

WESTERN BALKANS FUND



Guidelines for Grant Applicants

Third WBF Call for Proposals

Deadline for submission of project proposals is 10 December 2019

Referring to the Western Balkans Fund objectives and its scope of work (for further information please consult the <http://westernbalkansfund.org/web/>), the present Guidelines represent the general framework to guide the potential applicants through the process of project application. WBF wishes you success and good luck, reassuring full support and transparency.

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List of acronyms

EU	European Union
EUR	Euro currency
CfP	Call for Proposals
ICJ	International Court of Justice
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
UNSCR	United Nation's Security Council Resolution
WB	Western Balkans
WB6	Contracting parties, founders of the Western Balkans Fund (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia)
WBF	Western Balkans Fund

**This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence*

1. Basic provisions

1.1. Background

The regional cooperation remains one of the main challenges for the region of Western Balkans, especially taking into consideration its capacity to positively influence regional stability and bring various practical benefits for its citizens and societies.

To this end, strengthening of the regional cooperation represents an essential requirement for the Western Balkans contracting parties, including their EU membership aspirations.

The Western Balkans Fund's main objective is to foster cooperation between its members (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia), by strengthening neighborly relations and regional cohesion and to advance the integration of the WB into the European Union.

The Fund aims to achieve these goals by supporting common regional projects, at "*people-to-people*" level, creating the conditions to share mutual experiences, values, traditions and culture, in a regional perspective.

1.2. Objectives and areas of intervention

The overall objective of the WBF third Call for Proposals is to contribute to regional and cross-border cooperation, good neighborly relation and strengthen regional cohesion in the WB region.

The areas of intervention for this call for proposals are following:

- A. Cultural cooperation
- B. Education and scientific exchange
- C. Sustainable development

The project application should contribute to at least one of the above areas of intervention.

Please note that promoting reconciliation, European Integration, cross-border cooperation, freedom of expression, gender equality and youth are the cross-cutting issues covering all actions under WBF key areas of activities.

1.3. Financial allocation provided by the contracting authority

The overall indicative amount made available under this Call for proposals is EUR 250,000.00

1.3.1. Size of grants

Any grant requested under this Call for Proposals must not exceed EUR 12,000.00

Any grant funding requested from the WBF under this call for proposals must not exceed 80% of the total eligible cost of the action.

The remaining percentage (i.e. the difference between the total cost of the action and the amount requested from the WBF) must be financed from the following non-WBF sources:

1. Beneficiary (self-financing or/and in-kind contributions).
2. Financial contributions from other donors.
3. Contributions in-kind from third parties (only in duly justified cases).

2. Rules for the call for proposals

2.1. Eligibility criteria

These guidelines are setting forth the following three eligibility criteria sets:

- a) Eligibility of applicants
- b) Eligibility of project actions
- c) Eligibility of expenses
- d) Eligibility of partnership

The eligibility of project proposals will be checked against the criteria outlined below.

2.1.1. Eligibility of applicants

2.1.1.1. The lead-applicant

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

- A legal entity established in the WB6, **and**
- A non for profit, **and**
- A civil society organization¹ (CSO/NGO)², **or**
- A specific type of organization from one of the following categories:

¹ **Clarification:** An organisation's must be established under the national law and its seat is located in one of WBF contracting parties.

² **Clarification:** The operational activity of the CSO is not limited, it can be younger than two years with a good track record.

- A local or regional public entity, or association of local or regional public entities
- A business association such as: business cluster, agriculture association, chamber of commerce, tourism association, etc.
- An educational institution such as university³/faculty⁴, school, institute, library, research center, academy of science/music/arts, etc.
- An institution of culture or sports such as museums, art galleries, theatres, libraries, or associations of cultural institutions, sport associations, etc. **and**
- Directly responsible for the preparation and management of the project and the relevant actions together with the project partners, and not acting as an intermediary.

If awarded, the lead applicant will become the project beneficiary.

2.1.1.2. Exclusion criteria

Potential applicants may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded grants if they are in any of the situations facing legal or financial complications, as following:

- They are bankrupt or having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities.
- They are not in compliance with their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions and/or the payment of any taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the contracting party in which they are established.
- They, or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them, have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization, money laundering or any other illegal activity.
- They are directly affiliated to commercial profit.
- They are involved directly in political campaigning.
- They exclusively serve to religious purposes.

In Annex C (declaration by the lead applicant), the lead applicant must declare that the lead applicant itself, and the project partners are not in any of these situations.

2.1.1.3. Number of grants and applications per applicant

Under this call for proposals an applicant may submit only one project proposal as the lead applicant or/and one project proposal as a project partner.

³ Clarification: privately owned universities can apply through this Call for Proposals as well, however their projects must not have the purpose of generating profit.

⁴ Clarification: universities can apply on the level of faculties

2.1.2. Eligible project actions

2.1.2.1. Definition of the action

A project action is composed of a set of activities.

2.1.2.2. Duration

The planned duration of a project may not exceed 12 months from the moment of signing of the contract.

2.1.2.3. Areas of intervention

Project proposals submitted under the third WBF Call for Proposals can cover one or several of the following areas of intervention:

- I. Cultural cooperation: Strengthening regional cultural identity and intercultural dialogue in the WB, by enhancing cooperation through cultural initiatives, activities and projects.
- II. Education and Scientific exchanges: Promoting regional projects/activities aiming education development, its growth and its extension, capacity building and mobility, regional scientific and research exchanges and improvement.
- III. Sustainable Development: Advancement of regional cohesion and supporting institutional partnership in sustainable economic development.

Promoting reconciliation, European Integration, cross-border cooperation, freedom of expression, gender equality and youth are the cross-cutting issues covering all actions under WBF key areas of activities.

2.1.2.4. Location

Activities should take place in the WB region. In certain circumstances activities that promote WB region in other parts of Europe will be also taken into consideration.

2.1.2.5. Types of activity

Below are listed some types of actions which may be financed under this Call for Proposals (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 neighborly 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 WB 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 archeological 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 organization 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 programs, etc.).
- Promotion of best practices of education policies and sharing of best performances in the dialog among decision-making bodies, municipalities, schools and families.
- Promotion of innovation and knowledge-based entrepreneurship as the main source of growth and job creation.
- Supporting opportunities/actions for the researchers from the WB region ex. topic “brain drain”.
- Promote Networks of Excellence to strengthen excellence on a particular research topic.
- Improving lifelong learning for better access to labor markets.
- Increasing science popularization, 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.
- Exchange of best practices to increase awareness on a healthy and active lifestyle, and for the prevention of substance abuse.

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 (Startup, Venture forums, Innovation Fairs, Business Accelerators etc.)
- Improved ecosystem for business development at the regional level.
- Facilitate science-industry cooperation and technology transfer by promoting ‘knowledge transfers activities’.
- Supporting activities aiming to boost 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.

- Supporting activities for improving working skills and their adjustment to better access to the labor 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.

2.1.3. Eligibility of partnership

For the purpose of application in this Call for Proposals, the applicants must form project partnerships. Project partnership is consisted of the lead-applicant and minimum two project partners.

Partnership parties must come from at least three different WBF contracting parties.

2.1.3.1. The role project partners

The role of lead applicant and project partners must be elaborated in the project application form under methodology section.

The project partners participate in designing, developing the project idea and implementing the project and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the lead applicant.

The project partners must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable to the lead applicant.

2.1.4. Eligibility of costs

Only eligible costs can be covered by a grant. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are as indicated below.

2.1.4.1. Eligible direct costs

The WBF Third Call for Proposals foresees cost-sharing as a mandatory condition of receiving a grant. The WBF covers up to 80% of total project costs. The remaining 20% of the budget shall consist of other financial (the applicant's, partners' or other donors' financial contributions) or non-financial contributions (in-kind).

A well-planned budget shall be simple and realistic. The budget should include approximations of the project's future expenditures in EUR (€) based on real costs in the market.

All budget costs have to be eligible costs, no matter the source of financing (grant or co-financing) and ONLY the costs presented in the budget will be considered for financing.

Detailed project costs together with financing sources have to be presented in "Annex B" the budget form.

Total budget of the project consists of grant awarded plus 20% co-financing of the total budget.

The amount of the awarded grant and the percentage of the WBF financing as a result of future corrections cannot be increased.

It is therefore in the applicant's interest to provide a realistic and cost-effective budget.

Applicants are recommended to use the average exchange rates available at the given national bank at the time of preparing the application form.

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. Printing and publishing/Delivery of printed/published materials
2. Rent of premises and related technical services
3. Fees for artists/Copyrights
4. Fees for experts
5. Accommodation and board
6. Transportation costs
7. Translations and interpreting costs
8. Awards and prizes
9. Office stationery costs/Consumption material (e.g. paper, flipcharts, toner, stapler etc.)
10. Public relations costs, advertising and promotion material
11. Overhead costs—max. 10% of the granted sum (e.g. project coordination, accountancy, one's own work on the project or other running expenses).

2.1.4.2. Ineligible costs

The following costs cannot be covered (with the exception of 10% overhead costs):

1. Tangible and intangible assets (e.g. purchase of certain equipment or property)
2. Applicant's own indirect costs (e.g. utilities, central telephone bills)
3. Internal costs (rent of one's own premises, one's own work)
4. Salaries or financial remuneration of employees (or any expenses related employment based on the labor code, including allowances and part-time work, per-diems, etc.)
5. Applicant's individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses
6. Applicant's activities undertaken before signature of the contract
7. Applicant's activities aimed at profit making activities
8. Applicant's activities those are directly affiliated with or supportive of political parties.

2.1.4.3. Contributions in kind (by the third parties)

An in-kind contribution is a noncash, other than monetary contribution or input which can be given a cash value⁵. Expenditures in-kind can take the form of:

1. Donation of goods or services, time or expertise, rather than cash or appreciated property.
2. Infrastructure support, office supplies support, equipment support etc.
3. Human resources of the organizing institution.

2.2. How to apply and the procedures to follow

2.2.1. Where and how to send full applications

Lead applicants are invited to submit a full application, in English language, by using the application package annexed to these guidelines (Annex A, B and C).

Full application includes the following documents:

1. Annex A. Application form
2. Annex B. Budget
3. Annex C. Declaration by the lead-applicant

The full application must be submitted online to the following email:

WBFapplications@westernbalkansfund.org

Upon submission of the full application online, the lead applicants will receive a confirmation of receipt with the link for the survey to be completed by the applicant. Unless the confirmation of the receipt is not received within 7 days after the deadline please contact the WBF.

Please note that incomplete applications may be rejected.

2.2.2. Deadline for submission of full applications

The deadline for the submission of project applications is following: 10 December 2019 at 17:00hrs (WB6 time).

The lead applicant is advised to avoid waiting until the last day to submit the full application, since heavy Internet traffic or a fault with the Internet connection (including electricity failure, etc.) could lead to difficulties in submission.

⁵ **Clarification:** Goods or services offered free or at less than the usual charge result in an in-kind contribution. Similarly, when a person or entity pays for services on the project's behalf, the payment is an in-kind contribution.

2.2.3. Dissemination of the Call

Information Sessions on this Call for Proposals will be held in Belgrade, Podgorica, Prishtina, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tirana and other locations in the region, during the month of November 2019. Please check the WBF webpage and social media pages for the exact Info-session schedule.

2.3. Visibility

All communication and visibility activities should be carried out in close cooperation with the WBF Secretariat.

Dissemination of results by the applicant should focus on development with the Western Balkans Fund (WBF) as partner and on the achievements and impact of the project, not on administrative or procedural milestones. In order to maximize the impact of communication efforts:

- Activities need to be timely;
- Information used must be accurate;
- Activities should be coordinated closely with the WBF Secretariat;
- The right audience (s) should be targeted;
- Messages should interest the target audience (s);
- Activities should be appropriate in terms of resources spent, timing and expected impact;

Allocated budget for communication and visibility actions which should be included in the work plan of any WBF funded or co-funded project, highlighting the communication activities that need to take place at key stages in the life of the project. The level of detail should be appropriate with the nature, extent and cost of the communication activities envisaged.

Applicants should develop a communication and visibility plan which can be easily followed through the project lifespan. The communication and visibility plan for any action should seek to maximize synergies with the overall visibility strategy of the WBF Secretariat.

In formulating communication activities funded by WBF, applicants should take account the following:

- Methods of communication selected and messages given should be compatible with prevailing social or religious norms in the place where the communication activity is carried out;
- Activities should respect the local environment.
- In all communication activities, the official language should be English followed by local language.

The visibility of the WBF is essential during the whole period of the project implementation.

The winning applicants should adhere to the WBF Communication and Visibility Guidelines during the entire contractual period, by including the Fund's logo and a direct link to the Fund's web page on their organizations' web sites. The winning applicants are strongly encouraged to promote WBF on their social

networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn) and to make references to the Fund's active accounts:

- Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/WesternBalkansFund/>
- Twitter 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.

2.3.1. Partnership Platform

Western Balkans Fund established a Partnership Platform in Facebook in order to assist applicants to find a suitable Project Partner for WBF Call for Regional Projects.

The following [partner search page](#) seeks to support you with identifying possible project partners:

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

Applicants are free to post and interact with each other; while WBF Partnership Platform official language is English, for this reason, non-English language announcements won't be considered to the Group's newsfeed.

2.4. Additional Information

Inquiries pertaining to this Call for Proposals can be sent by e-mail no later than 25 November 2019 before the deadline for the submission of project proposals to the following e-mail address:

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 summarized and publicized no later than 7 days before the deadline for submission of project proposals at the WBF website. Please note that the replies to the questions asked at the Information Sessions will also be publicized at the WBF website.

2.5. Evaluation and selection of project proposals

Project proposals will be examined and evaluated by the WBF Secretariat. The approval of the awarded projects will be made by the WBF Council of the Senior Officials⁶ followed by the final endorsement of winning projects by the WBF Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

Please note that the WBF strives to award projects in equal and balanced proportions across the WB6 Contracting Parties.

All applications will be evaluated according to the steps and criteria enclosed in the Section 2.3.1.

If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in Section 2.1, the application may be rejected on this sole basis.

2.5.1. Administrative and eligibility check

During the administrative and eligibility check 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 the Chapter 2.1 of this Guidelines.
- iii. 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.

⁶ Clarification: The Council of the Senior Officials of the Western Balkans Fund is composed by the appointed officials from the Ministries of the Foreign Affairs of the WB6 members.

2.5.1.1. Evaluation grid

The project applications that pass the administrative and eligibility check will be evaluated on the relevance and design of the proposed action. The project applications will receive an overall score out of 100 in line with the evaluation grid below.

Name of the project:		
Protocol number:		
Scoring sections:	Specific Criteria	Justification
Relevance of the partnership: (up to 15 points)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The partnership parties (lead applicant and project partners) have sound background and track record relevant to the sector indicated in the project proposal. 2. The roles of the partnership parties are clear and in line with the objectives of the project proposal. 3. The importance of the cross-Contracting Party approach to the topic addressed is clearly demonstrated; the results cannot (or only to some extent) be achieved without cooperation. 	
Relevance of the project: (up to 20 points)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The main objective is in line with the WBF's call for proposal 2. The problem has been defined clearly with reasonable link between the situation analysis, objective of the call and proposed set of action 3. The solution is realistic and achievable 4. The project has substantial regional relevance 5. The project is based on a novel idea and/or enhances people to people action in innovative manner. 	
Relevance of the results and activities: (up to 20 points)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The activities and the related resources are necessary and sufficient to achieve the projected results 2. The expected results are consistent with the objectives of the project 3. The outputs and deliverables are clearly described and relatable to each of the project activity and are easily measurable (quantitatively and/or qualitatively) 4. The project outcomes can be used as good practices lessons by other actors in the region 5. Target groups are identified 6. The potential risks have been identified and the applicant has proposed a strategy to mitigate these risks. 	
Methodology: (up to 15 points)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The applicant has provided a project implementation methodology 2. The proposed budget is reasonable and provides a detailed breakdown of the costs associated with the project 3. The applicant clearly indicated the amount including the form of co-financing of the project 	
Project Management Capacity: (up to 10 points)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The applicant has previous experience relatable to the proposed project 2. The applicants⁷ have demonstrated to have stable and sufficient financial resources to maintain their activity throughout the proposed action 	
Sustainability and Visibility (20 points)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The applicants have a clear visibility plan to ensure WBF's visibility during the implementation of the project 2. The sustainability of the project is addressed comprehensively in the proposal 3. The project activities and results ensure continuity for further re-funding in upcoming Calls for Proposal 4. The project can be '<i>easily</i>' recommended to other donors 	
Total score:		

⁷ Clarification: The applicants refers to the Lead and Co-Applicant of the Project

2.6. Submission of supporting documents

Upon the assessment of the project proposals, a shortlist of the best ranked project proposals will be established.

In order for WBF to verify the eligibility of the lead applicant and the project partners, shortlisted applicants will be required to provide the following documents:

- a) Statute and the registration
- b) Financial statement
- c) Partnership Agreement

After verifying the supporting documents, the WBF Evaluation Committee will make a final recommendation to the WBF Council of the Senior of Officials as the decision making body for awarding the grants.

2.7. Notification of the WBF's decision

The lead applicants will be informed in writing about the application status. This letter will be sent by e-mail.

Applicants shall be notified about the final decision on their application status by the end of March 2020.

The grant contract shall be signed 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.

2.7.1. Indicative timeline

Activity	Date	Time
Information meeting, if any (local time)	During the month of November 2019 in the Capitals of the WB6 and other Locations.	
Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the WBF	25 November 2019	By 16:59
Last date on which clarifications are issued by the WBF	2 December 2019	By 16:59
Deadline for submission of project proposals	10 December 2019	By 16:59
Notification of award	End of March – Beginning of April 2020	
Negotiation phase	By April 2020	
Contract signature	April – Beginning of May 2020	

2.8. Reporting requirements

The WBF grantees shall provide the WBF Secretariat with the progress report which shall be submitted in the middle of the implementation cycle. 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 draft final narrative report shall be submitted not later than one month after the end of the period of implementation of the project activities.

2.8.1. Monitoring and evaluation

Project performance will be assessed on a regular basis by the designated WBF Program 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 Program Team Member and will be organized at the WBF Program Team Member's discretion. The grantee shall be notified about the monitoring visit accordingly.