

**Western Balkans
Media for Change**

Frequently Asked Questions

ACTION GRANT SCHEME CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Q1 Is ECR tool open for citizens? Is ECR tool public? Are the topics the citizens would like to cover visible to them?

A1 The ECR tool is primarily designed to assist media outlets in collecting and processing data for specific topics, enabling journalists to write stories based on gathered information. ECR tool functions as an online platform, resembling a survey or callout, designed to engage citizens by seeking their inputs on topic of interest, while at the same time allowing citizens to report any issues or areas of concern in a safe and secure way (by providing relevant evidence such as photos, videos, documents, etc.). The ECR tool is not accessible for citizens to write their own stories.

Q2 Is the equipping media studio eligible, given that the purchase of furniture is listed as ineligible costs?

A2 As stated in the Call for Applications, the purchase of equipment is allowed up to 50% of the total value of the proposed budget for equipment essential to the successful implementation of the project.

Costs of the purchase of office furniture and other office equipment such as desks, chairs, filing cabinets, photocopiers, fax machines are not eligible.

It is allowed to purchase grant/project implementation related assets, but please pay attention to the eligible costs' definition. Every purchase needs to be unambiguously justified - necessary and directly related to the grant implementation.

Q3 Is there a minimum length of project specified? We have planned to implement an 8-month project.

A3 The maximum duration of the project is 12 months (from March 2024 – February 2025). There is no minimum of months specified. However, the planned project activities should align with the requested budget and adequately justify the chosen project duration.

Q4 Our media outlet has 15 full-time employees. The other staff are engaged on an honorarium or voluntary basis. Are we eligible to apply within Group 2?

A4 As stated in the Call for Applications, the Group 2 is foreseen for the applicants with more than 100,000.00 GBP annual turnover and more than 15 staff members employed in the media outlet (permanent, on a fixed term, part-time basis, associates and volunteers) may request a grant that falls within the following range: 60,000.00 GBP to 80,000.00 GBP.

Q5 Can you, please, explain how we may apply with already developed business plan or project under LOT1 when it is stated In the Call that the projects funded by other donors will not be supported?

A5 Please refer to the section 4.1. Eligibility Criteria:

The applicant cannot be a beneficiary of UK funds or another donation or grant scheme financing activities that are identical to the ones proposed for this grant scheme. This means that the Project will not support the proposed project activities that are the same as the ones you have applied with other donors or have been already implementing.

Indeed, LOT 1 is tailored for established media organisations and larger outlets with a validated business idea or an already developed plan or strategy that have the capacity to absorb the support to implement the business idea/plan/strategy.

Q6 Do the certificates and documents that are supposed to be submitted with the grant application need to be translated into English language?

A6 No, supporting documents such as registration documents, financial statements, etc. should be submitted in their original form, i.e. in the local language.

Q7 Can the ECR tool be available for rejected grant applicants?

A7 ECR tool is available only to the media outlets awarded by the Media for Change grant who in addition to the access to ECR will receive mentorship and editorial support for using it for content production. (ECR tool refers to LOT2)

Q8 Our legal entity was established in 2014, should we submit the first registration of the legal entity or only the last one that states when the legal entity was registered for the first time?

A8 You may submit the last registration certificate. Please note that the applicant is eligible if registered before 1 January 2020.

Q9 Engagement of experts by the project for provision of technical assistance: are the experts selected/allocated already by the Project or the potential grantee can choose the experts?

A9 The WB Media for Change project has created a pool of experts which will be available as mentors or as experts for the media outlets during grant implementation phase. In addition, a needs assessment will be conducted at the beginning of the grant implementation, so the expertise is allocated based on grantees' needs.

Q10 Can we apply with the membership package/scheme as a business model? We have conducted our analysis and business model developed already.

A10 The applicant can apply with any part of its developed business model or with entire business model if deemed suitable. We, as a project, cannot provide approval or endorsement of any specific business model at this stage of application. The applications will be evaluated upon the closure of the Call and its deadline.

Q11 Is there a limitation for Human Resources within the overall budget, similarly to limitation on the equipment?

A11 The only limitation in the Budget Form is related to equipment and this is up to 50%. Other Budget Headings (Human Resources and Programmatic Costs) do not have any limitations.

Q12 The difference between two groups is in number of staff and annual turnover. How can we interpret 10+ and 15+ staff?

A12 The first group refers to the number of staff employed in the media outlet (permanent, on a fixed term, part-time basis, volunteers and associates) from 10 and more (meaning the media outlet should have 10 and more) and for the second group refers to number of staff employed in the media outlet (permanent, on a fixed term, part-time basis, volunteers and associates) from 15 and more (meaning the media outlet should have 15 and more staff).

Q13 Where to send the questions related to the application process?

A13 All the questions related to the Call and the application process should be sent to the e-mail stated in the Call for Application, Section 4.6.2.

Q14 Is there any technical assistance/mentoring foreseen for potential applicants during the application process (to assist them with writing the proposal)?

A14 No, there is no such support foreseen by the WB Media for Change project.

Q15 Regarding Lot 2, the applications must definitely include the use of the ECR tool or they can be broader than that?

A15 Lot 2 supports the production of quality audience-engaged content. The media outlet can freely choose the areas/topics they think are important to their audience, but they must show commitment to engage the audience while reporting through the use of the ECR tool to send the questions related to the application process.

Q16 Can costs for web portal redesign be an item in the budget? We plan to introduce podcasts as well. Do these activities correspond more to Lot 1 or Lot 2?

A16 The redesign of the portal can be an item in the budget, as well as the introduction of a podcast. The activities you mentioned in the email would correspond to LOT1 i.e. "Developing new or upscaling existing products and tools to attract and diversify audience". Our project cannot provide approval of any specific business model at this stage of application. The applications will be evaluated upon the closure of the Call.

Q17 I am seeking clarification on the criterion concerning potential partner contributions. Would it be feasible to involve a partner from the non-governmental sector in the project? This partner could

offer expertise in content production-related topics and participate in organizing activities aimed at enhancing communication with interest groups and the community.

A17 As stated in the Call for Application, applying in partnership with another media outlet / organization for the grant application purpose is not allowed as the grant scheme is focused on building individual capacity of selected media outlets. If your project requires external expertise, we recommend including individuals who are specialized in the project related topics and activities as team members to support project implementation.

Q18 Document(s) that prove(s) that the media outlet is established before 1 January 2020 (if different from date of Legal Registration): is it acceptable to submit the first Legal Registration as proof?

A18 If the registration documents of legal entity contain the proof of registration of media outlet dating before 1 January 2020, then only this document should be submitted.

Q19 Applicant must demonstrate grant absorption capacity: Please give us examples of documentation or refer to the narrative form, that will prove grant absorption capacity.

A19 Grant absorption capacity is assessed by the donor based on this grant (if selected) and other ongoing grants compared to the human resources available for administering all grants. It is very important that you fill in all sections of the Application form and provide accurate and precise data, and pay attention to the project implementation experience of the organization that should be specified in Section 4.

Q20 Please provide examples of Publication costs (in Programmatic Costs) in relation to web portal and radio station?

A20 Unfortunately, we cannot provide examples. All costs listed in the Budget form have to be in line with activities proposed in your Application form and their purpose should be clearly justified in the Budget form.

Q21 We understand that the total project budget must be submitted in net value, but we ask for instructions on who will pay VAT 17% (in BiH) on the total amount and/or the project can provide documentation that it is exempt from local VAT?

A21 As stated in the Budget form instructions, if the legal entity is NOT registered VAT taxpayer, then amounts in the budget should be gross (VAT included). If the legal entity IS registered VAT taxpayer than amounts in the budget should be net (VAT excluded). It means that if your legal entity is registered VAT taxpayer, you already deduct input and output VAT. If your legal entity is not VAT registered taxpayer, then VAT costs will be paid from grant.

The project Western Balkans Media for Change itself is not VAT exempt.

Q22 Is it allowed to submit images content in the Organizational overview section?

A22 In the section '3.1 Organizational overview' of Application form, please provide brief description of the current activities and operation of your organization - years of operation, number of employees, internal structure and divisions, annual income/turnover, production capacities, etc. In addition, you may submit supporting resources such as links, images, etc. (this is not obligatory). Please keep in mind that the maximum number of pages is limited to 15.

Q23 Is it necessary for media outlet to submit evidence about the ownership of the (website) domain and the official permission of the Communication Regulatory agency for broadcasting?

A23 Please submit documents that prove your media outlet is established in (country) before 1 January 2020.

Q24 Our media outlet has already participated in the Business Development in "Media for All" program (2022-2023), and we have an established and validated business development strategy. Can we propose a combined action of expanding the current revenue stream - Video production with a new production segment, and also initiate a new TV format revenue stream as a second pillar of the project, both oriented in inclusivity and achieving the long-term outcomes/specific objectives of this call?

A24 The applicant can propose any action that contributes to further implementation of the existing business plan and which is in line with this Call's objectives.,

Q25 Do we need to develop a new business plan for submission at this stage, or is it satisfactory to amend the current one with the proposed expansion/new revenue streams?

A25 The applicant does not need to develop a new business plan for this Call for Applications. The existing validated/approved business plan should be the basis for proposed activities during applying for this Call.

Q26 Is there any preset policy on the funding calendar for all applicants, or is it tailored based on the proposed project activities timetable?

A26 Section 2 of the Application Form (Problem Analysis and Implementation) requires that you list all the results, activities and deliverables, in a narrative form (point 2.3) and also requires that detailed Activity Plan is developed and presented, on monthly bases, for full duration of the proposal (point 2.3.1). Please note that all proposed activities should be finalised by 28 February 2025 and the implementation period cannot exceed 12 months.

Q27 Is there a set number of grants to be allocated for Lot or set number of successful applications for Lot?

A27 There is no predetermined number of grants per country nor per LOT per country. All eligible applications will undergo qualitative assessment and only the ones with highest quality will be funded.

Q28 You mentioned that the media outlet has to be established as a legal entity before 2020. Can civil society organisations that have their own online media apply for this CfA?

A28 Yes, civil society organisations are eligible to apply for this CfA, provided they publish content on their online media.

Q29 You mentioned that it is not allowed to apply in partnership with other media outlets, but can we have partnerships with other informal initiatives, such as influencers?

A29 The grants from this CfA are intended to build and strengthen the capacity of the media outlet that is the grant recipient, hence partnerships are not allowed. However, in the case of a co-operation with a person (influencer) and who is an expert critical for the success of the project, then the expert can be hired with a temporary service contract and paid by the grant.

Q30 Question regarding data – you are asking us to provide web statistics, what if we are a printed media?

A31 Provide any data from any source you have available, that includes number of printed copies, followers and interactions on social media channels, etc.

Q32 For web portals, in MKD relevant research and data are missing. How do we address the lack of data?

A32 You can present the data that you have currently and state which data and information you are missing, also stating the reason of this lack of data. Please always state the source of your data. Use web and social media sources as much as possible. For radio and TV approximate data are acceptable.

Q33 Our media outlet has You tube channel, where we have +100,000 subscribers, and a webpage where we have 160,000 followers, but we have no feedback. Can this project assist us to generate more feedback from social media.

A33 This project – especially Lot 1 – provides support in developing new income streams. If a business plan envisages using social media as a new source for monetization, the applicant can apply for support under Lot 1.

Q34 Will investments costs, such as for equipping a studio be borne by the grant? And if yes, what percentage of the total budget can be used for example for scenography and cameras.

A34 As stated in the Call for Applications, the purchase of equipment is allowed up to 50% of the total value of the proposed budget for equipment essential to the successful implementation of the project.

Costs of the purchase of office furniture and other office equipment such as desks, chairs, filing cabinets, photocopiers, fax machines are not eligible.

It is allowed to purchase grant/project implementation related assets, but please pay attention to the eligible costs' definition. Every purchase needs to be unambiguously justified - necessary and directly related to the grant implementation.

Q35 Will the development and launching of and Android/IOS applications for audience engagement be considered as an eligible programmatic cost? Additionally, is the development of such a tool in collision with the ECR reporting tool as an instrument for obtaining relevant information from the target audience?

A35 Within Lot 2 – Production of quality audience-engaged content, the ECR tool is envisaged as a tool for audience engagement, and development of any other applications for this purpose will not be financially supported. Please note that the ECR tool is also mobile friendly so the citizens can answer and questionnaires/ callouts and share information, photos, statements, data, videos through their mobile phones.

Please also note that such activities and corresponding costs are eligible within Lot 1 - Business Innovation Synergiser Program.

Q36 Is it a limiting factor if the media doesn't have viewer measurement dis-aggregated data considering that regional/local media are not subject to people meter measurements done by the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services? In addition, will the estimate done by the media itself as well as Google analytics data be considered relevant as support for the project proposal?

A36 You can present the data that you have currently and state which data and information you are missing, also stating the reason for this lack of data. Please always state the source of your data and use web and social media sources as much as possible. For radio and TV approximate data is acceptable. Yes, Google analytics data are considered relevant.

Q37 Is previous experience in using ECR tools an advantage when applying for the grant (LOT 2)?

A37 Previous experience in ECR will not be taken as an advantage when applying for LOT 2. All applicants will have equal opportunities. Media outlets that have used the ECR tool as part of their grant from Media for All will be supported to continue to use it in production of content, while the media outlets who have not used the ECR previously will receive all the needed support (training, guidance and access details) for incorporating the ECR tool in their editorial practices. All recipients of grants will be provided with editorial and mentorship support to integrate the ECR tool into their editorial practices, enhancing audience engagement at a more advanced level. This includes selecting topics and formulating questions that are easily accessible to all citizens, particularly the target groups associated with the chosen topics. The support will be customized to meet the specific needs and requirements of each media outlet. In cases where a grantee has not utilized ECR before, a portion of the editorial and mentorship support can be dedicated to training on the use of the ECR tool.

Q38 When you mention "associate" media, does that include those who collaborate with our media through authorship contracts or service contracts? In our case, the service contract with the editor-in-chief is permanent, while with other collaborators under this type of contract, it is based on completed services (but we can prove the long-term and continuous collaboration with these collaborators). On the other hand, authorship contracts with collaborators are valid for one year, but we renew them annually (we can also prove the continuity of collaboration). So, can we consider such collaborators as part of our media staff?

A38 Yes, all types of contracts with your associates are valid. In the Application form, under point 2.7 you will list all the engaged project team and specify the type of engagement.

In section Organisational overview, it is expected from you to give the accurate number of employees. If selected for a grant award, the continuity of collaboration will be checked during the Due Diligence phase prior to the Grant Agreement signing.

Q39 Is the use/inclusion of the ECR tool necessary for every project proposal? And if not, will those who anticipate its use have an advantage in the selection process?

A39 The usage/inclusion of the ECR tool is highly recommended in your project's proposals for LOT 2. It is recommended to foresee ECR tool for production of quality engaging content created with engagement and for diverse audiences, including women, young people and underrepresented groups.

Q40 Can media organisations apply for this call? We have expertise in working with youth and content creation. Our organisation brings together media publishers whose resources our organization utilizes.

A40 The Call for Applications targets media outlets established before 1 January 2020, also please see a full list of eligibility criteria 4.1 of the Call for Applications.

Q41 How many projects will be supported under LOT1 in Serbia?

A41 The Project is regional, encompassing six Western Balkans countries. The Call for Applications does not foresee the exact number of projects allocated for each country. In line with the project requirements, please refer to criteria under 4.1 and 4.7 of the Call for Applications, and subject to available project funds, the applications of the highest quality will be accepted for grants.

Q42 Our media outlet recently migrated from WordPress to a new CMS in November. During the transition, we encountered complications that led to a lack of analytics data for over two weeks. Now, we need to provide analytics for the period of October-December 2023. How significant of an issue will the decreased audience numbers be in this context?

A42 Please present the current statistics in the Section 3 of the Application Form, and provide this explanation (that you did not have Google Analytics for two weeks and that numbers are not completely accurate), in the first row. If needed, the evaluation team will follow up to ask for details.

Q43 Is there any recommendation for the percentage of Human Resources Costs in relation to the total budget?

A43 The only limitation in terms of the budget is for equipment – up to 50% of the total budget of the project. However, please note that the budget needs to correspond to the proposed activities, level of engagement on the project and be realistic. Detailed justification for each budget heading needs to be provided.

Q44 Our media outlet is financed exclusively from donations. It is stated in the call that you will not support applicants who are a beneficiary of UK funds or another donation. Are we eligible for applying for the grant?

A44 Please refer to the section 4.1. Eligibility Criteria:

The applicant cannot be a beneficiary of UK funds or another donation or grant scheme financing activities that are **identical** to the ones proposed for this grant scheme. This means that the Project will not support the proposed project activities that are **the same** as the ones you have applied with other donors or have been already implementing.

Q45 Is there a possibility to simultaneously implement the project (business plan) financed by other donor and the Project WB Media for Change, given that co-financing is not obligatory nor mandatory?

A45 The project (business plan) can be financed by two donor sources targeting complementary activities, meaning that part of the activities is financed by one donor and other part of activities by the other. In this case, there is no need to present co-financing in the budget. The identical activities will not be supported.