk types including physical, environmental, political, economic and social risks.

The applicant must explain how sustainability will be secured after completion of the action. This can include aspects of necessary measures and strategies built into the action, follow-up activities and ownership by target groups etc.

In doing so, a distinction between the following dimensions of sustainability must be made:

- Economic (financial) sustainability, i.e. financing of follow-up activities, sources for covering all future operating and maintenance costs, etc.
- Institutional sustainability, i.e. which structures/systems would allow the results of the action to continue to be in place after the end of the action, and how. Issues related to the local "ownership" of outcomes of the project proposal should be addressed. Where applicable, policy level sustainability should be addressed, i.e. what structural impact will the action have - e.g. will it lead to improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods, etc.
- Environmental sustainability, i.e. what impact will the action have on the environment? Have conditions been put in place to avoid negative effects on natural resources on which the action depends and on the broader natural environment?
- Social sustainability, i.e. what are the elements related to gender equality and to support vulnerable groups

Contribution to objectives' framework indicators for the Strategy. In order to quantitatively measure the overall implementation of territorial strategy, to conduct benchmarking, and to monitor and evaluate implementation of territorial strategies at the level of the Republic of Serbia, the minimum set of objectives and indicators are devised. The set of indicators is given separately, as Annex J to this Call.

Capacity. Implementation of integrated sustainable development projects often requires different

types of expertise and experience. The applicants are, therefore, encouraged to carefully consider specific needs regarding needed expertise and describe the proposed approach in their application. While EU PRO Plus will provide external technical assistance, it is expected that the applicants will ensure core expertise within their teams.

Provision of technical assistance. Having the specific requirements of the ISTD approach, and lack of experience in development and implementation of integrated projects, the EU PRO Plus Programme shall provide expertise to the selected grantees for implementation of proposed projects. This will include technical support in development of terms of references and other tender documents, as well as review and advice on how to optimise project resources which may include limited interventions prior to signing of the Grant Support Agreement.

5. Financial Allocations, Cost Share Distribution and Eligibility of Costs

The overall indicative amount made available under this Call for Proposals is 10,000,000 Euros (10,600,000 USD) out of which 9,000,000 Euros (9,540,000 USD) for LOT1 and 1,000,000 Euros (1,060,000 USD) for LOT2. The Budget should be planned and filled-in in USD exclusively.

The EU PRO Plus Programme reserves the right not to award all available funds and to adjust the funds distribution per LOT.

Minimum and Maximum Grant Award

LOT1:

- Minimum - 200,000 Euros (212,000 USD), Maximum - 1,500,000 Euros (1,590,000 USD) in case of wider territories (ITI)
- Minimum - 100,000 Euros (106,000 USD), Maximum - 500,000 Euros (530,000 USD) in case of narrower territories (SUD)

LOT2:

- Minimum - 50,000 Euros (53,000 USD), Maximum - 200,000 Euros (212,000 USD)

Applicant's cost share and Value Added Tax (VAT)

A minimum cost-share contribution of 20% is mandatory for both LOTs. The cost-share contribution must be financed from sources other than the European Union.

Grantees are obliged to act in line with valid tax legislation of the Republic of Serbia whereby the VAT exemption extends to the cost share contribution provided by the beneficiary (ref. Official Gazette no. 49/22, Article 112/5). Hence, all funds should be planned without VAT.

Planning of eligible costs with the budget thresholds

Planning of costs must be based only on the eligible activities specified in Section 4: Scope. Planned costs must be presented in the form of unit costs covering all or certain specific categories of eligible costs which are clearly identified in advance by reference to an amount per unit and/or lump sums covering in global terms all or certain specific categories of eligible costs which are clearly identified

in advance.

The eligible costs for each LOT are listed below:

LOT1

In order to be eligible, applications submitted under LOT1 should contain a compulsory combination of investment components (works and/or supply). Namely, cost for infrastructure works and supplies (equipment) should be in the amount no less than 70% of the total eligible costs while the cost of soft measures should amount to a minimum of 10% and a maximum of 30% of the total eligible cost of the project.

Cost for infrastructure and works

Cost for infrastructure and works include the infrastructure works and other types of works that clearly contribute to the Objective of the project.

Cost for Equipment

This category covers purchase of new equipment. Equipment should be strictly related to the achievement of the Objective of the project and is as follows.

- Office equipment
- IT hardware and software
- Furniture and fittings
- Laboratory equipment
- Machines and instruments
- Tools or devices
- Specialised vehicles, electric vehicles for public car sharing and other specific equipment needed for the operations.

Cost of soft measures

Soft measures refer to non-physical actions that support the project's goal but are not works or supply. These actions aim to secure local support, involve stakeholders, enhance the capacity of partners, and increase project visibility and outreach.

These expenses are to be declared as real costs and can include:

- The organisation and implementation of participatory or stakeholder events or meetings including rent, catering
- Trainings for project partners and stakeholders to identify, implement, monitor and evaluate integrated projects
- Visibility measures - Production of standing board(s)/ wall plaque(s) per location according to Programme provided specifications. Provision of multi-media promotional material including before, during and after video material of the project, where possible a project render / maquette and organisation of other activities in support of the project (events, workshops etc.). Cost of these activities is limited to up to 5% of the eligible cost of the project.

The costs for external expertise and services, costs for staff and the costs for travel should be included in the amount allocated for soft measures, respecting the above indicated limitations.

Cost for External expertise and services

This category covers expenses related to professional services and expertise provided by external service providers (other than the Project Partners) contracted to carry out certain activities linked to

the delivery of the project (e.g. tasks that cannot be carried out by the Project Partners themselves). These expenses are to be declared as real costs and can include:

- Preparatory activities for consultancy on design or for preparing tendering packages - limited to up to 1% of the total cost of the action
- Technical Supervision of the works and Health and Safety Coordinator
- Technical Commissioning of the works
- IT systems and website development; modifications and updates
- Other specific expertise and services needed (including training)

Cost for Staff

Staff costs cover gross employment costs of persons employed directly by the Project Partner and working full or part time on the project in line with their respective employment document or other similar document under the law. The staff costs are calculated based on the standard scale of unit costs defined by the Project Partner and cannot exceed 10% of the total eligible costs of the project.

Cost of Travel

This cost category covers travel costs of employees of Project Partners that relate to project activities. The items considered under the travel category are exhaustively listed below:

- Travel (e.g. tickets, car mileage, toll and parking fees)
- Daily allowances

All cost estimations must be aligned with the National Law accordingly.

LOT 2

Cost of External expertise and services

This category covers expenses related to professional services and expertise provided by external service providers (other than the Project Partners) contracted to carry out certain activities linked to the delivery of the project (e.g. tasks that cannot be carried out by the Project Partners themselves). These expenses are to be declared as real costs and can include:

- Preparatory activities for consultancy on design, design brief, preparing tendering packages or for concept competitions
- Provision of design services that include the geological investigations, geodetic surveys, development of pre-feasibility study, feasibility study, social impact study, environmental impact assessment study, master plans, participatory designs
- Services related to the organisation and implementation of participatory events or meetings (including rent, catering)
- Services related to trainings/capacity building for project partners and stakeholders to identify, implement, monitor and evaluate integrated projects
- Visibility measures - Provision of render, maquette or promotional material that would support the project - limited to up to 5% of the total cost of the action. Where applicable production and placement of wall plaque produced according to specifications provided by the Programme.
- Financial schemes implemented by Project Partners, supporting the distribution of financial contribution as a reward following a contest (such as prizes) to the benefit of third parties (individuals or organisations) that are not part of the Project Partnership.

Cost of Staff

Staff costs cover gross employment costs of persons employed directly by the Project Partner and

working full or part time on the project in line with their respective employment document or other similar document under the law. The staff costs are calculated based on the standard scale of unit costs defined by the Project Partner and cannot exceed 10% of the total eligible costs of the project.

The project can be co-financed by EU PRO Plus with up to 80% of the total eligible costs, and each Project Partner must secure a financial contribution to complete its budget at least to the 20% contribution of the Partner eligible costs.

For both LOTS, the following costs are not eligible:

- debts and debt service charges (interest)
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities
- loans
- fuel
- costs declared by the Applicant(s) and financed by another project or founding source
- purchases of land
- infrastructure network connection fees
- cost of permit of use
- real estate appraisal cost
- notary fees
- property taxes and fees (transfer of ownership rights, cadastre, etc.)
- bank commission charges (bank fees, opening and servicing bank account, etc.)
- accounting and bookkeeping services
- currency exchange losses
- procurement of the equipment that is not grounded in the objectives of the Call and without specific outcome
- procurement of the used/old equipment
- credit to third parties
- auditing costs
- office and administration costs
- all costs incurred prior to the signing of Grant Support Agreement
- unforeseen expenses.

Financial implementation

The grantee LSGs will be required to open a separate sub-account for implementation of the awarded project. The cost share contribution must be paid within the period of 90 days after signing of the Grant Support Agreement.

6. Duration

The planned duration of an action **may not exceed 18 months** from the signing of the Grant Support Agreement. This includes initiation of activities (including completion of financial requirements related to opening a separate sub-account), tendering, contracting for services/works/goods, implementation of services/works, handover of works/goods, where applicable and acceptance of the final report within 30 days following the end of grant activities.

7. Criteria

Assessment and evaluation of received project proposals will be conducted in line with the following criteria, including the eliminatory general eligibility criteria, an administrative check, and the technical evaluation criteria.

General Eligibility Criteria

Projects deriving from the twelve territorial strategies (seven SUD and five ITI) for which EU PRO Plus Programme provides technical support are eligible to be proposed for support through this Call. Only projects which are ready to be implemented within the given timeframe of 18 months may be considered for support through this Call. In case of wider (ITI) territories, only projects targeting more than 50% of LSGs involved in the strategy may be considered for support through this Call.

The support provided by the Programme included support in establishing governance arrangements for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of strategy implementation and support in developing capacities for application of territorial development instruments. To streamline the prioritisation of projects, the projects being proposed must be endorsed by the Development Councils for the Urban Area in charge of the territorial strategy in question.

The Urban Area Development Council has a mandate to endorse project proposals from the designated urban area for submission under this Call. In the case of narrower territories (SUD) the council consists of the mayor and elected members: representatives of the city administration and the city assembly (especially city services in charge of urban planning and urban development), representatives of public companies, institutions, representatives of the economic sector, civil society organisations and scientific and research institutions, as well as relevant regional development agency. In the case of wider territories (ITI) the members are the mayor and the presidents of the municipalities that are part of the urban area, as well as the representatives of the competent regional development agency. For the purpose of this Call, the decision of the Council to candidate selected projects should be submitted. The Urban Area development Council may be substituted with the LSG Development Council if the City formally decides to entrust affairs. The project proposals endorsement decision date must be after the advertisement date of this Call.

Up to two project proposals for LOT1 and one project proposal for LOT2 deriving from one territorial strategy may be submitted under this Call.

With respect to the outcome of the scoring, only one project proposal for each of the LOTs deriving from one territorial strategy supported by this Call may be awarded. The Programme Steering Committee may consider to approve more than one project proposal per LOT in case funds are available.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants under this call are local self-governments (LSGs) and regional development agencies (RDAs) included in the twelve strategies developed with support of the EU PRO Plus. Additionally, where justified, the eligible applicants may be other local or regional bodies and authorities (including regional structures of the central public authorities and statutory bodies), business support organisations, civil society organisations, academic, research, training, education, social and cultural institutions.

For wider (ITI) territories, partnership with RDA and a participating LSG is mandatory, whereas in case of narrower (SUD) territories, partnership with the LSG is mandatory. The applicant must be registered in the targeted urban area.

The Applicant should demonstrate a clear ownership of the activities presented in the project proposal. The Applicant is responsible for the overall implementation and management of the entire project.

Partnership

Development of strong partnerships between other public bodies, regional development agencies, and civil society (including citizens) is widely recognised as a cornerstone of integrated sustainable territorial development. The applicant is expected to play a strategic leading role in the development of the project by establishing and chairing a strong Project Partnership to make it technically, scientifically, and financially viable.

A Partner may be a key institution or organisation that can contribute to the implementation of the project, and/or to have an active role in the implementation and funding of the project activities by providing financial contribution to the project (the share of the budget ensured by a Partner, i.e. co-financing rate).

Depending on the issue to be addressed and based on the local context and previous experiences, the Applicant could involve a mix of relevant partners (partner LSGs within the territory - urban area in case of wider territories, agencies, institutions, public companies, higher education institutes, private sector related organisations, investors, research institutions, CSOs, etc.), that are needed to deliver the proposed solution, to achieve the project's objectives and ensure longer term effects as concerns sustainability and scale-up. Partners shall have an active role in the design and implementation of the project and are responsible for the delivery of specific activities and the production of the related deliverables/outputs.

Partners have a share of the project budget and report the costs incurred for the delivery of the activities. When justifiable, the partner may be a non-profit entity, registered outside of the targeted urban area within the territory of the Republic of Serbia or be registered within the European Union. However, the projects need to be implemented in the territory of the Applicant. Partners formalise the contractual relation with the Applicant by signing the Partnership Agreement, as other Project Partners, following the approval of the project.

The Partnership should be balanced and complementary in terms of policy and thematic competences. Partnerships should seek to promote horizontal (including actors dealing with the different dimensions of the urban challenge to be addressed) and vertical integration (including different levels of governance).

Consultancy firms having as primary objective the development and management of European projects and organisations with no staff budgeted (only declaring external expertise costs) are not entitled to participate in a project as Project Partners.

In line with UNOPS policy that no funds shall be paid as profit to a Grantee or any sub-Grantee, awarding of service contracts by the Lead applicant to a partner organisation is not allowed. Partner organisations cannot submit an invoice to the Lead applicant for the service fulfilment or request funds for the performed services. It is expected that all project eligible costs should be disbursed

through the bank sub-account dedicated for the project implementation.

Verification of Eligibility of Applicants

The Declaration by the applicant will be cross-checked with the supporting documents provided by the applicant. Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between the Declaration by the applicant and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the application on that sole basis.

The Programme reserves the right to conduct other forms of verification including site visits. If the budget check shows the discrepancies, the Programme reserves the right to request adjustment of the budget in line with the propositions of the Call and the submitted proposal.

Administrative checks

During opening and administration check, the following will be assessed:

- If the deadline has been met. Otherwise the application will be automatically rejected
- If the application satisfies all criteria specified in Section 8 (Application Procedure). This includes also an assessment of the eligibility of the activities. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that sole basis and applications will not be further evaluated.

Technical Evaluation

The applications for which eligibility of applicants is confirmed, and an administrative check has been conducted with a positive outcome, will undergo a technical evaluation process.

Technical Evaluation will be conducted in line with the following criteria:

Area	Criteria	Max points	
		LOT1	LOT2
I Operational Capacity (10 points)	1.1 Does the applicant have sufficient in-house experience of project management? <i>The applicant implemented at least two projects covering the theme(s) addressed by the proposal (2 points, one point for each provided reference)</i> <i>The applicant implemented at least two projects funded by the EU or other international or bilateral donor (2 points, one point for each of the provided reference)</i> <i>The applicant implemented project(s) in partnership with entities other than local self-government and its affiliated organisations (1 point, for at least one or more references provided)</i>	5	5

Area	Criteria	Max points	
		LOT1	LOT2
	<p>1.2. Does the applicant have sufficient in-house technical expertise and experience to implement the proposed project?</p> <p><i>The Grant Implementation Team (GIT) includes Grant Manager with demonstrated, multi year, experience in project management and or grant implementation (2 points)</i></p> <p><i>The GIT includes members that have expertise, including professional qualifications, needed for the implementation of the proposal (3 points)</i></p>	5	5
II Relevance (40 points)	<p>2.1 Is the proposal in line with the specific objective of the Call for Proposals?</p> <p><i>Does it address territorial/ urban development challenges through an integrated project?</i></p>	Eliminatory question	
	<p>2.2 Is the project in line with the objectives and measures of the territorial strategy?</p> <p><i>Do the proposed activities contribute to realisation of objectives and measures of the related territorial strategy?</i></p>	Eliminatory question	
	<p>2.3 Is the project in line with the priorities of the Smart Specialisation Strategy or any other relevant national strategy?</p> <p><i>The project is in line with Serbia Smart Specialisation Strategy: 3 points</i></p> <p><i>The project is in line with other relevant national strategies: additional 2 points</i></p>	5	5
	<p>2.4 How relevant is the proposal to the particular needs and constraints of the targeted territory and/or relevant sectors?</p> <p>Are the beneficiaries clearly defined and adequately selected?</p> <p>Have beneficiaries' needs been clearly explained and does the proposal address them appropriately?</p>	5	5

Area	Criteria	Max points	
		LOT1	LOT2
	2.5 To what extent does the proposal envisage participation and co-creation of local level stakeholders ³ - academic/university, scientific, research, private sector related organisations, civil society - other than local self-governments - in multilevel level partnership?	5	5
	2.6 Does the project address other interconnected problems of the targeted territory/urban area i.e. more than one of the five thematic areas stated in the Scope of the Call? <i>Two themes: 3 points</i> <i>Three or more themes: additional 2 points</i>	5	5
	2.7 Does the project proposal include funding from funding sources other than EU and the LSG? Does it provide a direct basis for further financial investments into other projects that fall under relevant programmes or measures of the territorial Strategy? <i>Provided co-funding exceeds 25% of the total eligible cost: 2 points</i> <i>Co-funding includes at least one other source: 1 point</i> <i>Project established basis for further investments: additional 2 points</i>	5	5
	2.8 Does the proposal contain added-value elements related to innovation? <i>The proposed innovation is relevant for the selected urban area, it introduces a new idea, product, services, processes or similar, which enhance the effects of the proposed project.</i>	10	10

³ This relates to the definition from the [New Leipzig Charter](#): "Public participation in urban development processes should engage all urban actors, which also strengthens local democracy. Wherever possible, citizens should have a say in processes that impact their daily lives. New forms of participation should be encouraged and improved, including co-creation and co-design in cooperation with inhabitants, civil society networks, community organisations and private enterprises. Experimenting with new forms of participation can help cities manage conflicting interests, share responsibilities and find innovative solutions while also reshaping and maintaining urban spaces and forming new alliances to create integrated city spaces. Public participation is central to the successful delivery of a high-quality built environment."

Area	Criteria	Max points	
		LOT1	LOT2
	<p>2.9 In case of wider (ITI) territory: Will the project provide benefits for the majority of participating LSGs?</p> <p><i>The entire territory is covered: additional 5 points</i></p> <p>In case of narrower (SUD) territory: To which extent is the project contributing to integration of different stakeholders?</p> <p><i>In addition to LSG, the project includes the civil society sector, including the CSOs, universities, academia, etc.</i></p> <p><i>The project is addressing needs beyond SUD territory.</i></p>	5	5
III Implementation Approach (10 points)	<p>3.1 Are the activities feasible and consistent in relation to the expected results (including time frame)?</p> <p><i>Are results (output, outcome and impact) realistic and supported by verifiable data? Activities clear, feasible, realistic: 3 points</i></p> <p><i>Description and flow of output, outcome, impact clear and supported by verifiable data: 2 points</i></p>	5	5
	<p>3.2 Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved, and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders? Does the design take into account external factors (risks and assumptions)?</p>	5	5
IV Sustainability and Impact (30 points for LOT 1 and 15 points for LOT2)	<p>4.1 What is the extent of the socio-economic impact of the proposed project on its target group?</p> <p><i>For LOT1: To what extent does the proposal contribute to realisation of the outcomes aligned with the objectives of the Call? Is the target group of the project adequately identified and realistic?</i></p> <p><i>For LOT2: What would be the expected impact of the project for which the documentation would be developed?</i></p>	10	10
	<p>4.2 What is the indirect impact of the proposed project?</p> <p><i>Will the proposed activities have a positive impact on a wider group of beneficiaries, beyond the level of immediate users, in the context of territorial development? Does the proposal have the possibilities for replication and extension of the action outcomes?</i></p>	5	5

Area	Criteria	Max points	
		LOT1	LOT2
	<p>4.3 To what extent is the sustainability of results secured?</p> <p><i>Does the proposal include elements of Economic (financial) sustainability? Are the funds needed for maintenance and usage of the project results after its completion secured? Up to 3 points</i></p> <p><i>Are there indicators/ evidence that funding is provided for other complementary strategic projects deriving from the strategy? Additional 2 points</i></p> <p><i>Does the proposal include elements of Institutional sustainability? Is there institutional capacity to sustain the results upon the end of the project? Which structures would allow, and how, the results of the project to continue to be in place after the end of the action on the Institutional level? Have the issues related to "ownership" of project outcomes been considered? Up to 4 points</i></p> <p><i>Does the proposal include elements of Environmental sustainability? What impact will the action have on the environment? Are the conditions put in place to reduce negative effects on natural resources on which the action depends and on the broader natural environment? Up to 3 points</i></p> <p><i>Does the proposal include elements of Social sustainability? Does the proposal contain elements related to gender equality and support to vulnerable groups, which contribute to the well-being of the citizens and foster social cohesion of the wider communities in a viable way? Up to 3 points</i></p>	15	N/A
V Budget and Cost Effectiveness (10 points)	<p>5.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?</p> <p><i>Does the proposal consider well planned resources?</i> <i>Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?</i> <i>Does the proposal demonstrate that the financial resources are fully/partially planned for the project?</i></p>	5	5
	<p>5.2 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the results satisfactory?</p>	5	5
Maximum Total Score		100	85

Only applications that have been given a total score of a minimum 70 points in case of LOT1 and a minimum of 60 points in case of LOT2 will be considered for the award.

Other Considerations

The Programme reserves the right to conduct a site validation visit, to validate information related to applicants' eligibility and to validate the project proposal and data provided by the applicant. The eligibility check will be performed only for the applications that have been provisionally selected according to their score and within the available budget for this call for proposals. Any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application above the threshold minimum on the reserve list that falls within the available budget for this call for proposals.

The applicants will be informed in writing of the decision concerning their application and, if rejected, the reasons for the negative decision.

8. Application Procedure

Applications must be submitted exclusively via the online application form at <https://www.euproplus.org.rs> in English language. The following forms must be filled:

Annex A:	Application Form (Word format)
Annex B:	Project Budget Form (Excel format)
Annex C:	Logical Framework (Word format)
Annex D:	Eligibility Declaration by the Applicant (Word format)
Annex E:	Eligibility Declaration by the Partner Organisation (Word format)
Annex F:	Statement of Co-funding (Word format)
Annex K:	Standardised CV form (Word format)
Annex L:	PSEA Self-assessment (Excel format)

The following instructions should be followed:

- Applications sent by any other means (e.g. by fax or by post or by hand delivery) or delivered to emails will be rejected. Hand-written applications will not be accepted.
- All fields in the application form must be filled in before submitting the applications
- The application documents should be uploaded in PDF format (signed, stamped and scanned) and in original editable format (i.e. Excel, Word). Signed, stamped and scanned versions must contain exactly the same application documents as the electronic versions in original editable format.
- The total size of the application documents should not exceed 100 MB.
- Automatic notification of the delivery to the entered contact email address of the applicant would follow upon successful submission of application form. If the confirmation is not received the application may not be successful.
- The deadline for the submission of applications is 28 December 2023. Any application received after the communicated deadline will be rejected.
- Applications must be received before 24:00 PM (CET) on the closing date of the Call for Proposal. Applicants are kindly advised to submit the application timely, as late deliveries due to slow internet connection or other network/hardware/software related problems may lead to disqualification of the application. Only applications received by UNOPS server before the deadline would be accepted.

- Requests for clarification should be submitted via on-line form <https://www.euproplus.org.rs/> no later than 10 days before the deadline for submission.
- UNOPS reserves the right to request the original versions of submitted documents from applicants where/when original documentation is required by the Evaluation Team.

The Applicants should provide the following documents in order to allow the Programme to verify the eligibility of the applicant and (if any) of the co-applicant(s):

- Proof of funds available for project financial contribution (budget line for project activities, contingencies or similar)
- Statement that applicant will transfer the initial co-funding on the allocated budget sub-account not later than 90 days after signing of the Grant Support Agreement.

Additionally, the following supporting documents should be enclosed, where relevant:

- Building Permit issued as per Planning and Building Law of Republic of Serbia, Article 135, or Approval for construction works where applicable as per Article 145, issued by relevant Authority (Municipality or the Ministry of Infrastructure for the projects that fall under the Article 133 - Planning and Building Law of Republic of Serbia), with following mandatory elements:
- Proof of ownership for the Location (all relevant sheets for all parcels from the Cadastre Registry) with the situational design layout drawn on the Cadastral Topographic Plan (KTP)
- Proof that the project is not creating a negative impact on the environment - Environment Impact Assessment Study⁴ or Decision of No Need for Environment Impact Assessment Study issued by relevant institutions.
- Documentation related to the Grant Management Team, formed with members with relevant experience and expertise, including at least three experts in the areas of urban planning, public procurement, engineering and economy. The experience and expertise of the team members is justified with the CVs and list of relevant implemented projects. The following documents may apply:
 - Decision on appointment of the Grant Management Team
 - Contract or an Act of employment or tax forms form for each team member
 - Resumes (CVs) which include information on education and experience, including the list and value of relevant projects for each team member
- List of relevant projects implemented, supported by contracts between applicant and a service provider or confirmation of provided services or final payment certificates
- Prefeasibility or feasibility studies or investment programmes or other relevant study that proves the economic justification of the investment if available
- Design documentation in line with the issued permit
- Evidence of alignment with the planning documentation. The proof that the location is zoned and regulated in the planning document (such as detailed regulation plan) or Location Information. The proof is the extract from the planning document.
- The non-inclusion of these documents while deemed necessary for project implementation by UNOPS will lead to the exclusion of the project application.

⁴ According to the Article 2 of the Law on Planning and Construction and the Law on Assessment of Impact on the Environment

NOTE: ALL supporting documents must be submitted together with the Application. The non-inclusion of these documents while deemed necessary for project implementation by UNOPS will lead to the exclusion of the project application.

9. Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

The grantees must monitor their own projects and keep relevant records, including documentations, photos and other materials. The grantee will be expected to submit at the end of the project the final report on the activities carried out. The EU PRO Plus Programme will also monitor implementation of the projects. The grantee can be audited at any time during the project implementation or in the period of five years after the project completion and subsequent actions may be taken according to the assessment's findings.

If at any time the Programme is not satisfied with the quality of work or the progress being made toward achieving such goals, the Programme may in its discretion (i) withhold payment of funds until in its opinion the situation has been corrected, or (ii) declare the signed Agreement terminated by written notice to the grantee; and/or (iii) seek any other remedy as may be necessary.

The Programme determination as to the quality of work being performed and the progress being made toward such goals shall be final and shall be binding and conclusive for the grantee.

10. Visibility

The Applicants must take all steps prescribed in the [EU PRO Plus Communication Guidelines](#) to promote the European Union (EU) financial contribution to the Action.

Namely, each project **will be required** to develop a video material (up to five minutes long) of the project according to template scenarios provided by the Programme. The material should contain video footage of before, during and after the intervention as well as statements by territorial leaders, direct and final beneficiaries. A good practice example will be provided to the grant recipients at the beginning of the project.

Visibility activities also extend to clear visual identification of the action at site during and after the intervention as per the [EU Visibility Guide in Serbia](#). The standing project board(s) and/ or wall plaques, produced according to the specifications provided by the Programme, should be budgeted as a part of the intervention's visibility component. One standing project board, and a wall plaque should be planned per each infrastructure site to mark donor contribution. The placement of the produced board(s) / plaque(s) should be done upon project completion and in consultation with the EU PRO Plus Communication team.

The visibility activities also include but are not limited to partaking in various media activities and events including activities designed to raise the awareness of specific or general audiences of the overall EU support to Serbia including on-camera and other media interviews, participation in high level events and relevant on-line and in person surveys on Programme related topics.

In case additional visibility activities are suggested by the project, these have to be agreed with and approved by the EU PRO Plus Communication team.

In all visibility activities, successful applicants must at all times comply with the objectives and priorities and guarantee the visibility of the EU financing.

11. Indicative Timeframe

Activity	Timeframe/ deadline
Publishing the Call for Proposals	9 November 2023
Outreach activities - Implementation of info sessions	late November 2023
Deadline for submission of the project proposals	28 December 2023
Information on the Evaluation Results	25 February 2024
Signing of the Agreement and initiation of implementation	15 March 2024

This indicative timetable may be updated by the Programme during the procedure. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the EU PRO Plus website <https://euproplus.org.rs/en>

12. Additional Considerations

Conditions for implementation after the Programme's decision to award a grant

Following the decision to award a grant, the applicants will be offered an agreement. By signing the application form (Annex A of these Guidelines), the applicants agree, if awarded a grant, to accept the general conditions of the Grant Support Agreement.

The Programme would use grant methodology for implementation of the approved infrastructure projects.

Data Protection

UNOPS shall ensure an appropriate protection of the data subject provided by the Applicant in accordance with the applicable UNOPS Key Privacy Principles (ref. UNOPS Executive Office Directive Ref. EOD.ED.2019.01). Data subjects shall therefore be managed carefully by UNOPS and in a coherent manner across the organisation, particularly ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals, in particular the right to privacy.

13. Annexes

- Annex A: Application Form (Word format)
- Annex B: Project Budget Form (Excel format)
- Annex C: Logical Framework (Word format)
- Annex D: Eligibility Declaration by the Applicant (Word format)

- Annex E: Eligibility Declaration by Partner Organisation (Word format)
- Annex F: Statement of Co-funding (Word format)
- Annex G: The list of mandatory support documentations for submission (Word format)
- Annex H: UNOPS Grant Support Agreement Template (not to be filled, for information purposes only)
- Annex I: Territorial Innovation Atlas (for information purposes only)
- Annex J: Contribution to objectives framework indicators (Word format)
- Annex K: Standardised CV form (Word format)
- Annex L: PSEA Self-assessment (Excel format)
- Annex M: Capacity Assessment (Excel format, to be completed during the evaluation process, upon request by the Programme)