**Human Resources Management in Local Self-Governments – Phase 2**

**CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

SUPPORTING SERBIAN LSGs FOR IMPLEMENTING SPECIAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES (SPDPs)

(**Ref. Grant 4708/2021/SPDPs)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Project** | Human Resources Management in Local Self Governments – phase 2 |
| **Awarding entity** | Council of Europe |
| Office in Belgrade |
| **Funding** | 125,000.00 EUR |
| **Duration** | Projects shall be implemented by **29 October 2021**Reporting requirements shall be completed by **22 November 2021** |
| **Issuance date** | 17 June 2021 |
| **Deadline for applications** | 17 July 2021 |
| **Estimated starting date** | 03 September 2021 |

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

[I. INTRODUCTION 3](#_Toc73091882)

[II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE JOINT PROGRAMME OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE 3](#_Toc73091883)

[III. BUDGET AVAILABLE 3](#_Toc73091884)

[IV. REQUIREMENTS 3](#_Toc73091885)

[1. General objective 4](#_Toc73091886)

[2. Means of action 4](#_Toc73091887)

[3. Implementation period 4](#_Toc73091888)

[4. Target stakeholders 4](#_Toc73091889)

[5. Budgetary requirements 4](#_Toc73091890)

[6. The following types of action will not be considered: 4](#_Toc73091891)

[7. Funding conditions: 5](#_Toc73091892)

[8. Reporting requirements: 5](#_Toc73091893)

[V. HOW TO APPLY? 6](#_Toc73091894)

[1. Documents to be submitted: 6](#_Toc73091895)

[2. Questions 6](#_Toc73091896)

[3. Deadline for submission 6](#_Toc73091897)

[4. Change, alteration and modification of the application file 6](#_Toc73091898)

[VI. EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE 6](#_Toc73091899)

[1. Exclusion criteria: 7](#_Toc73091900)

[2. Eligibility criteria: 7](#_Toc73091901)

[3. Award criteria 8](#_Toc73091902)

[VII. NOTIFICATION OF THE DECISION AND SIGNATURE OF GRANT AGREEMENTS 8](#_Toc73091903)

[VIII. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE 8](#_Toc73091904)

Appendices:

* Appendix I - Application Form
* Appendix II - Provisional budget (Template)
* Appendix III - Template Grant Agreement (**for information only**)

**INTRODUCTION**

**How to apply?**

* Complete and sign the **Application Form** (See **Appendix I**)
* Attach a provisional budget (using the template reproduced in **Appendix II**)
* Attach the other supporting documents:
* Copy of the Articles of Association of the grantee (local self-government unit);
* Copy of the Budget of the grantee for year 2021;
* Copy of the accredited Special Professional Development Programme(s) developed by the grantee;
* Copy of the Decision on the accreditation of the Special Professional Development Programme(s) issued by the National Academy for Public Administration.
* Send these documents in electronic form (PDF format) to the following e-mail address: <**lsg.serbia@coe.int**>. Emails should contain the following reference in subject: <**Application** - **Micro Grants>.**
* Applications must be received **before 17 July 2021 (at 17:00 CEST).**

This call for proposals is launched in the framework of the Joint Programme **“Human Resources Management in Local Self-Governments – phase 2”**, jointly funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe.

The Programme aims to co-fund local projects aimed at implementing Special Professional Development Programmes (SPDPs) and strengthening technical capacities (equipment) for conducting trainings.

Project proposals shall aim to produce an added value to the Council of Europe efforts in this domain.

1. **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE JOINT PROGRAMME OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

This Programme has been developed to respond to the needs arising from the implementation of key priorities of the Public Administration Reform Strategy of the Republic of Serbia, as well as to reply to the requirements linked to the implementation of the new legislative framework. The Programme is financed by the European Union and the Council of Europe in the total amount of 4,000,000 EUR, and is implemented by the Council of Europe in cooperation with two programme partners, the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government and the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities.

The overall objective of the Programme is to support Serbian administration to effectively meet requirements and conditions deriving from the accession negotiations and successfully manages overall EU integration and pre-accession assistance geared towards EU membership focusing on key areas of human resources management (HRM) and human resource development (HRD) in local public administration.

Introduction of the new professional development system for civil servants, including employees at the local level, is a significant milestone in the HRM and HRD reform of public administration. The basic idea is to establish the integrated national system of professional development programmes upon the common framework and standards for identifying needs, developing programmes and evaluation of results.

The Programme design consists of two main components within which following specific results - expected outputs are to be delivered:

* Component 1: Strengthened HRM function at local level;
* Component 2: Strengthened human resources development system at local level.
1. **BUDGET AVAILABLE**

The indicative available budget under this call for proposals is **125,000.00 EUR (one hundred and twenty-five thousand Euros)**. The Council of Europe intends to award **50 (fifty) grants of a maximum amount of 2,500.00 EUR (two thousand and five hundred Euros) each**. **The grants will be awarded in Serbian dinars.**

Subject to availability of funds and extension of the Programme’s initial duration, the Council of Europe reserves the right not to award all available funds, and/or to redistribute the available funds in a different manner depending on the project proposals received and on the outcome of the call for proposals.

1. **REQUIREMENTS**
2. **General objective**

The grants will fund projects designed to implement accredited professional development programmes for local government employees and which fall under the responsibility of LSGs. Namely, the grants will be given to those projects aimed at implementing **Special Professional Development Programmes (SPDPs).**

In line with the provisions of the Law on Employees in Autonomous Provinces and Local Self-Governments regulating professional development and the Decree on Accreditation, Methods of Engagement and Compensation for Trainers and Training Providers of Professional Development Programmes in Public Administration, **the grant applicants should** **engage accredited trainers (natural persons) or training providers (legal persons) to implement accredited trainings which are part of their project proposals**. Grant applicants should apply appropriate procedures related to internal calls and/or public procurement.

1. **Means of action**

Projects/grants may include different means of actions aiming at organizing seminars and trainings, such as: rent of premises, rent of training equipment, catering services, travel and accommodation costs, procurement of consultancy services, procurement of services of accredited trainers (natural person) and training providers (legal person) for delivering accredited trainings, procurement of technical equipment, translation services, publication and printing services, visibility actions, etc.

**Nota bene:**

1. **The procurement of technical equipment is limited to the procurement of equipment necessitated for the carry-out of in-person or online training/seminars for professional development of employees (e.g. computers, projectors, printers, scanners, web-cameras, headsets, etc.)**
2. **The threshold for the procurement of technical equipment as described above is set to maximum 20% of the total proposed budget of each individual project/grant.**
3. **Implementation period**

The implementation period of the projects should start on **03 September 2021** (see indicative timetable under VIII. below) and shall not extend beyond **29 October 2021.**

Reporting requirements shall be completed on **22** **November** **2021 at the latest**.

Projects completed prior to the date of submission of the applications will be automatically excluded. As regard projects started prior to the date of submission of the applications, or prior to the date of signature of the grant agreement, only those costs incurred after the date of submission of the grant application could be eligible (provided the agreement concerned so provides).

1. **Target stakeholders**

Projects should target in particular the following key stakeholders:

* Serbian cities
* Serbian municipalities
* Serbian city-municipalities
1. **Budgetary requirements**

Project proposals shall be accompanied by a draft budget (See **Template Budget, in Appendix II**) amounting to a maximum of **290,000.00 RSD (two hundred and ninety thousand Serbian Dinars)**. The estimated budget must be consistent, accurate, clear, complete and cost-effective, in the light of the activities proposed.

**Each Grantee shall also be required to contribute to the project either by way of its own resources or by contribution from third parties. Co-financing may take the form of financial or human resources, in-kind contributions or income generated by the action or project.**

1. **The following types of action will not be considered:**
* Projects/actions providing financial support to third parties (re-granting schemes);
* Projects/actions concerning only or mainly individual scholarships for studies;
* Projects/actions supporting political parties.
1. **Funding conditions:**

The funds for each grant should in principle be distributed as follows:

* **80%** will be paid when the Grant Agreement between the two parties is signed;
* the balance will be paid based on actual expenditures incurred, and after the presentation and acceptance by the Council of Europe of the final narrative and financial reports for the Grant implementation.
1. **Reporting requirements:**
* **Narrative reporting** requires a full Narrative report in Serbian on the use made of the grant and, a copy of registration list(s) of the persons present during each of the activities, including names and signatures of participants, and, if applicable, a list of purchased technical equipment with the description of its use:
* **Financial reporting** requires in particular a statement in the currency in which the Grant Agreement will be concluded (local currency RSD), stating the payments made for the implementation of the activities, certified by the responsible financial officer of the Grantee, accompanied by **“appropriate original supporting documents”** (see below). The Council of Europe reserves the right to ask for summary translations of invoices into English. If for legal reasons the original documents must be retained by the Grantee, certified copies must be submitted with the financial statement.

**“Appropriate original supporting documen**t**s”** refers to signed contracts, invoices and acceptances of work (for all transactions), payment authorisation for all transactions should also be provided in case the Grantee uses such practice, and reliable evidence of payment (authorised payment order and bank statement).

As regards round tables / conferences, presenting “appropriate original supporting documents” requires presentation of a programme indicating the title, dates, venue, and agenda of the event; the names of persons facilitating the event, a signed list of participants, the contracts with the owner of venue of the event (e.g. hotel) for the rent of premises, food and beverages of participants, invoices from the owner of the venue of the event for the above services, and a report on the results of the event (see narrative reporting above).

As regards consultancy services, presenting “appropriate original supporting documents” requires presentation of evidence of the outputs produced, contracts with experts and consultants containing a specific description of services to be carried out, invoices produced after the works have been performed and delivered (the specialities of the consultants shall correspond to the nature of activities for which they are contracted).

As regards travel fees / lodging of experts and participants, presenting “appropriate original supporting documents” requires presentation, where relevant, of contracts with a travel agency for travel fees and lodging, invoices of the travel agency indicating destinations, dates, ticket costs, and names of the travelling persons, a programme of the event indicating the names of the experts and signed lists of participants.

The above description is not comprehensive. Any doubt regarding the interpretation of the notion of “appropriate original supporting documents” should lead the Grantee to consult the Council of Europe.

1. **HOW TO APPLY?**
2. **Documents to be submitted:**

Each application shall contain:

* the completed and signed **Application Form** (See **Appendix I**);
* a provisional budget (using the template reproduced in **Appendix II**);
* the other supporting documents:
* Copy of the Articles of Association of the grantee (local self-government unit);
* Copy of the Budget of the grantee for year 2021;
* Copy of the accredited Special Professional Development Programme(s) developed by the grantee;
* Copy of the Decision on the accreditation of the Special Professional Development Programme(s) issued by the National Academy for Public Administration;

**Applications that are incomplete will not be considered.**

1. **Questions**

General information can be found on the website of the Council of Europe: www.coe.int and www.coe.int/belgrade.

Other questions regarding this specific call for proposals must be sent **at the latest one week before the deadline for the submission of proposals**, in English or Serbian, and shall be exclusively sent to the following address: **lsg.serbia@coe.int** the following reference in subject: **<Question - Micro Grants>.**

1. **Deadline for submission**

The application form **completed and signed**, together with the provisional budget and supporting documents, must be submitted in electronic form (PDF format) to the following e-mail address: **lsg.serbia@coe.int**. Emails should contain the following reference in subject: <**Application** - **Micro Grants>**.

Applications must be received **before 17 July 2021 (at 17:00 CEST)**. Applications received after the above-mentioned date will not be considered.

1. **Change, alteration and modification of the application file**

Any change in the format, or any alteration or modification of the original application file, will cause the immediate rejection of the application concerned.

1. **EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE**

The projects presented will be assessed by an Evaluation Committee composed of at least **five members**, including: two staff members of the Council of Europe, one staff member of the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, one staff member of the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, and one staff member of the National Academy for Public Administration.

The procedure shall be based on the underlying principles of grant award procedures, which are transparency, non-retroactivity, non-cumulative awards, not-for-profit, co-financing and non-discrimination, in accordance with [Rule 1374 of 16 December 2015 on the grant award procedures of the Council of Europe](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=SG/Rule(2015)1374&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=99CCFF&BackColorIntranet=99CCFF&BackColorLogged=99CCCC).

The applicants, and their projects, shall fulfil all of the following criteria:

1. **Exclusion criteria:**

Applicants shall be excluded from the grant award procedure where they:

a. have been sentenced by final judgment on one or more of the following charges: participation in a criminal organisation, corruption, fraud, money laundering, terrorist financing, terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, child labour or trafficking in human beings;

b. are in a situation of bankruptcy, liquidation, termination of activity, insolvency or arrangement with creditors or any like situation arising from a procedure of the same kind, or are subject to a procedure of the same kind;

c. have received a judgement with res judicata force, finding an offence that affects their professional integrity or constitutes a serious professional misconduct;

d. do not comply with their obligations as regards payment of social security contributions, taxes and dues, according to the statutory provisions of the country where they are established;

e. are included in the lists of persons or entities subject to restrictive measures applied by the European Union (available at [www.sanctionsmap.eu](http://www.sanctionsmap.eu)).

By signing the Application Form, applicants shall declare on their honour that they are not in any of the above-mentioned situations (See **Appendix I, Item 12**).

The Council of Europe reserves the right to ask applicants at a later stage to supply the following supporting documents:

* for the items set out in paragraphs a), b) and c), an extract from the record of convictions or failing that an equivalent document issued by the competent judicial or administrative authority of the country where the applicant is established, indicating that these requirements are met;
* for the items set out in paragraph d), a certificate issued by the competent authority of the country of establishment;
* for the items set out in paragraph e);
	+ for natural persons, a scanned copy of a valid photographic proof of identity (e.g. passport)
	+ for legal persons, an extract from the companies register or other official document proving ownership and control of the applicant.
1. **Eligibility criteria:**

In order to be eligible for a grant, an applicant must:

* be legally constituted as a local government unit in the Republic of Serbia;
* be entitled to carry out activities described in its project proposal;
* have sufficient financial capacity (stable and sufficient sources of funding) to maintain its activity throughout the period for which the grant is awarded and to participate by way of its own resources (including human resources or in-kind contributions);
* have sufficient operational and professional capacity, including staff, to carry out activities described in its project proposal;
* have a bank account
* have developed a Special Professional Development Programme that has been accredited by the National Academy for Public Administration.

**Multiple applications are not allowed and shall lead to the exclusion of all applications concerned.**

1. **Award criteria**

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

* the relevance and added value of the project with regard to the objective of the call (25%);
* the extent to which the action meets the requirements of the call (25%);
* the quality, accuracy, clarity, completeness and cost-effectiveness of the application and the estimated budget (25%);
* the relevance of the experience of the applying organisation(s) and staff (25%).
1. **NOTIFICATION OF THE DECISION AND SIGNATURE OF GRANT AGREEMENTS**

On completion of the selection process, all applicants will be notified in writing of the final decision concerning their respective applications as well as on the next steps to be undertaken.

The selected Grantees will be invited to sign a Grant Agreement (See Appendix III, for information only), formalising their legal commitments**. Potential applicants are strongly advised to read the draft Grant Agreement, in particular its requirements in terms of payment and reporting.**

1. **INDICATIVE TIMETABLE**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Phases** | **Indicative timing** |
| **Publication of the call** | 17 June 2021 |
| **Deadline for submitting applications** | 17 July 2021 |
| **Information to applicants on the results of the award procedure** | 13 August 2021 |
| **Signature of the grant agreements** | 30 August 2021 |
| **Implementation period** | 03 September – 29 October 2021 |
| **Reporting requirement** | 22 November 2021 |