**Public Call for Cluster Support Proposals Published**

## **Belgrade, 11 December 2014** – European PROGRES published a Public Call for Proposals to support clusters in introducing innovative practices and a common market approach. All clusters registered in the 34 South East and South West Serbian local self-governments involved in the implementation of this Programme are entitled to apply.

## European PROGRES’ donors, the European Union and the Swiss Government, have earmarked 200,000 Euro to support the advancement of the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises rallied in clusters, through the introduction of new or improvement of their existing products, expansion of their markets and internationalisation of their business operations. The value of the individual projects may not exceed 40,000 Euro and the clusters are to participate with co-funding of at least 10% of the total value of the projects.

“Limited access to international markets and lack of innovative products are some of the key obstacles to the development of small and medium enterprises in Serbia. I encourage the clusters to submit their project ideas regarding the introduction of innovations and improvement of marketing in small and medium-sized enterprises. The Programme will support the best proposals and thus help increase their competitiveness,” said Olivera Kostić, European PROGRES Sector Manager for Competitiveness.

The Call allows for partnerships with higher education institutions and professional associations that can contribute to the implementation of the planned project goals with their experience and knowledge. The project selection process will involve two steps: the submitters of the shortlisted project concepts will be extended technical assistance in the form of individual consultations and training in developing the final applications, which they are to submit by 13 March 2015.

Information sessions at which the details of the Call will be presented to the interested clusters will be held in Novi Pazar, Vranje and Niš in the period 16-18 December 2014.

The application form for the call for proposals, requirements and other relevant information are available at <http://www.europeanprogres.org/konkursi/en/>.

European PROGRES is implemented in the following LSUs: Novi Pazar, Ivanjica, Nova Varoš, Priboj, Prijepolje, Raška, Sjenica and Tutin in South-West Serbia, and Prokuplje, Blace, Žitorađa, Kuršumlija, Leskovac, Bojnik, Vlasotince, Lebane, Medveđa, Crna Trava, Vranje, Bosilegrad, Bujanovac, Vladičin Han, Preševo, Surdulica, Trgovište, Brus, Aleksinac, Gadžin Han, Doljevac, Merošina, Svrljig, Babušnica, Bela Palanka and Knjaževac in South-East Serbia.

Should you require any additional information, please feel free to contact:

Dejan Drobnjak

**Communication Sector Manager**

**Evropski PROGRES**

**Cell phone: +381 (0) 63 861 4524**

**E-mail:** dejand@unops.org