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Contracting Authority:  
WESTERN BALKANS FUND

**CN 2023/449-078**  
**Support to the promotion of Civil**  
**Society regional actions in the Western**  
**Balkans (Phase II)**  
-  
**Call for Regional Proposals**

## **Annual Grants**

### **Application Guideline**

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Annual Grants EU/WBF Joint Action

Deadline for submission of project application: **19<sup>th</sup> of February 2025**



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## **1. Support to the promotion of civil society regional action in the Western Balkans (Phase II)**

### **1.1. Background**

The Western Balkans region includes **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia**. This area shares a common history and culture, and its long-term goal is to join the European Union (EU) for stability and development. However, historical legacies can sometimes hinder cooperation.

The Western Balkans Fund (WBF), established by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Western Balkans 6 (WB6), serves as a catalyst for further enhancing regional cooperation and reconciliation processes in the Western Balkans. By supporting local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and other key stakeholders, WBF fosters initiatives that contribute to people to people links, peace, stability, and strengthened collaboration across the region.

The Fund administers its Annual Grants program to provide direct support to third-party regional projects and initiatives within its three key areas of intervention: Cultural Cooperation, Education and Scientific Exchange, and Sustainable Development. This annual grant scheme is designed to empower CSOs, with a focus on grassroots organizations across the Western Balkans by fostering regional and cross-border collaboration. Through these grants, WBF aims to strengthen regional cohesion, enhance cooperation among stakeholders from at least three WBF Contracting Parties, and promote active participation in initiatives that advance the Fund's mission of regional integration and development.

The WBF Annual Grant Scheme is committed to addressing regional needs equitably across all 6 Contracting Parties (CPs) of the Western Balkans Fund. Supported by the European Union, this initiative reinforces democratic principles in the region by funding regional projects led by civil society organizations and promotes inclusive development, regional cohesion, and the active engagement of civil society in shaping democratic and prosperous Western Balkans.

The Application Guideline outlines the rules for WBF's Annual Grants and helps potential applicants prepare and submit their proposals.

### **1.2. Objectives and areas of intervention**

The **overall objective** of the EU/WBF Joint Action is to strengthen regional cooperation and participatory democracies around the WB region.

**Specific objectives** include:

- **Establishing partnerships** among CSOs across the region to work on shared challenges.
- **Boosting capacities** through training and different eligible types of supports.
- **Promoting inclusivity** by supporting marginalized.

**Outcomes** include:

- **Regional partnerships** are established and reinforced by addressing common challenges and achieving shared goals.
- Regional actors' **capacities are increased** through training activities, awareness campaigns, and research for policy development targeting specific audiences.
- **Increased inclusion** of marginalized groups in regional activities, empowering underrepresented communities to take on leadership roles.
- **Enhanced inclusiveness** in CS to better represent the diverse needs and perspectives of communities.

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<sup>1</sup> \*This designation is without prejudice to position on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence



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This Call for Proposals **target groups** are non-state, non-profit organizations such as: CSOs, business and media associations, educational and cultural associations, sport associations, universities, local authorities, etc. *(Please refer to Article 2.1 eligibility of applicants for more information)*

The **final beneficiaries** are the communities in the Western Balkans 6.

**Areas of intervention** for this call represent the key priorities and strategic objectives identified by WBF. Projects can cover one or several of the following areas of intervention:

- I. **Cultural cooperation:** Fostering regional cultural identity and intercultural dialogue in the Western Balkans by promoting cooperation in sustainable initiatives, activities, and projects to embrace a shared commitment to both environmental stewardship and peaceful coexistence and nurture nature and cultural bonds for a harmonious and eco-conscious region.
- II. **Education and Scientific exchanges:** Advancing regional projects and activities in education development, capacity building, and mobility to foster growth and extension with a commitment to the green agenda by integrating environmentally conscious practices into educational initiatives and promoting scientific exchanges for sustainable regional development.
- III. **Sustainable Development:** Promoting regional cohesion and fostering institutional partnerships for sustainable economic development through integration of green agenda into environmental responsible practices, ensuring a harmonious balance between regional growth and ecological well-being.

### 1.3. Financial allocation provided by the Contracting Authority

The overall indicative amount made available under this Call for Proposals is EUR 360,000.

The EU/WBF Joint Action shall respect and ensure balanced distribution of funds per each contracting party of the Western Balkans Fund (WB6).

*\*The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to award all available funds or cancel the Call, should the quality or number of proposals received be insufficient.*

### 1.4. Size of grants

The Contracting Authority (WBF) will fund up to maximum grant per project of 15,000 EUR.

- The Grant shall not exceed 80% of total eligible costs of the action.
- Co-financing amount committed by the applicant must **not fall below 20%** of the total eligible costs of the action<sup>2</sup>.

Projects with higher co-financing levels will be prioritized for funding due to their greater potential for impact. A minimum of 3,750 EUR is required as co-financing if asking the maximum (15,000 EUR) amount of grant.

Example of the co-financing formula: **Max. Size of the Grant (15,000 EUR) + 20% Co-financing (3,750 EUR) = Total Amount of Eligible Costs (18,750 EUR)**

### 1.5. Duration

The project duration may not be lower than 3 (three) months nor exceed 6 (six) months, including Reporting Period (last 30 days within the implementation timeframe).

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<sup>2</sup> **Clarification:** Being that this Call for Proposal are supported by the European Union, the co-financing amount may not come from other European Union funds.



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## 2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### 2.1. Eligibility of Applicants

To be eligible to apply for the Annual grant, the lead applicant must be:

- a legal entity, (individuals and/or not registered entities are not eligible) **and**
- established in one or more WBF Contracting Parties, **and**
- non-profitmaking, **and**

Be a specific type of organisation from one of the following categories:

- A Civil Society Organization<sup>3 4</sup> (CSO/NGO)
- A local or regional public entity, or association of local or regional public entities
- A business association such as: association of enterprises, agriculture association, chamber of commerce, tourism association, etc.
- An educational institution such as university/faculty<sup>5</sup>, school, institute, library, research centre, academy of science/music/arts, etc.
- Media associations such as: organizations working with media, journalism, and freedom of expression.
- An institution of culture or sports such as museums, art galleries, theatres, libraries, or associations of cultural institutions, sport associations, etc.

*Note that: Profit-making entities, Central Governmental Institutions, Political Parties, Religious Institutions are not eligible under this specific call for proposals, neither as Lead Partner nor as Project Partner.*

### 2.2. Partnership

Partnerships are an essential requirement for applying to this Call for Proposal. Partnerships must include Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and/or institutions as described in the eligibility of applicants Article 2.1:

#### 2.2.1 Diverse Representation:

**Partnerships must include participants from at least three (3) different WBF Contracting Parties (CPs).**

#### 2.2.2 Partnership Structure

Each partnership should have one (1) Lead Applicant and at least two (2) Project Partners from different WBF CPs.

*However, partnerships formed from more than three (3) CPs are encouraged to apply and will be prioritized when evaluating the proposals.*

#### 2.2.3 The role of the Lead Applicant

The Lead Applicant is the sole responsible, as contract signatory with WBF, for the sound implementation, funds expenditure and reporting under this Call for Proposal.

The lead applicant is responsible for submitting the project proposal, signing the Declaration by the Lead Applicant, signing the grant agreement with the WBF, and representing the partnership.

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<sup>3</sup>Clarification: An organisation's must be established under the national law and its seat is in one of WBF contracting parties.

<sup>4</sup> Civil society is highly heterogeneous and encompasses a wide range of actors and aims. The EU considers civil society organisations to embrace a wide range of actors with multiple roles and mandates which includes all non-State, not-for-profit, independent and non-violent structures, through which people organise to pursue shared objectives and ideals, whether political, cultural, religious, environmental, social or economic or related to health [...] They include, but are not limited to: Non-governmental organisations, organisations representing indigenous peoples, women's and youth organisations, diaspora organisations, migrants' organisations, local traders' associations and citizens' groups, cooperatives, employers' associations and trade unions (social partners), organisations representing economic and social interests, organisations fighting corruption and fraud and promoting good governance, civil rights organisations and organisations combating discrimination, local organisations (including networks) involved in decentralised regional cooperation and integration, consumer organisations, environmental, teaching, cultural, research and scientific organisations, universities, churches and religious associations and communities, philosophical and non-confessional organisations, the not-for-profit media and any non-governmental associations and independent foundations, including independent political foundations.

<sup>5</sup> privately owned universities can apply through this Call for Proposals as well; however, their projects must not have the purpose of generating profit. Universities can apply on the level of faculties.



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The Lead Applicant shall remain committed to successfully implement all the project's actions in close cooperation with the Project Partners, by also choosing to share the project's expenditures.

*The Lead Applicant is encouraged to provide (through experience cards in the OGMS) ongoing/active experience in implementing donor funded projects in the last three (3) years.*

*If the Lead Applicant defines themselves as a grassroots organisation they can press the "No Experience" button in the respective module of the online application form.*

## 2.2.4 Number of applications/grants

Under this Call for Proposal, an applicant may apply multiple times as Lead or be partner in several applications, however, may be awarded only 1 (one) grant (highest scored) as Lead Applicant and/or 1 (one) grant (highest scored) as Project Partner.

## 2.3. Eligibility of Costs

The proposed budget must be well-planned, simple, and realistic, using market rates for cost estimations in EUR. Eligible costs are thus directly related to the project implementation and incurred within the project implementation period. Only eligible costs presented in the approved budget will be financed and reimbursed based on expenses incurred. Applicants must provide detailed justifications for each project costs and financing sources under the Budget Section in WBF OGMS.

### 2.3.1 Exclusion Criteria

Applicants must comply with WBF requirements and avoid any legal or financial issues that could disqualify them from participating in or receiving grants. The exclusion criteria are specified in [Annex C: Declaration by the Lead Applicant](#), which must be signed and stamped by the lead applicant, where they declare that they and their project partners do not meet any exclusion criteria, ensuring legal and financial integrity.

### 2.3.2 Financial Principles

Funding adheres to WBF's Financial Regulation, emphasizing co-financing, prohibition of double financing, and the non-profit rule. This ensures grants do not lead to profit for beneficiaries and maintain transparency and responsibility in financial allocations.

#### Eligible costs

- Cost incurred by the Lead Applicant and/or Project Partners for the implementation of the project.
- Costs incurred within the timeframe of the implementation of the project.
- The Total Costs for Human Resources (HR) (WBF+Co-financing) must not exceed 30% of the Total Amount Granted by WBF.  
*(Ex. If Max Grant requested from WBF is 15,000 EUR -> Total HR Cost should be up to 4,500 EUR (WBF+Co-Financing))  
HR cost-sharing between Lead Applicant and Project Partners is encouraged.*
- Indirect costs must not exceed 7% of the subtotal direct eligible costs.
- In-kind contribution is not Eligible.

When planning the budget, it is important to adhere to the following list of eligible cost categories, i.e. costs that can be covered by the Fund:

1. Total Human resource costs should be up to 30% of the Total Amount Granted by WBF:
  - a. The cost of staff assigned to the action (gross salaries of the dedicated project personal including social security charges and other related costs, excluding bonuses); salaries and costs shall not exceed those normally borne by the beneficiary(ies), unless it is justified by showing that it is essential to carry out the action.



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2. Travel and Accommodation (including board) costs
  - a. Travel and accommodation costs for staff and other people taking part in the action, provided they do not exceed those normally borne by the beneficiary(ies) according to its rules and regulations. (i.e., Accommodation board up to 100 EUR/night).
  - b. Travel costs need to be justified as the most cost-effective option.
  - c. Travel on a personal vehicle will be allowed only if properly justified and calculated in basis of 0.3 EUR/km).
3. Other direct costs, services
  - a. Rent of premises and related technical services, renting costs for equipment (new or used) and supplies specifically dedicated to the purposes of the action, costs of services and supplies purchased by the beneficiary(ies) for the purposes of the action.
  - b. Experts should not be part of the HR Team declared in the applied project.

#### **Eligible indirect costs**

The indirect costs incurred in carrying out the action may be eligible for flat-rate funding, but the total must not exceed 7% of the estimated total eligible direct costs (e.g. accountancy, bank charges costs, running expenses, un-foreseen costs in the direct costs of the actions (subject above eligibility of costs), etc.).

Indirect costs estimated as of the above are eligible if they do not include costs assigned to another budget heading in the standard grant contract and are related to the implementation of the project. The Lead Applicant may be asked to justify the percentage requested before the grant contract is signed. Once the flat rate has been fixed in the special conditions of the grant contract, no supporting documents need to be provided, unless the Contracting Authority deems necessary to ask justifying documents in the Reporting Phase.

Since the same cost could be treated as direct or indirect cost, the applicant will describe in the application form which costs have been included in the category of the indirect costs allotted to the action.

#### **Ineligible costs**

The following costs cannot be covered by the WBF grant:

1. Costs incurred for Applicant's activities undertaken before signature of the contract.
2. Debts and debt service charges (interest).
3. Provisions for losses, or potential future liabilities.
4. Applicant's activities aimed at profit making activities.
5. Applicant's activities that are affiliated directly with/or supportive to political or religious agendas.
6. Costs declared by the beneficiary/ies and financed by another action or work programme receiving a European Union grant.
7. Purchases of equipment, land or buildings.
8. Currency exchange losses.
9. Credits to third parties, unless otherwise specified in the special conditions.
10. Bonuses included in costs of staff; customs and import duties, or any other charges.
11. Fines, financial penalties and expenses of litigation.
12. Taxes<sup>6</sup>, including VAT. (Except when it is non-recoverable under national VAT legislation might be eligible and/or declared in the Declaration by Lead Applicant).
13. Beneficiary's individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses.
14. Alcohol and tobacco costs

#### **2.4. Eligibility of Activities**

The project shall encompass a range of activities aimed at achieving its objectives and maximizing its impact. Project actions shall include regional events, awareness-raising campaigns, and networking efforts, advocacy events all of which serve to mobilize stakeholders and inform them about the project's mission. Any event that

<sup>6</sup> Excluding HR related Taxes and Withholding Tax



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is focused on building a sense of community and exchanging best practices, fostering a spirit of cooperation among members, is recommended.

#### **2.4.1 Mainstreaming of Cross-cutting Issues:**

All activities MUST ensure Regional Balance and non-discriminatory participation in the Events.

Project proposals must consider the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues at project level and at least three are mandatory to be part of the project proposal. When developing a project to address any of the specific objectives of the call, cross-cutting issues need to be mainstreamed. Please select the relevant cross cutting issues that fit in your project:

- |                         |                                     |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1) Green Agenda         | 6) Promotion of Marginalised Groups |
| 2) Regional Outreach    | 7) Freedom of Expression            |
| 3) Gender Sensitive     | 8) EU Integration                   |
| 4) Conflict Sensitivity | 9) Reconciliation                   |
| 5) Knowledge Sharing    | 10) Innovation and Digitalization   |

#### **2.4.2 Examples of Eligible types of Activities**

*Indicative types of activities which may be financed under this Call for Proposals are given below (please note that this list is non-exhaustive):*

##### **Cultural cooperation**

- Supporting regional projects aiming to increase awareness of the richness in terms of cultural heritage in the WB, including history, art, culinary, tourism, etc.
- Promotion of regional intercultural dialogue that directly contributes to people to people links and good neighbourly relations.
- Promotion of regional interfaith dialogue, supporting the spread of best practices of tolerance, constructive and positive interaction between religious communities in the WB region.
- Promoting the Western Balkans region in other parts of Europe, such as promotion of the regional cultural identity/products.
- Supporting regional initiatives that monitor and promote the EU integration process.
- Promoting the raise of awareness for protection and preservation of archaeological sites, monuments and overall cultural heritage. Underlining the importance of regional cooperation in this respect.
- Supporting cultural and creative sectors in the region in creating and promoting authentic regional brands in their specific areas of activities.
- Promoting/supporting the organisation of regional sport activities in different specialties.
- Encourage active cooperation between museums, art galleries, artistic and folk assembles, film producers, etc., by supporting joint regional activities and products.

##### **Education and Scientific exchanges**

- Supporting and strengthening the cooperation among educational and research institutions in the region.
- Supporting teachers in the region, by offering concrete opportunities for sharing of the best practices.
- Supporting the development of regional initiatives in education academia and research.
- Supporting the increase in the volume of common of educational tools and their regional exchange (e.g. methodologies, common textbooks, internship programmes, etc.).
- Promoting best practices of education policies and sharing of best performances in the dialogue among decision-making bodies, municipalities, schools and families.
- Promoting innovation and knowledge-based entrepreneurship as the main source of growth and job creation.
- Supporting opportunities/actions for the researchers from the Western Balkans region ex. topic “brain drain”.





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- Promoting Networks of Excellence to strengthen excellence on a particular research topic.
- Improving lifelong learning for better access to labour markets.
- Increasing science popularisation, with particular focus on the STEM curriculum for the women and youth.
- Supporting mobility in the region on specific topics such as: internships, youth summer/winter camps.

### **Sustainable Development**

- Promoting initiatives for inclusive and sustainable economic growth and for improvement of the living conditions, competitiveness and overall economic development in the region.
- Supporting regional conferences (Start-up, Venture forums, Innovation Fairs, Business Accelerators etc.)
- Improving ecosystem for business development at the regional level.
- Facilitating science-industry cooperation and technology transfer by promoting knowledge transfer activities.
- Supporting sustainable growth through promotion of tourism; resources and products of the region.
- Promoting innovation initiatives in the region.
- Sharing of best practices on creating the suitable environment for SME's establishment and further development.
- Exchange of best practices to increase awareness on a healthy and active lifestyle, and for the prevention of substance abuse.
- Supporting activities for improving working skills and their adjustment to better access to the labour market.
- Promotion and exchange of best practices employment in the region and in vocational training.
- Supporting cross border projects among local authorities on activities that boost economic and social development, especially by sharing best practices cross-border areas.
- Supporting interconnection and exchange of experiences between local authorities, aiming to improve the management and transparency of municipal operations and exchange of know-how in improving living conditions.
- Promoting and supporting awareness raising initiatives on environmental protection and climate change in the region.

#### **2.4.3 Location:**

Activities should take place in the Contracting Parties of WBF (WB6). Activities outside of WB6 are not encouraged however in exceptional cases should be properly justified.

#### **2.4.4 The following types of activities are ineligible:**

- activities concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, and congresses.
- activities concerned only or mainly religious and/or political activities.

#### **2.4.5 Financial support to third parties**

Applicants **may not** propose financial support to third parties. In other words, sub-granting is not allowed under this call for proposals.

#### **2.4.6 Visibility**

The beneficiaries must take all necessary steps to publicise the fact that the European Union has financed the action. As far as possible, actions that are funded by the European Union must incorporate information designed to raise the awareness of specific or general audiences of the reasons for the action and the European Union support for the action in the contracting parties and regions concerned, as well as the results and the impact of this support.



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All measures and activities relating to visibility and, if applicable, communication, must comply with the latest Communicating and Raising EU Visibility: Guidance for External Actions 2022, laid down and published by the European Commission (Communicating and raising EU visibility: Guidance for external actions (europa.eu)).

*“The envisaged visibility must be ensured with no specific expenditures other than the costs related to the implementation of the Action Activities. Any expenditure related to visibility is part of the action and can benefit from EU funding. Given that individual projects/programmes will not, in principle, include a dedicated visibility budget, any costs necessary to ensure compliance with contractual visibility requirements should be factored into the budget foreseen for the relevant objectives and activities of the action.”*

To maximize the impact of communication: 1) Activities need to be timely; 2) Information used must be accurate; 3) The right audience (s) will be targeted; 4) Messages will be interesting for the target audience/s.

Communication and visibility activities shall be coordinated closely with the WBF Secretariat. The beneficiaries shall adhere to the WBF Communication and Visibility Guidelines during the entire contractual period. Inter alia, they will include the Fund’s logo and a direct link to the Fund’s web page on the website of their organisation. The beneficiaries are strongly encouraged to promote WBF on their social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn) and also make references to the Fund’s active accounts:

- Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/WesternBalkansFund/>
- Twitter [https://twitter.com/balkans\\_fund](https://twitter.com/balkans_fund)
- Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/westernbalkansfund/>
- LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/westernbalkansfund/>

The Fund reserves the right to make use of the project results for its promotion.

**Failing to comply with the above requirement will cause the rejection of the relevant applications.**

Ethics Clauses and Code of Conduct

- a) *No Conflict of Interest: Applicants must not have any conflict of interest with other applicants or parties involved in the actions. Attempts to obtain confidential information or influence the evaluation process will lead to rejection and penalties.*
- b) *Human Rights and Environmental Compliance: Applicants must comply with human rights, environmental legislation, and core labor standards. Zero tolerance for abuse, harassment, and exploitation.*
- c) *Anti-Corruption and Anti-Bribery: Applicants must comply with anti-bribery and anti-corruption laws. Project financing may be suspended or canceled if corrupt practices are discovered.*
- d) *Unusual Commercial Expenses: Applications will be rejected or contracts terminated if unusual commercial expenses such as unexplained commissions or payments to front companies are found.*
- e) *Breach of Obligations, Irregularities, or Fraud: The Contracting Authority may suspend or cancel procedures or contracts if breaches, irregularities, or fraud are discovered.*

## **2.5. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW**

The applicants will be required to complete and submit a full Project Application form through the Online Grant Management System (OGMS). ONLY the applications that pass the evaluation threshold will be further considered to be evaluated.

### **2.5.1 Information Sessions**

Information sessions on this Call for Proposals will be held in Belgrade, Podgorica, Prishtina, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tirana, and other locations in the region. Please check the WBF webpage and social media pages for the exact Info-session schedule.



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### 2.5.2 Partnership Platform

The Western Balkans Fund established a Partnership Platform in Facebook to assist applicants to find suitable Project Partners in the context of the preparation of this Call for Proposals.

Please check <https://www.facebook.com/groups/WBFPartnershipPlatform/>

### 2.5.3 Where and how to send applications

Lead applicants are invited to submit project application on behalf of the established partnership, in English language, by using the online Grant Management System (OGMS).

The online system provides detailed information about the Annexes incorporated in the System:

1. Annex A – Application Form
2. Annex B – Budget of the Action
3. Annex C – Declaration by the Lead Applicant (to be signed and stamped)

The project application must be submitted electronically in the below web page:

<https://wbportal.org/applicant/login.html>

Applications sent by other means (e.g. by fax, mail or by email) will be rejected. (In case of a system breakdown the applicants will be notified for further application instructions from the WBF Secretariat).

Upon submission of the Project Application online, the Lead Applicants will receive a confirmation of receipt with the Protocol Number (PN-7-XYZ) and the link for the survey to be completed by the applicant. Should the confirmation of the receipt be not received within 7 days after the deadline please contact the WBF in writing by using the following email address:

[info@westernbalkansfund.org](mailto:info@westernbalkansfund.org)

*Please note that incomplete applications will be rejected automatically by the System.*

### 2.5.4 Deadline for submission of applications

The deadline for the submission of applications is **Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2025, 23:59 hrs CET (time)**.

*The lead applicant is advised to avoid waiting until the last day to submit the full application.*

### 2.5.5 Additional information

Inquiries pertaining to this Call for Proposals can be sent by e-mail no later than 15 days before the deadline to the following e-mail address:

[info@westernbalkansfund.org](mailto:info@westernbalkansfund.org)

The WBF has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date. Only the questions sent in written will be answered (no phone inquiries). Replies will be summarised and publicised no later than 10 days before the deadline for submission of project proposals at the WBF website. Please note that the replies to the questions asked during the Information Sessions will also be published at the WBF Website.

## 2.6. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF PROJECT PROPOSALS

All applications will be evaluated according to the steps and criteria specified below in Step 2: Evaluation of Applications. If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in Section 2.1., the application will be rejected on this sole basis without undertaking further evaluation steps.

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the Contracting Authority (WBF) with the possible assistance of external assessors. According to WBF internal rules, the proposed List must respect and ensure balanced distribution of funds between WBF CPs.

The List of the recommended projects is endorsed/approved by the WBF Governing Bodies.



### STEP 1: Opening, Administrative and eligibility checks according to the eligibility criteria for the Lead applicant and partners.

During the opening and administrative and eligibility checks the following will be assessed:

- i. If the deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will be automatically rejected.
- ii. If the project proposal satisfies the eligibility criteria specified in Chapters 2.1 – 2.4 of this Guidelines.
- iii. If the project consists of minimum 3 project partners coming from four different WB6 Contracting Parties
- iv. If the project application was submitted through Online Grant Management System
- v. If the Declaration by the Lead applicant has been filled in and has been signed and stamped
- vi. If the application is typed and is written in English
- vii. If the Budget is completed in the format requested, and stated in EUR
- viii. If the duration of the action is minimum 3 months and does not exceed 6 months
- ix. If the requested WBF contribution (amount) is not exceeding 15,000 EUR
- x. If the lead applicant is legal entity established in the WB6
- xi. If the project partners are legal entities established in the WB6
- xii. If the project partners are non-profit organizations/associations
- xiii. If any of the requested information/document is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that sole basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

### STEP 2: Evaluation of Applications

The project applications that pass the administrative and eligibility check will be evaluated on the relevance and design of the proposed action.

#### Step 3: Individual Evaluation of Full Applications

Partnership (up to 20 pts)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the partnership bring together partners from different parts of the region and with complementary expertise?</li> <li>2. Are the roles of the project partners clearly defined, balanced and in line with the objectives of the project proposal?</li> </ol>
Description and Regional Relevance: (up to 20 pts)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The project description and context analysis presented in the project are well described.</li> <li>2. The project has regional relevance and involves collaboration among participants in the WB Region.</li> <li>3. The project proposal is innovative and presents in a clear way added value elements.</li> </ol>
Objective, Activities and Results: (up to 15 pts)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How well the project addresses the overall and specific objectives of this CfP? (Objective is written in a coherent and clear way.)</li> <li>2. Are activities described clearly and in a timely manner that do not hinder the implementation of the project within the contractual timeframe?</li> <li>3. To what level the project addresses the expected results of this CfP? (Results are related to the objective and activities.)</li> </ol>
Capacity, Risk Management and Sustainability (up to 15 pts)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is the organizational structure (team proposed for the implementation) and their tasks clearly described?</li> <li>2. Has the applicant presented a viable risk management scenario?</li> <li>3. Has the applicant outlined the sustainability plan of the project and its potential impact continuation after implementation?</li> </ol>
Target Audience and cross-cutting issues: (up to 10 points)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the applicant clearly present the Target Group and specify the needs, challenges, or opportunities faced with detailed outcomes and benefits that the project will bring for each target audience?</li> <li>2. Does the project address value-added cross-cutting issues (Green Agenda, Regional Outreach, Gender Sensitive, Conflict Sensitivity, Knowledge Sharing, Promotion of Marginalized Groups, Freedom of Expression, EU Integration, Reconciliation, Innovation and Digitalization)?</li> </ol>
Visibility (Up	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the applicant present a scenario on which will ensure the visibility of the project</li> </ol>



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to 5 points)	and Donor/s?
Financial Envelope: (up to 15 points)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Has the applicant presented a cost-realistic budget?</li> <li>2. Are the costs presented in line with the activities described in the project?</li> <li>3. Has the organization presented a budget that justifies properly the share and source of co-financing? Does the co-financing exceed minimum co-financing criteria?</li> </ol>
<b>Total score: out of 100</b>	

*As a rule, applications which obtain less than 55 points during evaluation will not be taken further in consideration.*

#### STEP 4 – Submission of supporting documents

Only shortlisted applicants will be required to provide the following documents through OGMS:

1. Partnership Agreement (WBF Format)
2. Scanned statute and the registration certificate
3. A bank account verification letter or a latest bank statement of the lead applicant detailing the account name, number/ Iban and the latest annual financial statements of the lead applicant.
4. A financial capacity form of the Lead Applicant (WBF Format)

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

Any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application for that respected CP.

### 2.7. NOTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY’S DECISION

#### 2.7.1 Content of the decision

The Lead Applicants will be informed in writing of the contracting authority’s decision concerning their application and, if rejected, the reasons for the negative decision. The decision will be disseminated through WBF OGMS.

Letters to successful Lead Applicants must be sent within 10 (ten) days of the award decision: unsuccessful lead applicants must be informed that they have not been selected within 20 (twenty) days of the notification to the successful Lead Applicants.

An applicant believing that it has been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may lodge a complaint to the contracting authority who will endeavour to investigate the complaint and respond within 10 (ten) days.

#### 2.7.2 Indicative timetable

The grant contract shall be signed preferably within 1 month following the notification of the award decision. Implementation of the project shall begin on the day following the signing of the Grant Contract.

	DATE	TIME
<b>Information meeting (if any)</b>	27/01/2025 – 07/02/2024	Check WBF Webpage
<b>Deadline for requesting any clarifications</b>	15 days prior to deadline	COB
<b>Date on which clarifications are issued</b>	10 days prior to deadline	COB
<b>Deadline for submission of full applications</b>	19/02/2025	23:59 hrs (CET)
<b>Contract signature</b>	April/May 2025	N/A

*This indicative timetable refers to provisional dates and may be updated by the contracting authority during the procedure. In such cases, the interested parties will be informed by the Contracting Authority.*



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## **2.8. CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AFTER THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION TO AWARD A GRANT**

### **2.8.1 Reporting**

The WBF grantees are obliged to continuously update the WBF Secretariat for their activities and expenditures through the Online Grant Management System. Grantees shall submit a final narrative report, financial report, and scanned invoices on the eligible expenditures along with other relevant documentation of the project at the end of the period of implementation of the project. The final draft of the narrative report shall be submitted within the last 30 calendar days of the period of implementation of the project activities.

### **2.8.2 Monitoring and evaluation**

The WBF grantees (all partners included) are expected to monitoring project progress and evaluate its results, together with target groups as appropriate. Furthermore, project performance will be assessed on a regular basis by the designated WBF Programme Team Member. Some of the key elements and approaches of WBF monitoring and evaluation processes are technical monitoring, financial monitoring, and performance monitoring. Monitoring visits will be carried out by the designated WBF Programme Team Member and will be organized at the WBF Programme Team Member's discretion. The grantee shall be notified about the monitoring visit accordingly. The WBF MEL Officer will act as depository of best practices to be proactively established, assembled, kept up to date and shared with grantees. For such to be effective, (i) the WBF Secretariat shall perform lessons report after each selection/assignment process and (ii) awarded grantees shall provide within the time frame of 2 months after the termination of their activities a full report on activities including lessons identified that the EU/WBF Joint Action shall consider for future processes.

## **LIST OF ANNEXES**

### **DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED**

All annexes are foreseen to be incorporated on the Online Grant Management System. The applicants will find all related documents on the system.

- |          |                                   |
|----------|-----------------------------------|
| Annex A: | Grant Application Form            |
| Annex B: | Budget                            |
| Annex C: | Declaration by the Lead Applicant |