



Ministry of European Integration  
REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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PRO+

# QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT

Jan - Mar 2022



<b>Overall objective:</b>	To contribute to socio-economic development, prosperity and social cohesion of Serbian society
<b>Purpose:</b>	To decrease socio-economic disparities in two regions within Serbia
<b>Budget:</b>	40 million Euros
<b>Donor:</b>	The European Union
<b>Start date:</b>	1 January 2021
<b>End date:</b>	30 June 2024
<b>Programme area:</b>	The Regions of Šumadija and Western Serbia and the Southern and Eastern Serbia
<b>Implementing partner:</b>	United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
<b>Report date:</b>	25 April 2022
<b>Period covered:</b>	1 January– 31 March 2022
<b>Prepared by:</b>	UNOPS

## Acronyms

<b>BSO</b>	Business Support Organisation
<b>CFP</b>	Call for Proposals
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>DEU</b>	Delegation of the European Union
<b>DOA</b>	Description of Action
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GAP</b>	Gender Action Plan
<b>GEC</b>	Grant Evaluation Committee
<b>GG</b>	Good Governance
<b>ITI</b>	Integrated Territorial Investment
<b>ISTD</b>	Integrated Sustainable Territorial Development
<b>LAGs</b>	Local Action Groups
<b>LED</b>	Local economic development
<b>LSG</b>	Local Self-Government
<b>MLEVSA</b>	Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs
<b>MPALSG</b>	Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self Government
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MEI</b>	Ministry of European Integration
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organisation
<b>PSC</b>	Programme Steering Committee
<b>RDA</b>	Regional Development Agency
<b>RFP</b>	Request for Proposals
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium Sized Enterprises
<b>SUD</b>	Sustainable Urban Development
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference

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## 1. SUMMARY

The European Union for Local Development Programme intensified the pace of implementation in the first quarter of 2022. Three public calls were implemented, while evaluation for two of these calls was also concluded during the quarter. Furthermore, the Programme progressed with implementation of capacity building activities related to territorial mechanisms, while also developing other interventions. Additionally, the Programme continued to support Government's efforts in combating the COVID-19 pandemic by enabling extended support to medical teams and procurement of items for prevention of the disease.

Carefully designed outreach activities have generated great interest in the Programme. Four info sessions organised during the quarter gathered 193 participants out of which 138 (or 71 percent) were female. Furthermore, the interest is also evidenced by the response to the Programme calls, with a total of 210 applications received in response to the three public calls closed during the quarter.

Activities of the Programme related to **improved development planning and introduction of integrated territorial investment concepts** advanced, with four comprehensive training sessions on territorial development instruments organised in March 2022. Four international experts were included in the delivery of training, covering topics related to governance of territorial instruments, as well as development, monitoring, implementation and evaluation of territorial strategies. These trainings were attended by 120 representatives of ten regional development agencies (RDAs) and 51 local self-governments (LSGs) working in the areas of urban planning, economic development, environmental protection and social affairs, with 17 out of the 19 cities in the Programme area participating alongside 34 municipalities.

Furthermore, evaluation of applications received in response to the Call for Applications for the development of territorial strategies has been finalised, while the results are yet to be presented to the donor and the key national stakeholder.

Programme activities related to **enhanced economic growth** also progressed during the quarter. The Call for Business Support Organisations closed on 2 February resulted in 45 applications in total value of 2 million USD submitted by RDAs, business associations, research institutions and Chambers of Commerce. While the results are yet to be presented to the Programme Steering Committee (PSC) in April, the proposed projects are expected to contribute to enhancement of competitiveness and resilience of more than 400 SMEs and their ability to recover from COVID-19 related challenges.

In addition, in consultation with the key national stakeholders, primarily the Ministry of Economy, the Programme has finalised the Call for Procurement of Equipment and Introduction of Services for Entrepreneurs, Micro and Small Enterprises which is expected to contribute to enhancement of market potentials, value chain contribution, technological, green and digital transformation, job creation and economic recovery recover from the negative impact of COVID-19 of at least 100 enterprises in the second investment cycle.

The Programme has closed two public calls relating to **improved social infrastructure and social cohesion**. The Call for Local Infrastructure Projects closed on 31 January 2022 attracted 75 projects proposed by 65 LSGs. The total value of the proposed projects is 18.4 million USD, out of which 12.9 million USD is requested from the Programme. The evaluation process is concluded and the results are to be presented to the PSC in April, however the proposed projects should contribute to enhancement of the functionality of existing public infrastructure or development of new infrastructure that will improve health, social care, education, culture and public administration facilities, as well as communal and sports infrastructure which will ultimately contribute to the enhanced quality of life of the targeted population.

The Call for Strengthening Social Services has marked thus far the highest response rate, with 90 received applications with a total value of 2.5 million EUR aiming at increased quality and enhanced sustainability of social services provided to the citizens at the local level, particularly to the disadvantaged groups and

during the periods of intensified need such as the pandemic or other state of emergencies. While the evaluation process has just been initiated following the closure of the Call on 7 March, these interventions are expected to contribute to introduction of innovative and integrated social services, filling the gaps in provision of social protection services identified during the COVID-19 crisis, and enhanced preparedness and resilience of the social services providers, primarily public institutions, for possible future emergencies and major disruptions.

Additionally, the Programme continued its support to medical institutions in preventing and combating COVID-19. The prevention service supported by the programme in 23 public health centres enabled provision of 658,558 medical services related to COVID-19 including testing, referrals to hospitalisation, vaccination and monitoring of spread of infection. This support is extended for an additional three months following the request of the Ministry of Health supported by the Ministry of European Integration and the donor, as were the procurements of additional triage containers and disinfection devices which are initiated during the quarter.

Programme **communication activities** followed the implementation, securing outreach for the ongoing Programme calls and capacity building activities, while promoting the results of the predecessor Programmes in parallel. Presence of the Programme in the media was maintained with 85 media reports, while the Communication Survey on the citizens opinion on the EU support gathered 495 responses which are to be analysed in the next quarter.

The Programme proactively **managed risks** and addressed issues during the quarter. While the ongoing pandemic continued to influence the implementation modality, the Programme has managed to maintain the engagement and participation of its stakeholders. Furthermore, the Programme has identified two key risks to be monitored in the forthcoming period: the effects of the Ukraine crisis on the global market as it may result in prolonged and more costly procurement processes to be conducted by beneficiary grantees, and the effects of the results of the elections in 10 Programme municipalities which will take place in early April.

This Report provides review of progress and performance, update on management and coordination issues, review of assumptions and risks, quality and sustainability considerations, insight into the key outputs for the next reporting period, and lessons learned. A number of annexes give the readers opportunity to get in depth knowledge of some specific actions taken by the Programme.

## 2. QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT

### 2.1 Review of project progress

#### 2.1.1 Policy and Programme Context

On 15 February the President of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić dissolved the Parliament and called early parliamentary elections for 3 April<sup>1</sup> while on 2 March, the Serbian Parliament Speaker, Ivica Dačić, called Presidential elections for the same date.<sup>2</sup> Eleven local self-governments (LSGs), out of which nine from the Programme AoR<sup>3</sup> also decided to conduct early local elections on 3 April.<sup>4</sup>

In February, the Government of Serbia [adopted two strategies](#) relevant to improving the status of the excluded groups and the civil sector. After nearly a decade of work, [the Strategy for an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development for the period from 2022 to 2030](#) was adopted. The Strategy should ensure greater involvement of the civil sector in the decision-making process at all levels including the process of European integration, improve the sector's transparent funding and sustainability, increase the participation of civil society organisations in socio-economic development and act in accordance with sustainable development principles. Due to the alleged increased pressure and attacks on civil society and independent media by the state institutions a [group of prominent CSOs](#) withdrew from the consultation process in 2021 and ended up boycotting the Strategy drafting process.

The [Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma for the period from 2022 to 2030](#) was also adopted, as the previous 2016-2025 Strategy needed to be aligned with national laws and the EU strategic framework for Roma. The document aims to improve the participation of Roma in all social processes, ensuring full inclusion in preschool, primary, secondary and higher education, increased access to quality and sustainable employment and health services, improving housing conditions and equal access of Roma to social protection rights and services.

The [Law on Social Entrepreneurship](#) was ratified by the National Assembly in February, setting the legal framework for development and work of social enterprises in the Republic of Serbia. The law will recognise the existing practice and ensure that about 500 social enterprises in Serbia are able to receive support, regardless of whether they are currently registered as entrepreneurs, companies, foundations, citizens' associations or cooperatives as long as they were established to offer sustainable solutions for community development, have a social mission and the obligation to reinvest or return profits to the community.

On 9 March 2022, the European Commission adopted the IPARD III programme for the Republic of Serbia for the period 2021-2027. The financial contribution of the European Union for the IPARD III programme has increased compared to the previous programming period and amounts to 288 million Euros. Investments that will be supported by the IPARD III relate to the procurement of equipment and machinery, construction and reconstruction of facilities. The overall objective of these investments is achieving European standards in the field of hygiene, food safety, animal welfare and environmental protection, empowering farmers to place products on the EU market, as well as preparing domestic farmers and food processors for the use of European funds that will be available upon accession to the EU.<sup>5</sup>

In March 2022, EU for Green Agenda in Serbia published a [Challenge Call for Proposals for Innovative Solutions in the Field of Circular Economy](#). The aim of this challenge is to support the implementation of innovative ideas that will contribute to more efficient use of resources, as well as to the reduction and

<sup>1</sup> RS.N1info.com [Serbian president calls early parliamentary elections for April 3](#) (15 February 2022)

<sup>2</sup> B92.net Serbian Parliament Speaker, Ivica Dačić, called presidential elections (2 March 2022)

<sup>3</sup> Arandelovac, Smederevska Palanka, Lučani, Medveđa, Knjaževac, Bajina Bašta, Doljevac, Kladovo, and Majdanpek

<sup>4</sup> BBC.com Local elections in Serbia- Cities and municipalities to elect local parliaments (29 March 2022)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.minpolj.gov.rs/evropska-komisija-usvojila-ipard-iii-program-republike-srbije-za-period-2021-2027-godine/>  
[www.euproplus.org.rs](http://www.euproplus.org.rs)

reuse of waste in production processes. Twenty of the best solutions submitted to the call will be selected to receive mentoring and technical support, while co-financing will be provided for the top five, so that these ideas may be applied in practice. LSGs, public utility companies, and companies from the private sector may apply to the Open Call to participate in this challenge until April 29, 2022.

The StarTech programme, implemented by NALED and the Government of the Republic of Serbia, with the support of Philip Morris Company published [Call to support innovation and digital transformation](#). The call is open from 18 March to 18 May for entrepreneurs, micro, small and medium enterprises and informal teams with innovative ideas who want to transform their business with new technologies. Total value of the Call is one million USD while individual grants can range from 15,000 to 100,000 USD. The Call also includes 1,000 hours of expert support for the selected beneficiaries.

## 2.1.2 Progress towards achieving objectives

Public Calls closed during the reporting period as well as those prepared for publishing in the next period are setting the ground for ensuring contribution to the Programme specific objective to reduce socio-economic disparities between the two regions.

In response to the Call for Development of Territorial Strategies 16 applications were received which include 47 LSGs inhabited by approximately 2.2 million citizens. Regarding capacity building process, the Programme already exceeded the planned target with 84,5 percent LSGs and RDAs benefiting from interventions, after conducting Module I and partial implementation of Module II of the Capacity Building Programme (82 LSGs and 11 RDAs).

Call for Business Support Organisations has been closed with 45 applications received. It is expected that through 16 projects that passed the threshold in the evaluation, 22 BSOs will support 425 SMEs contributing to economic development. The Call for Procurement of Equipment and Introduction of Services for Entrepreneurs, Micro and Small Enterprises is designed to ensure benefits for at least 100 enterprises in the Programme territory which will result in new jobs and increased productivity.

Call for Strengthening Social Services was closed successfully, recording a good interest from the target groups with 90 applications received. At least 20 projects are expected to be endorsed, which will set the ground for improvement of at least 15 social services at local level and better position of the vulnerable groups in the Programme's AoR.

Over 64 percent out of 99 targeted municipalities applied to the Call for Local Infrastructure Projects, among them ten LSGs first time applicants, which confirmed the relevance of support and intervention as well as a quality outreach campaign conducted prior and during the Call. Evaluation committee formed out of 19 members, evaluated 75 project proposals during the reporting period and proposed 34 applications for award.

## 2.1.3 Results and Activities

### **Result 1: Improved development planning in targeted municipalities and introduction of the ITI concept**

The Programme continued the activities related to introduction of territorial development concept. The initial steps towards study on the national Integrated Sustainable Territorial Development (ISTD) model were taken, the first part of the Capacity Building Programme for LSGs and RDAs was implemented, and the international and local pool of capacity building specialists have been recruited. The evaluation of the results of the [Call for Applications for Development of Territorial Strategies](#) was prepared and its endorsement will initiate introduction of the EU territorial development instruments and development of local and regional level capacities to manage territorial initiatives.



### ***Activity 1.1 Enhancing national capacity to introduce integrated territorial development***

The recruitment process for a pool of international Capacity Building Specialists was successfully finalised resulting in engagement of five experts in support of the capacity building activities targeting the national level, MEI in particular, while additional two retainers have been endorsed.

The already prepared structured content for the Study of the National model for ISTD and the development of Comparative Analysis of EU Member States on usage of ISTD Instruments regarding the selection of countries to be subject of the analysis is pending discussion and approval by MEI. In March, following the consultations with DEU on additional development of the IT tool intended to support monitoring and coordination of ISTD funding mechanisms, the work on the improvement of the initial concept note started. New version of the document will be prepared for discussion with DEU and MEI in April 2022.

The programme prepared Terms of Reference (ToR) for two local specialist positions to support preparation of the Analysis of Serbian legal and institutional framework in relation to the requirements of the EU legal framework for territorial development and usage of territorial instruments under the EU cohesion policy, as well as practice in EU member states. The vacancy will be advertised in April.

### ***Activity 1.2 Improving capacities of municipalities and regional development agencies to introduce concepts of integrated territorial planning***

The evaluation process for the [Call for Applications for Development of Territorial Strategies](#) was completed on 11 January, in the presence of an observer from the Ministry of European Integration (MEI). The Summary evaluation report with the justification for the applications proposed for support was shared with the donor who endorsed project proposals and MEI whose endorsement is still pending.

The Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) for SUD and ITI strategies were prepared along with the set of documents required for establishment of institutional framework for territorial strategies that will be submitted to awarded LSGs once the results of the Call are approved.

The recruitment process of two local positions - Pool of Senior Capacity Building Specialist and Capacity Building Specialist who should support development of SUD strategies have been completed and the contract issuing is ongoing.

The ToR and Tender for the service provider for provision of support in development of ITI strategies was prepared and approved and will be advertised immediately after MEI endorsement of the Call results.

The Programme conducted four two-day trainings for Programme LSGs and RDAs on Module I - Territorial Development Instruments<sup>6</sup> as a part of the EU PRO Plus Capacity Building Programme. The turnout of the LSGs was satisfying, considering circumstances that directly impacted attendance (ongoing pandemic, elections and political campaign). Total of 120 participants (74 or 61.7 percent women) from 51 LSGs (17 cities and 34 municipalities) and ten RDAs attended the training prepared and delivered by international experts. The participants, divided into four groups, attended training in Zlatibor (15-16 March and 17-18 March) and Belgrade (21-22 March and 23-24 March).

After the training, the Programme conducted a short training needs assessment (TNA)<sup>7</sup>, to get first hand insights about the topics to be included in the Module IV - additional training. According to the total of 108 responses collected, regarding specific aspects of ISTD that participants would like to know more about, the majority refers to strategy development (72 percent of respondents), followed by implementation of projects (56 percent), monitoring and evaluation (55 percent), cross-sectoral

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<sup>6</sup> Report on Territorial Development Instruments Training available in Annex I, Attn 1

<sup>7</sup> Report on TNA for LSGs and RDAs available in Annex I, Attn 2

integration (53 percent) and funding and finance (52 percent). In terms of topics to be added, participants in particular suggested the examples that are more closely related to the Serbian context and more good practice examples, but also cases of poor practice to learn from. The initial findings together with the feedback obtained through the process of development of SUD and ITI strategies will serve to develop need based, tailored training modules.

### ***Activity 1.3 Implementing activities contributing to socio-economic growth deriving from integrated territorial planning strategies***

The activity is planned for late 2022.

### **Result 2: Enhanced economic growth in targeted municipalities**

During this quarter, the Call for Economic Infrastructure projects and the Call for Technical Documentation were drafted. The Call for Economic Infrastructure is designed to create infrastructure conditions that are expected to generate at least 25 million euros of new industry investments in the target municipalities. The Call for Technical Documentation incorporated the recommendations of the MoE and LSG beneficiaries that pointed out the lack of high quality design for economic infrastructure as a major obstacle for economic development. This Call will enable preparation of technical documentation for at least six infrastructure projects contributing to economic development.

The Call for Business Support Organisations has been closed and evaluation finalised. The projects that passed the threshold in evaluation are expected to contribute to the enhancement of competitiveness and resilience of more than 400 SMEs and their ability to recover from COVID-19 related challenges.

The Call for Procurement of Equipment and Introduction of Services for Entrepreneurs, Micro and Small Enterprises has been prepared with relevant supporting documents and outreach plan. It is expected to contribute to enhancement of market potentials, value chain contribution, technological, green and digital transformation, job creation and economic recovery recover from the negative impact of COVID-19 of at least 100 SMEs in the second investment cycle.

### ***Activity 2.1 Developing economic infrastructure and business related services at the local level***

The Infrastructure team drafted the Call for proposals for technical documentation and the Call for proposals for economic infrastructure projects with accompanying Call documentation. Additionally, a draft ToR for an expert for supporting LSGs in managing economic infrastructure projects was prepared.

The Programme also prepared the assessment note on the chosen Programme approach to implementation of economic infrastructure, considering two alternatively proposed approaches in DoA. After evaluating advantages and disadvantages, it was concluded that economic infrastructure should be implemented as a stand alone activity considering the Programme timeline. The assessment indicated that integrating support to economic infrastructure in the ISTD Call would not be a feasible option taking into account few planning and design stages the development projects would need to undergo to be prepared for implementation. Furthermore, in case the Programme does not launch the EIP Call during Q1 2022 there is a high risk that planned impact indicators will not be realised .

During March, the Ministry of Economy announced the results of their Call for economic infrastructure, recommending 20 projects for funding, in total value of 5,3 million Euros.

In March the Programme held meetings with the representatives of 20 local development offices in order to analyse the needs of Programme municipalities and collect the quality data for preparation of the Public Call for Proposal for Business Related Services. The findings confirmed the relevance of the activity and the grant methodology approach to address the specific needs of LSGs like connecting local Public Utility Companies with LSGs existing GIS to improve provision of their services to businesses, promoting particular investment opportunities, industrial zones and tourism potentials etc. However, it also showed that contracting a service provider for joint initiatives, like access to information, can also be effective.

### ***Activity 2.2 Enhancing competitiveness and sustainability of enterprises contributing to economic stability of local communities***

The CFP for Business Support Organisations published on 9 December 2022 was closed on 2 February 2022. During January, a compilation of [frequently asked questions and answers](#) was published on the Programme website for all interested applicants who could also pose their questions via a Google form placed on the Programme website as well. Unlike previous CfPs, the application process for BSOs was organised online, via a Google platform, thus enabling a new, more sophisticated and secure way of submitting applications while preserving the integrity of the whole process. A total of 45 applications were received in the response to the Call with the total value of 2,155,019 USD while the funds requested from EU PRO Plus amounted to 2,095,594 USD. The Grant Evaluation Committee (GEC), constituted in line with UNOPS Grants Management Policy and relevant Standard Operating Procedures, was composed of 14 members divided into two teams, Administrative team (seven members) and Technical Evaluation team (five members), along with two assigned observers, one from the Ministry of Economy and one from the Development Agency of Serbia. Out of 45 applications, 3 applications were ineligible and 42 went through technical evaluation. During February and March, the Committee held three online working meetings in order to report on the evaluation process. The evaluation committee concluded that 16 applications passed the threshold of 60 points and would be recommended for funding. The total value of these applications is 777,771 USD out of which EURO PRO Plus proposed funding is 753,372 USD.

The Call for Procurement of Equipment and Introduction of Services for Entrepreneurs, Micro and Small Enterprises has been prepared together with the application documents and an outreach plan.

### **Result 3: Improved social infrastructure and social cohesion in targeted municipalities**

The Programme successfully closed the Call for Social Services Strengthening in March, with a total of 90 applications received from the civil sector and LSGs, and with partnership engagement of a broad range of local stakeholders relevant for improvement of the social services. Positive response to the CFP and great interest of local actors confirmed the relevance of the intervention and a great need for this type of support at the local level. The Programme will endorse at least 20 projects and their implementation is expected to start in the next quarter bringing benefits to the excluded groups and greater resilience of the social service providers.

The Programme continued its support to medical institutions in preventing and combating COVID-19. During the last quarter, the engagement of medical and non-medical teams in 23 public health centres was extended thus contributing to the provision of 658,558 medical services related to COVID-19:

- In total, 470,642 individuals were tested for COVID-19, out of which 202,418 men, 220,613 women, 24,907 boys and 22,704 girls;
- Total of 60,797 individuals were referred to other health care centres / medical institutions due to COVID-19, out of which 26,077 men, 30,770 women, 1,907 boys and 2,043 girls;
- In total, 5,422 individuals were admitted for hospital treatment due to COVID-19, out of which 2,902 men, 2,392 women, 53 boys and 75 girls;
- In total, 116,900 individuals were vaccinated against COVID-19, out of which 55,479 men, 59,527 women, 939 boys and 955 girls;
- In total, 4,797 individuals were traced due to COVID-19, out of which 1,699 men, 2,419 women, 331 boys and 348 girls;

### ***Activity 3.1 Developing and improving infrastructure which contributes to enhanced quality of life***

The final online info-session, out of total three online and six live, organised to promote the Call for Local Infrastructure projects, was held on 12 January 2022. The Info-Sessions Evaluation Report showed that a total of 218 people (127 live and 91 online) participated in nine info sessions (108 female and 110 male) from 75 LSGs and 6 RDA. In addition, the answers to all 174 questions received during the info-sessions or [www.euproplus.org.rs](http://www.euproplus.org.rs)

submitted within the deadline set on 15 January were published on the Programme webpage as per applicants' easier reference. The Programme managed to ensure coordination and avoid overlapping with similar activity implemented by other UNOPS implemented projects, i.e. EU for Social Housing and Active Inclusion (SHAI) project, as had timely informed all potential applicants.

Regular contacts were maintained during January with the LSGs aiming to support their applications as per the advertised Call for proposals for local infrastructure.

Several LSGs reported decreased capacities for preparation of the proposals for local infrastructure projects due to the increased Covid 19 cases during January, and sought for an extension. However, after careful considerations of timelines and number of cases, the EU PRO Plus decided not to extend the original deadline, to avoid further delays.

In response to the Call, closed on 31 January 2022, 75 applications from 64 LSGs were received. Fifty-three (53) LSGs submitted one application and 11 LSGs submitted two applications that were allowed by the Call criteria. The Evaluation Committee with 19 members was formed in line with UNOPS procedures including three voting members, five secretaries and eleven observers, among them a representative from the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure (MCTI), two representatives of the Public Investment Management Office (PIMO) and one from the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS). During February and March four Evaluation Committee meetings were held to inform all members on the evaluation progress. All 75 projects passed administrative checks and went through technical evaluation as per defined evaluation criteria. As part of the quality assurance process, the quality of technical documentation related to the subject of infrastructure intervention, was also assessed by the technical experts of civil, electrical and mechanical expertise, also members of the evaluation committee. During March, the quality of designs was assessed by technical members of the evaluation committee, experts of civil, electrical and mechanical expertise and verification visits paid to 13 LSGs.

As a result of evaluation, the Programme prepared a ranking list, scoring the applications from max 88,33 to min 42,33 points, with relevant justification for each score per project. To secure funding of 34 applications that have scored over 60 points and have the mandatory Integrated Territorial relevance, the Programme will request an increase in the initial Call award from 3,4 million to 5,54 million Euros. The additional amount would be allocated from the ten million Euros budget awarded to the Programme via Addendum.

Fourteen (14) applications were also scored above the set thresholds but were put on the reserve list due to the budget limitations. Nineteen (19) applications were not recommended as they scored below the set threshold, while eight (8) applications were deemed ineligible. The Evaluation Report with all supporting annexes was prepared and shared with all members of the evaluation committee and all documentation is prepared for the Programme Steering Committee for review and approval.

### ***Activity 3.2 Supporting public institutions, including the social protection institutions, to enhance social services and preparedness for emergencies***

[The Call for Strengthening Social Services](#) published on 14 January was closed on 7 March, after being extended for seven days. The need for extension was identified based on the feedback provided by potential applicants and taking into consideration other factors - unfavourable epidemiological situation, as well as proximity of three other CFPs published by UNOPS and the overlapping in potential applicants.

The Programme conducted a wide outreach campaign to promote the Call, which in addition to media promotion included sharing information with around 900 direct contacts from public and civil sectors, while promotional material was disseminated to 99 LSGs to be placed in public places. Furthermore, three info-sessions about the Call were organised with participation of 158 people (117 women and 41 men). All info sessions had to be conducted online due to the COVID-19 epidemiological situation in the country.

The CFP attracted significant interest among the target groups reflected in the number of participants at info-sessions and the questions received. The answers to the frequently asked questions were published on the internet page of the Call. Finally, the CFP was closed with 90 received applications from 56 municipalities and cities, where 58 project proposals came as a result of a partnership, mainly between civil and public sectors. Total value of the proposed projects is approximately 2.5 million Euros, out of which 2.3 million EUR is requested from the Programme.

In line with UNOPS procedures, the Evaluation Committee for the CFP has been established with three members of the Technical Evaluation Team, five secretaries within the Administrative Team, and three observers nominated by the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs (MLEVSA). Upon finalisation of the administrative screening of the applications, the first meeting of the Evaluation Committee was held on 22 March. The evaluation is underway and set to be completed at the beginning of May.

### ***Activity 3.3 Support to COVID-19 related prevention and response activities***

Following the request from the Ministry of Health, endorsed by MEI and DEU due to an unfavourable epidemiological situation, the Programme facilitated continued engagement of 191 medical and non-medical workers in 23 healthcare centres throughout Serbia, supporting them in COVID-19 prevention and recovery efforts. Addendums to the existing grant support agreements were issued for all beneficiary healthcare centres in January followed by verification of the financial report and payment of a third tranche. Engagement of medical workers in 21 institutions was completed at the end of March, while several medical institutions expressed the need for extension of the support.

COVID-19 related procurements are underway. The 1,000 disinfection devices and 41 triage containers were contracted, while tender for the disinfection liquid was closed.

## **2.2 Management**

### **2.2.1 Governance**

The EU PRO Plus is governed by the Programme Steering Committee (PSC), constituted by the representatives of the key national institutions relevant for the Programme activities. While no PSC meetings were held since December 2021, the PSC members remained engaged and consulted on the key processes which took place during the quarter.

Representatives of the Ministry of Economy (ME) and Development Agency of Serbia (DAS) participated in the work of the Grant Evaluation Committee (GEC) for evaluation of applications received in response to the Call for Business Support Organisations (BSO) in the capacity of observers. Likewise, representatives of the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS), Ministry of Construction, Transportation and Infrastructure (MCTI) and Public Investment Management Office (PIMO) participated in the work of GEC for the Call for Proposals for Local Infrastructure Projects as observers. Finally, representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs (MLEVSA) are observing the work of the GEC for the Call for Proposals for Strengthening Social Services. A total of eight GEC meetings were held for the three calls during the quarter.

Additionally, several meetings with the representatives of the DEU and MEI were organised during the quarter. The next PSC meeting is planned to be organised in April 2022.

### **2.2.2 Coordination**

The first coordination meeting was held in January with two complementary World Bank projects - [Serbia Local Infrastructure and Institutional Development Project](#) and [Green, Livable, Resilient Cities in Serbia Programme](#), to mutually present initiatives and establish cooperation and synergy in activities related to sustainable urban development of the cities. This coordination will mostly contribute to the

implementation of the projects derived from the territorial strategies supported by the Programme.

Involvement of the key national stakeholders, both from public and civil sector, in promotion of the CFP for Strengthening Social Service evidently resulted in a greater interest and engagement of the target group. MLEVSA and the Centre for Social Policy shared information about the CFP on their website and social networks and disseminated it to their relevant contacts. Their support in the outreach campaign contributed to both the large number of the applications received and in the significant number of the partnerships established with the institutions for provision of the social protection services.

The representatives of the MLEVSA are participating in the GEC for the CFP for Strengthening Social Services as an observer, contributing to the quality of the evaluation process with significant knowledge and experience related to the social protection services.

The visits to LSGs in 2021 followed by promotions of the Call through info-sessions and direct communication with individual LSGs in January 2022 resulted in a high number of applications to the Call for Local Infrastructure projects. Out of 64 municipalities that submitted one or two proposals, ten are first time applicants in comparison to the predecessor Programme EU PRO<sup>8</sup>.

Four representatives of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry for Construction Transport and Infrastructure, and Public Investment Management Office supported the work of the Evaluation Committee for the CFP for Local Infrastructure projects, and participated in four evaluation committee meetings, contributing to the process.

### 2.2.3 Human Resources

During Q1, the core programme team in ISTD Capacity Building and Competitiveness sectors has been reinforced with two regular Senior Assistants positions. Additionally, the Pool of five Capacity Building Specialists for Territorial Development has been onboarded in order to respond to the expansion of activities in this sector. Mechanical, Water and Electrical Engineers have supported the Infrastructure sector in the assessment and development of technical documentation for local infrastructure project proposals.

Programme personnel completed performance reviews for 2021 and developed individual performance related objectives for 2022.

Over 30 courses in the area of Project Management, Infrastructure, Corporate Tools and ICT, Human Resources Management, Diversity and Inclusion have been completed by the personnel while the Associate for SMEs obtained PRINCE2 Foundation certificate.

### 2.2.4 Procurement and Grants

The EU PRO Plus predominantly uses grant methodology which gives ownership over the projects to the grantees while the Programme maintains monitoring and advisory roles. During the first quarter of 2022, the Grant Administration Unit conducted the process for the issuance of GSA Amendments for 23 projects in regard to support the employment of human resources in 23 health care institutions on the territory of the Republic of Serbia, for the purpose of control and suppression of COVID-19 virus. In brief, the administration of these GSAs included:

- Administered 23 budget revisions and time extensions and verifications of 23 requests for budget revision and time extension
- Issuance of 23 GSA Amendments
- Verification of 23 financial reports and processing of 23 payments

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<sup>8</sup> Osečina, Krupanj, Brus, Negotin, Tutin, Vrnjačka Banja, Čićevac, Lapovo, Varvarin and Čuprija  
[www.euproplus.org.rs](http://www.euproplus.org.rs)

Moreover, the Grant Administration Unit conducted administrative assistance (sorting of the applications, completion of administrative and eligibility checks, managing applicant clarifications, budget checks etc.) in the application evaluation process of the following public calls:

1. Public Calls for Local Infrastructure Projects - 75 applications
2. Business Support Organisations - 45 applications
3. Strengthening Social Service - 90 applications

Finally, the Grant Administration Unit had updated the registration of the EU PRO Plus Project (end date and the total amount of the project) with the tax authorities.

As for the procurement, UNOPS has conducted 19 different procurement processes for purchase of various goods and services. Some of them represent the continuation of emergency purchases for Covid 19 support like provision of triage containers and medical furniture as well as disinfection devices and liquid. Procurement of Consultancy Services for Development ITI Strategies was also one of the commenced tenders in Q1. In relation to the value, nature and complexity of the requirements, the statistic of all conducted solicitation processes is as follows:

- 8 Shopping processes, i.e. small value purchases up to USD 5,000.00
- 7 Requests for Quotations processes, i.e. purchases of USD 5,000.0 to USD 50,000.00
- 4 Request for Proposal/Invitation to Bid, purchases of value more than USD 50,000

## 2.2.5. Finance

The following are the main financial indicators<sup>9</sup>:

- The total delivery of the EU PRO Plus as of 31 March 2022 was 4,181,879.79 Euros or 10.45% of the Programme budget.
- The forecast delivery for the next reporting period is 1,828,000 Euros.

## 3. RISKS AND ISSUES

During the quarter, the Programme proactively managed risks and issues. A summary of the current set of issues and risks affecting the Programme is as follows:

- **Prolonged COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect Programme implementation modality and jeopardise realisation of the Programme results.** During the quarter, the number of new cases ranged from 1,600 to the record numbers of 20,000 per day, and the related restrictions and health considerations have affected the implementation modality of the Programme activities, For example, all four info sessions organised during the quarter were held on-line while the capacity building events though held in-person had to take into account prevention measures and were marked with greater rates of cancellation of attendance. The risk response was effective, with greater focus on the outreach campaigns, which eventually yielded results with 210 applications received in response to the three calls closed during the quarter.
- **The increase of market prices on local and global level has begun to take its toll on the realisation of Programme activities.** In spite of the fact that during the promotion of the Call for local infrastructure projects, the local governments were advised to revise the available technical documentation so as to reflect the changes in the market prices and were warned that they would have to fund the difference in prices resulting from the changed market, there is a risk that they would cancel grants if not able to top their planned contribution. The risk response is effective as the Evaluation Panel of the subject Call has prepared a list of projects on the reserve list which would be used in case of grant cancellations. Further to this, this new situation on the

<sup>9</sup> While these figures provide quality insight into the Programme's spending, the final figures are only provided in the Programme's financial reports.

market could negatively impact the interest of the SMEs to participate in the CFP. The Programme will however, through its outreach campaign communicate this risk to potential applications and monitor preparation for procurement of equipment and verification of potential suppliers in order to ensure delivery within the given deadline and for the agreed price.

- **Various delays also affect the timeline for the implementation of activities.** Firstly, the delayed endorsement of the results of the Call for Applications for Development of Territorial Strategies may affect the implementation of Result 1 activities in terms of timing, potential overall and frequent modification of the work plan. Secondly, the delays in the endorsement of the recommended projects by the PSC could impact on the planned delivery targets. This could also be coupled with poor technical documentation submitted with LIP applications. The risk response of the Programme includes efforts to organise electronic voting so as to speed up the approval procedure. As far as the technical documentation is concerned, the Programme responded to his risk effectively by engaging engineering support to anticipate the setbacks in the designs that could be tackled in the preparation phases of project realisation.

## 4. QUALITY

The Programme approach to quality is regulated with the Quality Management Strategy adopted in July 2021, which defines the quality standards to be applied and the responsibilities of personnel for achieving the required quality levels during the implementation of the Programme.

Monitoring and evaluating quality is a significant step in implementation of Programme activities, with continuous collection and evaluation of feedback received from the Programme stakeholders and beneficiaries. The following examples provide evidence for quality assurance of Programme interventions during the reporting period:

The four two-day trainings Territorial Development Instruments, as a part of the EU PRO Plus Capacity Building Programme (Module I), were delivered for over 120 participants (out of which 61 percent female), coming from Programme LSGs and RDAs. The events took place in Zlatibor (15-16 March and 17-18 March) and Belgrade (21-22 March and 23-24 March). The review of the evaluation questionnaires<sup>10</sup> showed very positive feedback, with an overall average rating of 4.5, in scale set from 1 (unsatisfactory) to 5 (excellent). Looking at the particular segments, training content and training material was marked, on average, between 4.5 and 4.6. In participants' view, the quality of training content and achieved training objectives were met, and the competency of lecturers and their relationship with participants was marked as excellent (4.9). Participants stated that they have gained and improved knowledge and skills during the training, highly applicable in their work and organisation.

As a part of the Quality Management Strategy, the Programme developed the questionnaire for assessment of capacity building process in order to assess the quality of implemented capacity building activities. The Programme conducted initial assessment after delivering Module I<sup>11</sup> as a part of overall assessment of built capacities of all Programme LSGs and RDAs. The Programme uses this kind of assessment to perceive the end result of the capacity building process, and the level of change in knowledge and skills of the beneficiaries. Taking into account that the participants in the training could not assess in which field they should develop capacities, the numerical responses of the questionnaire are relative, and do not represent absolute values. However, numerical responses were supplemented with statements from the questionnaire in order to gain a deeper understanding of the state of the art in knowledge, relations and capacities for the implementation of integrated territorial development.

With regards to CFP for Business Support Organisations, a clarification process was conducted for 16 BSO project proposals that passed the threshold in technical evaluation to ensure that all aspects of the

<sup>10</sup> Report on Territorial Development Instruments Training is available in Annex I, Attn 1

<sup>11</sup> Report on Capacity Development for Territorial Development Instruments is available in Annex I, Attn 3



project proposal, including budget meet the quality standards and are ready for the implementation phase after the PSC approval.

Programme also conducted assessment of the modalities for implementation of the support to LSG in enhancing Business Related Services. The assessment was done to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of implementation.

The three online info-sessions for the Call for Strengthening Social Services, held in January and February, attracted 158 participants (117 women and 41 men) coming from 59 municipalities in the Programme AoR. Both sectors were well represented, as 73 attendees came from the public sector, including representatives of LSGs (41) and institutions for social protection services provision (32) and 85 CSOs representatives, evidencing quality of the conducted outreach campaign for the Call. The info-sessions were evaluated<sup>12</sup> very positively by the participants who completed the evaluation questionnaire, assessing them as useful and relevant for the preparation of the project proposals (95 percent), confirming that their understanding of the Call was improved significantly after the presentation. The organisation of the info-sessions was assessed positively by 98 percent of participants.

Evaluation questionnaires, populated by 148 participants during six live and three online info-sessions, confirming highly positive organisation of the info-sessions by 69 percent and positive by 28 percent was record of the quality of info-sessions. The number of LSGs applied to the Call that reached 65 percent of the total number of 99 targeted municipalities confirmed the quality of the outreach campaign and relevance of the intervention. As part of the quality assurance process, the infrastructure team introduced the quality assessment of technical designs related to the subject of infrastructure intervention during technical evaluation of the proposals. The technical experts of civil, electrical and mechanical expertise, also members of the evaluation committee, reviewed the submitted designs, and their quality. Namely, a high number of low quality technical designs was noted during the implementation of the predecessor EU PRO Programme. Therefore EU PRO Plus, as lesson learned, introduced additional quality checks and additional budget lines into individual project budgets, reserved for review of designs and preparation of tender documentation to minimise the unforeseen costs resulting from low quality technical documentation. To confirm the viability of the submitted project proposals, an evaluation committee requested administrative clarification to 43 LSGs and budget clarifications from 32 LSGs during March, and conducted verification visits to 13 LSGs.

## 5. SUSTAINABILITY

The Programme has continued ensuring sustainability factors are considered in all activities, including social, environmental and economic sustainability as well as building local, regional and national capacity that contribute to the sustainability of interventions in the long run.

The delivered training on Territorial development instruments conducted, a part of the capacity building process, included evaluation and participants feedback, shows the applicability of the acquired knowledge to their future work, with average rating of 4.5, in scale set from 1 to 5, which proves the concept of the long-term impact of the capacity building programme.

Sustainability has been incorporated into the Call for Business Support Organisations, not just as a criteria for selection, but also in the themes covered by the Call including support to circular economy and greening of business as a separate theme. This is the main area of intervention for five BSO project proposals.

To ensure sustainability, the infrastructure team included soft measures in the conditions of the Call for Local Infrastructure projects. The realisation of the proposed soft measures should improve the services in the public sector relevant to the subject of infrastructure intervention. This resulted in the high number of quality proposals while all 34 recommended for funding ensured all three pillars of sustainability are in place. They all also involve environmental consideration out of which 80 percent include energy efficiency

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<sup>12</sup> Evaluation report on CFP for Social Services info sessions is available in Annex III, Attachment 3.2

measures contributing to reduced level of CO2 emissions and to financial sustainability as a result of future energy savings. To ensure environmental sustainability, the projects having a negative impact on nature were subject to elimination while all applicants were obligated to submit the proof of no negative impact on nature through Environment Impact Assessment Study or the Decision of no need for the Study, issued by relevant legal authority. Social sustainability will also be ensured in all 34 projects recommended for funding through basic conditions of the Call supporting only the projects with impact on the wider community. Upon implementation, 34 projects should contribute to better life for nearly 195,000 inhabitants. The majority of proposals (60 percent) foresee impact on institutional level that should be seen through changes of local acts, adopting the local action plans or local strategic documents for development of specific public service in the health, social service, culture, sport, education, public service or communal service sector, or other related to inclusion of vulnerable groups or to the local budget redistribution to ensure accountability for disbursement of funds from savings. The Programme will closely monitor the sustainability indicators and include them in the final report summarised data obtained from all projects that are endorsed by PSC for funding.

## 6. CROSS-CUTTING THEMES: Good governance, Gender equality, Social inclusion, Environment and climate change and Digitalisation

The Programme addressed cross-cutting themes by integrating good governance, gender equality and social inclusion, and digitalisation aspects into criteria of the CFP for Social Services Strengthening and draft CFP for supporting SMEs. These elements were in particular assessed within the evaluation of the project proposals submitted for the CFP for Local Infrastructure Projects and CFP for Business Support Organisations, as target beneficiaries were encouraged to consider these issues during development of applications.

The draft CFP for supporting SMEs envisages different cross-cutting aspects as an integral part of the concept by promoting equal opportunities and increased women representation in business related activities, benefit for the vulnerable groups and promotion of the corporate social responsibilities (CSR) activities among the business entities. Moreover, the CFP for BSOs encouraged fostering, including and promoting CSR activities to support vulnerable groups and needs of local communities.

Digitalisation has been introduced as an important topic within the CFP for Social Services Strengthening in order to enhance capability of the social service providers to identify, monitor and assess status of social services delivery, contributing to the overall improvement of the services. Among other activity themes, the CFP for BSOs also included the digitalisation of SMEs production and sales, enhancing e-commerce as well as SME's greening activities contributing to environmental protection and reducing negative environmental impacts.

Implementation of the Gender Action Plan<sup>13</sup> is advancing in line with the set targets for all Programme activities. During the reporting period the Programme ensured equal opportunities and women representation in the outreach activities to promote current CFPs, making sure that the gender-disaggregated data are collected. Total of 15 info sessions were organised for the promotion of three CFPs, where 60 percent of the participants were female.

Review of the capacity-building related activities has confirmed that the gender equality (GE)-related targets have been met so far as the workshops on territorial development instruments for the local and regional actors gathered over 61 percent of female participants. Furthermore, guidelines for establishment of working groups for development of territorial strategies are defined in accordance with the GE principles and stipulate promotion of equal representation of women and men, while striving to

<sup>13</sup> Gender Action Plan is available in Annex V Attn 5.2

ensure that the working groups consist of at least 40 percent of women.

The Programme ensured gender-sensitive monitoring and reporting within the Business Support Organisation activity by developing a monitoring and reporting tool with included gender-related indicators. Gender equality was included in CFP for BSOs through equal inclusion of male and female beneficiaries together with gender sensitive objectives and activities, as well as the application of Good Governance principles.

All 34 local infrastructure projects recommended for funding include good governance (GG) activities, based on at least two good governance principles, as per the conditions of the Call. The GG activities vary from a set of rules and decisions on how to utilise the savings from energy efficiency activities to institutional acts or plans for development of specific activities to support inclusion of vulnerable groups or women in targeted sectors. The proposals were evaluated based on evaluation criteria that included relevance sections assessed on the basis of applicant's capacity to include gender concerns, good governance and target beneficiaries with respect to vulnerable groups. The infrastructure sector will create a monitoring tool to follow and report on gender and vulnerable groups related indicators.

## 7. COMMUNICATIONS AND VISIBILITY

A total of 85 media reports were generated as a result of two press releases to promote opening and the extension of the Public Call for Enhancement of Social Services as well as other programme activities. One media statement related to the mentioned call was organised for Radio Belgrade.

The Communication Survey on the citizens opinion on the EU support in the form of 26-item questionnaire, was open and disseminated through the social media from 25 January to 25 March in order to set the baseline for brand recognition and opinions of EU integration in the EU PRO Plus Programme Area of Responsibility (AoR). 495 responses were collected and are to be analysed in the next quarter.

Video scenarios for Success stories were developed as a tool for LSG beneficiaries of Local Infrastructure grants to facilitate production of promotional videos mandated by their contracts. Additionally, a testimonial guidance to serve as a template for other Programme success stories was also developed. The municipal profiles have been updated with the latest statistical data from January 2022.

Eleven different Programme overview notes were prepared including eight developed in coordination with other UNOPS projects. The overview of culture projects implemented from 2010-2022 within EU PROGRES, European PROGRES and EU PRO was prepared on the DEU request, while the narrative and project overview of the support to eight districts from the Programme AoR (Zlatiborski, Šumadijski, Pomoravski, Zaječarski, Nišavski, Pčinjski, Mačvanski and Jablanički districts) along with a List of Projects for ongoing and past UNOPS initiatives was developed. In addition to the MEI request, the Programme supported preparation of the answers to the media inquiry on the support to Kragujevac and Šumadijski district. Finally, the overview of all projects implemented in direct cooperation with LSGs within European PROGRES (2014-2018) and EU PRO (2018-2021) was also prepared upon the MEI request.

The list of potential video success stories for new EUforYou campaigns to be broadcasted on the Public Service Media - Radio Television of Serbia, was prepared upon the request by the EU Info Centre. In addition, three success stories on women entrepreneurs were shared with the MLEVSA to be presented within the Dubai 2020 Expo Serbian Hub in the week dedicated to the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 and the topics related to women's entrepreneurship and empowerment.

The team also coordinated participation of two EU PRO beneficiaries in the MEI conference "Circular economy, employment and digitalisation in light of the Conference on the Future of Europe" to promote the EU support to circular economy and employment, social justice and jobs creation, as well as the

predecessor programme results achieved in these domains. The UNOPS Project of the Year (POTYA) application for the predecessor programme EU PRO was prepared and endorsed by the regional office and the Director of Regional Portfolios.

The New Year VIP promotional packages acquired through communications procurement “The office in the box” were distributed and well received by the main national and international stakeholders, namely the Delegation of the European Union, Ministry of European Integration and Programme Steering Committee members. The tender for communication support activities including the traditional and social media, out-of-home advertising and viber promotion was successfully finalised providing easy access to communication channels necessary for successful promotion of the Public Calls for Proposals.

Further, a new set of promotional materials was developed and ordered, while tender for provision of packaging and bulk mailing services to ensure timely and evenly shared information through direct mail to all potential beneficiaries is ongoing.

The Programme website was visited 3,753 times by 2,266 unique visitors, while the most visited web pages were those dedicated to the public calls. The Facebook campaigns to promote BSO call and Call for enhancement of social services as well as the Opinion survey reached over 220,142 people, while the posts were liked 824 times and shared 44 times. The Facebook and Twitter pages stand at 19,016 and 1,164 followers respectively, while Instagram records 2,699 followers.

## 8. LESSONS LEARNED

EU PRO Plus programme introduced **Google forms** for submitting project proposals, registration sheets for participation in info-sessions and for posing questions related to the propositions of the Calls. This practice proved to be a valuable tool that has improved collection of information and shortened time for their processing, in particular the time needed for administrative evaluation of the proposals and the time for administration and storage of the received proposals since by using Google forms these tasks are done automatically by the system.

**Contractual consequences** related to the failure to deliver milestone reports by LSG grantees should be reinforced. There are no contractual consequences in case LSG grantees fail to deliver milestone reports, so there is no real leverage for the team if grantees do not deliver them. Fund return should be more explicitly introduced in the contractual clauses in such cases. The Programme will ensure that timely reporting is included in contractual obligations when preparing Grant Support Agreements for LSGs.

**Delivery** of infrastructure projects according to the grant methodology **highly depends on implementing partners**. Municipalities with higher co-funding and disturbed cash flow might have problems providing co-funding as agreed by the Grant Agreement, which may hinder timely transfer of second tranches of EU PRO Plus and impact the overall project implementation. In order to avoid such delays during project implementation, the Programme introduced the signed obligation of applicant LSGs to transfer their portion of co-funding within three months from the signing of Grant Agreement. The Programme will closely monitor implementation activities and report on any deviation from delivery targets set in the forecast.

**Involving members** of the PSC in the evaluation panel **could improve the evaluation process**. EU PRO Plus included the PSC members in the evaluation panel as observers to support and validate the process of selection of the proposals to the Call.

**Professionally produced video** of info-sessions posted on the Programme website for each Public Call, whereby the EU PRO Plus teams explain in detail the call criteria and application process for each specific Call for Proposals proved to be a good tool for promotion of CfPs. The video info-sessions helped the

applicants to better understand the criteria of the Call and inform about good practices and experiences.

During Calls for Proposals, Business Service Organisations/SMEs often **submit irrelevant cost requests within their budgets** that are not in line with real costs or Call criteria or submit application documents that need further explanations. **Introduction of a new clause in the budget form**, indicating that UNOPS maintains the right to review and suggest budget reductions or propose budget modification whenever assessed as relevant would help avoid budget discrepancies.

**More accurate budget specification** provided by the applicants during the application process with introduction of bills of quantities in advance would help to better assess the needs and market value of the equipment/services requested by BSOs/SME. **Including requests of three (3) bills of quantities** for the equipment/services to be procured by BSOs/SMEs during the application process would be suggested in the future CfPs.

## 9. NEXT REPORTING PERIOD<sup>14</sup>

*This section provides a list of priorities/activities for the subsequent reporting period. A detailed Work Plan should be produced separately and annexed to this report.*

The following are the key milestones for the upcoming period:

### **Result 1. Improved development planning in targeted municipalities and introduction of the ITI concept**

- Delivery of the Module I - Territorial Development Instruments training to MEI
- Initialising development of the Comparative analysis after confirmation of selection of EU member states
- Conducting recruitment process for Policy and Institutional specialists for analysis of Serbian legal and institutional framework
- Preparing ToR for development of ISTD platform
- Finalisation of the concept note on IT tool
- Advertising tender for selection of service provider for development of ITI strategies
- Obtain MEI endorsement for Call results, signing MoUs with selected LSGs for development of strategies and initialising process of its development

### **Result 2. Enhanced economic growth in targeted municipalities**

- Obtaining the PSCs approval and publish the Call for Economic Infrastructure projects (EIP) and the Call for Development of Technical Documentation (TD)
- Organising promotional activities for the EIP and TD call.
- Obtaining the PSCs approval and publish the Call for Business Related Services (BRS)
- Presenting the results of Calls for Proposals for Business Support Organisations and Local Infrastructure Projects to the PSC and securing endorsement.
- Obtain PSCs approval and publish the Public Call for Proposals for Procurement of Equipment and Introduction of Services for Entrepreneurs, Micc Call for Proposals for Procurement of Equipment and Introduction of Services for Entrepreneurs, Micro and Small Enterprises.

### **Result 3. Improved social infrastructure and social cohesion in targeted municipalities**

- Finalise the evaluation process for the Call for Strengthening Social Services and obtain PSCs approval on the results of the CFP
- Monitoring and completion of 23 grants for medical institutions, followed by administrative closing
- Obtaining PSCs approval to award 34 grants to LSGs, positively evaluated and recommended by the Evaluation committee and organising an award ceremony

<sup>14</sup> EU PRO Plus Work Plan for the period from 1 October -31 December 2021 is available in Annex V, Attachment 5.1.

- Sign contracts 34 GSAs with 33 LSGs and facilitate the introductory meetings to present the implementation procedures
- Facilitate transferring of the first tranches to all 34 LIPs.
- Monitor the preparation of the tender procedures for provision of works/services for all 34 LIPs

#### Programme Communications

- Support organisation of the Programme Steering Committee
- Promote results of the conducted call for proposals in the traditional and social media and among stakeholders and beneficiaries
- Promote the upcoming CfPs, in particular CfP for Micro and Small Enterprises through comprehensive promotional and info campaign via various communication channels

## LFM – progress against indicators

#### Legend

	Activity completed, outputs delivered in accordance with the set targets
	Activity progressing in accordance with the plan
	Activity progresses with manageable delay
	Activity is critical

Objectively verifiable indicators	Objectively Verifiable Indicators - Target	Progress during the reporting period
<b>Overall Objective:</b> To contribute to socio-economic development, prosperity and social cohesion of Serbian society	WB Doing Business Report score 74	Not available. The WB discontinued publishing of the Doing Business Report.
	Global Competitiveness Index Rank 69	The World Economic Forum paused comparative country rankings on the Global Competitiveness Index during the turbulent times of COVID-19 pandemic.
SO1. To decrease socio-economic disparities of two regions within Serbia	Šumadija and Western Serbia Region GDP and number of unemployed - 20% / 101,760	Data for the year 2021 will be available in the second half of 2022.
	South-East Serbia Region GDP and number of unemployed - 14.2% / 83,712	Data for the year 2021 will be available in the second half of 2022.
<b>RESULT 1</b>		
<b>Improved development planning in targeted municipalities and introduction of the ITI concept</b>		
<b>Result 1. Improved development planning in targeted municipalities and introduction of the Integrated and Sustainable Territorial Development (ISTD) concept</b>	<b>OC 1.1</b> The number of adopted Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) and Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) strategies and the number of LSGs covered with these Strategies (Corresponds with IPA PF 2.11) - At least 15 strategies which include at least 35 LSGs	Call for Applications for Development of Territorial Strategies conducted. The Programme received 16 applications including 47 LSGs

	<b>OC 1.2</b> Implementation of at least 80 percent adopted SUD and ITI Strategies initiated with at least three different funding sources - at least 12 (mid 2024)	This activity is planned for 2024.
<b>Result 2 Enhanced economic growth in targeted municipalities</b>	<b>OC 2.1</b> Number of jobs created or facilitated - At least 300 (2023)	Assessment of the implementation modality for support to Business Related Services carried out.
	<b>OC 2.2</b> Number of start-ups and MSEs that benefited - 500 (2023)	Call for Proposals for BSO closed. 45 Applications received. Evaluation completed and results for Programme Steering Committee.
	<b>OC 2.3</b> Number and financial value of initiated investments in industry and services facilitated - At least six investments valued at least 25 million Euros (mid of 2024)	Call for Proposals for Economic Infrastructure Projects prepared Call for Proposals for Technical Documentation prepared.
<b>Result 3: Improved social infrastructure and social cohesion in targeted municipalities</b>	<b>OC 3.1</b> Number of persons benefiting from improved public facilities/ services - at least 35,000 (2023)	Call for Proposals for Local Infrastructure Projects successfully closed with 75 received applications. When implemented, nearly 195,000 persons will benefit from improved services.
	<b>OC 3.2</b> Number of introduced or improved social services provided by CSOs and/or LSGs - at least 15	Call for Proposals for Strengthening Social Services closed successfully in March with 90 received applications.
	<b>OC3.3</b> Number of persons benefiting from enhanced health care services related to COVID-19 prevention and recovery - at least 300,000 (2022)	1,000 disinfection devices and 41 triage containers were contracted, while tender for the disinfection liquid was closed
<b>Activity 1.1</b> Enhancing national capacity to introduce integrated territorial development	Number of persons at the national level trained - 40 (middle 2023)	This activity is planned for the next reporting period.
	Proposals for regulators and procedural framework to enable preparation of the EU model for territorial planning - in place (end of 2024)	The suggested approach for development of the Comparative Study on EU member states is developed and shared with MEI. The content and the structure of the the Study on national model for ISTD is prepared
	Monitoring, reporting and evaluation approaches related to ISTD model - in place (2022)	A wider list of indicators for monitoring and implementation of territorial strategies recommended by the European Commission, and those identified with the Strategy for Urban Development is developed.
	Number of tools developed or enhanced - at least one (2022)	A Concept Note on the potential IT tool is drafted.

<b>Activity 1.2</b> Improving capacities of municipalities and regional development agencies to introduce concepts of integrated territorial planning	Number of LSGs and RDAs benefiting from interventions - at least 80 percent (middle 2023)	84,5 percent of the LSGs and RDAs benefiting from the capacity building process (82 LSGs and 11 RDAs participated in the training activities within Module I and in the part of the Module II of Capacity Building Programme)
	Population covered by SUD and ITI Strategies - at least 2 million (end of 2022)	The received applications in response to the Call for Development of Territorial Strategies cover a population of approximately 2.2 million.
<b>Activity 1.3</b> Implementing activities contributing to socio-economic growth deriving from integrated territorial planning strategies	Number of integrated projects deriving from the ISTD strategies, whose implementation is supported - at least 15 (mid 2024)	This activity is planned for next year.
<b>RESULT 2</b> Enhanced economic growth in targeted municipalities		
<b>Activity 2.1</b> Developing economic infrastructure and businesses related services at the local level	Number of supported economic infrastructure projects - 16 (2024)	Call for Proposals for Economic Infrastructure Projects prepared  Call for Proposals for Technical Documentation prepared.
	Number of LSGs supported in improvement of at least one business related service - 10 (2024)	Comparative analysis of the implementation methods for this activity conducted.
<b>Activity 2.2</b> Enhancing competitiveness and sustainability of enterprises contributing to economic stability of local communities	Number of supported start-ups, entrepreneurs and enterprises - 100 (2022)	Call for Proposals for support to SMEs prepared for approval.
	Number of supported youth and women entrepreneurs - at least 50 (2022)	This activity is planned for the next reporting periods.
	Number of people benefiting from skill-development training - 200 (2022)	This activity is planned for the next reporting periods.
	Number of supported BSO projects - 10 (2022)	Evaluation of 45 received BSO applications finalised.
<b>RESULT 3</b> Improved social infrastructure and social cohesion in targeted municipalities		
<b>Activity 3.1</b> Developing and improving infrastructure which contributes to enhanced quality of life	Number of social infrastructure projects implemented -at least 30 (2022)	Call for Proposals for Local Infrastructure Projects successfully closed and 34 recommended for funding within the amended value of amount budgeted for this activity.
<b>Activity 3.2</b> Supporting public institutions, including the social protection institutions, to enhance social services and preparedness for emergencies	Number of CSO projects related to social services supported - 20 (2023)	Call for Proposals for Strengthening Social Services closed successfully in March with 90 received applications.



<p><b>Activity 3.3</b> Support to COVID-19 related prevention and response activities</p>	<p>Number of medical centres supported to enhance services related to COVID-19 prevention and recovery - at least 20 (2022)</p>	<p>Engagement of medical and non-medical workers on combating COVID-19 has been completed in 21 out of 23 medical institutions.</p>
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## ANNEXES

### Annex I Improved Development Planning

Annex I Attn 1 Report on Territorial Development Instruments Training

Annex I Attn 2 Report on Training Needs Assessment (LSGs & RDAs)

Annex I Attn 3 Report on Capacity Development for Territorial Development Instruments

### Annex II Enhanced Economic Growth

N/A

### Annex III Improved Social Infrastructure and Social Cohesion

N/A

### Annex IV Communications

Annex IV Attn 1 EU PRO Plus Overview of Communication Activities

### Annex V Programme Management

Annex V Attn 1 EU PRO Plus Work Plan for Q2 of 2022