

Mobility grant scheme

Guidelines for applicants

Deadline for submission of full application:
20th of March 2024, 17.00 pm

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1. Support to the promotion of civil society regional action in the Western Balkans

1.1. Background

The Western Balkans is a geographical area that includes Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*¹, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia, collectively known as the Western Balkans or WB6 Region. A major challenge facing the WB6 region is the need of boosting regional cooperation which can positively impact regional stability and the well-being of citizens and societies. To address this, efforts are being made to strengthen regional cooperation, with the goal of eventually joining the European Union.

The WBF's experience in grant making was led successfully but without full capacity to satisfy the demand for regional cooperation since it vastly exceeds the funding opportunities available. Recognising this, the WBF through diversification of its grant making is bridging the gaps and better serving the increasing demand for people-to-people links and exchange of experiences. In addition to its annual calls for proposals, the WBF is now providing funding opportunities to further expand its impact and support regional cooperation efforts.

Through these mechanisms the Fund manages to support various actors engaging in regional exchange and cooperation, to pursue meaningful opportunities and respond to the demands of civil society and constituents in the Western Balkans. Identified target audience for this grant scheme are individual artists, cultural professionals, academia, journalists, activists from the Western Balkans to work and interact across borders.

Mobility Grant Scheme dedicated to Individuals aims to foster people-to-people connections. More specifically, WBF will support individuals from the region in their personal and professional growth by providing means to explore the region and new perspectives; encouraging them to step out of their comfort zones, embrace diversity, and develop a regional mindset. The scheme aims to nurture regional cooperation through people-to-people links by encouraging active engagement with local and regional issues and challenges. It creates a great platform for individuals to become agents of positive change, fostering a sense of responsibility toward creating a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable WB region.

1.2. Target groups and areas of intervention

Mobility Grant Scheme for Individuals specifically aims to:

- Enhance intercultural dialogue and knowledge exchange between experts and professionals from WB region;
- Support professional mobilities (i.e., regional travel for professional purposes) of artists, cultural professionals, academia, journalists, activists;
- Create links between professionals to support regional cooperation.

The priority areas of intervention within Mobility Grant Scheme for Individuals are:

- Arts & Culture
- Education & Scientific exchange
- Media
- Environmental protection & Climate change

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration

- Economic development & Digital innovations
- Peacebuilding
- Sports

The proposed actions (also referred to as 'project proposals' or 'projects') should align with at least one of the priority areas outlined above and should attempt to mainstream cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, social inclusion, non-discrimination, and the overall promotion of human rights.

1.3. Financial allocation provided by the Contracting Authority

Size of grants

The WBF will support grant funding requests up to the 100% of the total eligible costs of the project. Any grant requested under this Call for Proposals must not exceed **4,000 EUR**.

**The Contracting Authority reserves the right to not award all the funds or cancel the grant if the quality or number of proposals received is not sufficient.*

***The Contracting Authority reserves the right to apply balance in terms of distribution of grants among the six Western Balkans Contracting Parties.*

2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

2.1. Eligibility criteria

2.1 Eligibility of applicants -Who can participate?

All applicants must comply with the following eligibility criteria:

- be at least 18 years old on the day of the application deadline; **and**
- have citizenship from one of the following Contracting Parties of WBF (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia); **and**
- be part of a legal public or non-public organization, established in one or more of the Contracting Parties of the WBF.

The grants can only be awarded to registered juridical persons without criminal record.

2.1.1. Eligible actions: action for which an application may be made

Definition: A project can consist of one or a set of **activities**, with a maximum limit of three mobilities.

Duration: The duration of the stay or mobility action **should not exceed 6 months** including the reporting period.

Within this Call for Proposals the applicant can start his/her mobility project no earlier than **1st of June 2024** and must complete the mobility project until **30th of November 2024**.

***Please note:**

In case the applicant indicates the start of the mobility project before above mentioned date, the application will be withdrawn during the first step of evaluation and not be considered further.

Location: The activities must take place within the WB6 region. In exceptional cases, where the promotion of highly effective models of regional cooperation is concerned, the location of activities within the European Union might be considered, but only with a well-elaborated justification.

Regional cooperation: Each action must facilitate mobility of individuals between at least two WBF Contracting Parties.

***Please Note**

Only **individual** application is eligible. Applications to support the mobility of a group of individuals, or individuals travelling together, will not be supported.

Furthermore, only regional mobility projects are eligible: *mobility within the applicants' place of residence will not be supported.*

Applications prepared by ChatGPT may be rejected immediately.

2.2 Type of actions and activities

Below is an indicative and non-exhaustive list of activities that can be implemented in the framework of the Mobility Grant Scheme for Individuals:

1. **Study or Research Exchange:** support individuals in pursuing study or research opportunities within WB region. This can involve short-term or long-term (up to 6 months) stays at universities, research institutions, or laboratories in different institutions;
2. **Training and Capacity Building:** support individuals for attending workshops, seminars, training programs, or courses relevant to their field of study or profession. These activities shall aim to enhance knowledge, skills, competencies and networking with peers from the WB region;
3. **Internships and Work Placements:** support individuals/journalists/artists in undertaking internships or work placements in organizations, or institutions within WB region. This activity should provide valuable practical experience and exposure to different working environments;
4. **Conference and Event Attendance:** support individuals to participate in conferences, symposiums, or academic events within WB region. These activities should enable individuals to present their research, network with experts in their field, and stay updated on the latest developments;
5. **Artistic and Cultural Projects:** support individuals' participation in art/movie/music/theatre or media festivals, including participation in artist residencies, exhibitions, performances, or collaborations with artists from different contracting parties. These initiatives should promote cultural exchange and creativity.
6. **Policy Development and Advocacy:** support individuals more specifically researchers/journalists involved in policy development, advocacy, or governance. This can include study visits, research projects, or placements in international organizations/media outlet or other agencies.
7. **Field Research and Data Collection:** support individuals conducting field research or data collection in different geographical locations within WB region. This supports individuals to reach their research objectives and enables them to gather diverse perspectives and data.
8. **Collaborative Projects and Partnerships:** support individuals to facilitate collaborative projects and partnerships between individuals, organizations, or institutions from different parts of WB region. This promotes cross-border cooperation and knowledge exchange.
9. **Community Engagement:** support individuals who wish to engage in community projects in different parts of the WB region. This allows individuals to contribute to social causes and gain a broader perspective on regional issues.
10. **Sports projects & exchange:** support individuals who wish to participate to regional sport

events (competitions, championships, exchange activities).

The following types of action are ineligible for funding under this call:

- actions which are covered by the WBF annual calls for proposals;
- actions without a regional exchange and cooperation component.

Visibility: Every action must include at least one public outreach activity, which would aim to promote the results of the project as well as acknowledge the support under the WBF regional cooperation framework. This might include joint press event and/or creative presentation of outputs prepared under the project (e.g., poster, essay, theatrical performance, social and traditional media content, research brief, testimonials of participants in the form of a blog).

Applicants may submit only one application in response to a Call for Proposals: if they submit several applications for the same call, only the last submitted application will be considered.

WBF will support a maximum of one mobility project per applicant per year: applications from persons who have been successful in a previous Call will not be considered.

2.1.2. Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included.

To be eligible under this call for proposals, eligible costs must meet all the following criteria:

- **They are incurred during the implementation of the action.** They should be paid before the submission of the final report.
- **They are indicated in the estimated overall budget for the action.**
- **They are necessary for the implementation of the action.**
- **They are identifiable, verifiable,** and recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary(ies) and determined according to the accounting standards and the usual cost accounting practices applicable to the beneficiary(ies).
- **They comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.**
- **They are reasonable, justified and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, regarding economy and efficiency.**

Only eligible costs can be covered by a grant. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and an overall ceiling for 'eligible costs.

Financial support to third parties is not allowed under this call for proposal. Applicants **are not permitted to provide sub-granting** to other parties.

The reimbursement of eligible costs will be based on actual costs incurred during the project and based upon the reports and accompanying documentation submitted by the lead applicant/individual applicant, as solely responsible for the management of funds.

The grant disbursement for selected projects by organizations or individuals shall be as follows:

1. 80% as pre-payment upon submission of required documents and signing of grant contract.
2. 20% balance disbursed after submitting required final documents (as per Grant contract template).

A well-planned budget shall be simple and realistic and includes approximations of the project's future expenditures in EUR (€) based on real costs in the market. All budget costs must be eligible costs, and

ONLY the costs presented in the budget will be considered for financing. Detailed project costs together with financing sources must be presented in **Annex B [budget form]**.

The amount of the awarded grant cannot be increased. Applicants are recommended to use the average exchange rates from national bank at time of application preparation.

Eligible direct costs

When planning the budget, it is important to adhere to the list of eligible cost categories, which are tailored to the specific focus of the Mobility grant scheme:

- Travel, health insurance and visa costs (if applicable);
- Accommodation costs;
- Daily allowances costs;
- Registration fee in specific activities that apply a price for participation;
- Special Needs (Additional expenses linked to mobility of applicant with disability).

It is important to note that eligible costs must comply with the rules of WBF regarding financial estimations and maximum cost ceilings as indicated in the table below and in the budget form (Annex B) of the application which offers further details on eligible costs.

Type of eligible cost	Remarks
Travel	All envisaged travel costs must be included in the financial proposal. Travelling by any kind of mean, shall be based on the principles of the most cost-effective means of travel and cheapest option available. <i>(Please check the budget template for further details)</i>
Accommodation	Costs on accommodation shall not be more than 65 EURO per night. Accommodation shall be calculated only for activity and traveling days. (*In exceptional cases, for accommodations outside of WB6 the rate is up to 85 EUR per night.)
Daily Allowance	Daily allowance cannot be more than 40 EURO per day. Daily allowance should be strictly calculated only for activity and traveling days. In case of travelling half day (less than 6 hours), half daily allowance shall be calculated. Daily Allowance may be calculated also together with accommodation if deemed necessary or it is considered more cost or time efficient.
Registration Fee	Registration fee shall strictly relate to the activity which is indicated in the proposal. No other fee shall be considered (example fee for registering in a training, conference ecc.)
Special Needs linked only to mobility of applicant with disability	Up to of 1,200 EUR can be funded. This amount is additional to the maximum grant amount.
Travel insurance (if any)	Travel insurance should be strictly related to the timeline of activities
Visa costs (If any)	
Visibility cost (if applicable)	Up to 7% of the total budget if needed.
Contingency fee	Up to 7% of the total budget. Bank charges, postal service, exceptional expenses needed for the action. Contingency is a reserve budget line which shall be used only for emergency cases upon prior notification of the Contracting Authority.

Travel and accommodation costs cannot be increased: they will be decreased if the mobility does not take place as foreseen. **Example:** If your mobility was planned for 18 days but lasted only 15 days, the costs for these three days (cost of stay) will be deducted from the final calculation of your grant. If you decide to stay longer in the destination, it will be at your own expense.

What expenses cannot be supported by the Mobility Grant Scheme for Individuals?

- Expenses that have not been indicated in the budget of the mobility;

- Expenses that are not directly related to the mobility;
- Expenses that are already fully covered by another source, grant, or program (double funding).

***Please note:**

Co-funding of the mobility projects from other source(s) is possible, e.g., co-funding of registration fee for the targeted conference, travel costs, costs of stay. However, if these costs are covered by another source, they cannot be included in the budget of this mobility grant.

Any conflict of interests must be always avoided.

2.2. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

2.2.1. *Where and how to send full applications*

Individuals are invited to submit a full application, in the English language, using the Online Grant Management System (OGMS). The OGMS is designed to make the application process easier and user-friendly.

A full application includes the following documents:

Application form – to be filled in online

Budget– to be filled in online

Declaration by the Individual Applicant signed (To be uploaded by the applicant in the system)

To apply for the Call for Proposals, applicants should:

1. Register at WBF OGMS at: <https://wbportal.org/applicant/login.html> ;
2. Provide information according to the instructions or guiding questions provided in the OGMS. After submitting their online application, applicants will receive an automatic confirmation of receipt and their protocol number.

***Please Note**

Incomplete applications may be rejected, and hand-written applications will not be accepted.

After submitting the full application online, the lead applicant will receive an email confirming that their application has been received. The email will also include a link to a survey that the Individual must complete. If the confirmation email is not received within 48 hours, the applicant should contact the WBF by email at info@westernbalkansfund.org.

It is important to note that incomplete applications may be rejected, and hand-written applications will not be accepted.

Applicants are strongly advised not to wait until the last day to submit their application. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be evaluated.

Applicants who are not successful can re-apply in response to the following Call.

Depending on funding and other circumstances, the WBF may update the process, the structure of the application or the mechanism of the financial support used for future Calls for Proposals. The Guidelines will be published for every Call for Proposals separately. Therefore, we highly recommend that applicants who intend to respond to future Calls for Proposals, always refer to the guidelines of the corresponding Call.

Deadline of Applications for June Call is 20th of March 2024, 17.00 p.m.

2.3. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF PROJECT PROPOSALS

The Mobility Grant Mechanism will open for applications two times a year, in February and October and will remain open for a period of 30 days. The decision on the selected applications will be announced within 40 working days after the application deadline.

Applications will be evaluated by the WBF with the potential assistance of external assessors. The final list of awarded projects will be endorsed by the WBF Council of Senior Officials.

All applications will be evaluated according to the criteria and steps outlined in this [Section](#). If the application does not meet the eligibility criteria outlined in [Section 2.1](#), it may be rejected without further evaluation.

STEP 1: Opening, administrative and eligibility checks.

During the opening, administrative and eligibility checks will be assessed as follows:

- i. If the project is compliant with the eligibility criteria outlined in the [Section 2.1](#) of the guidelines.
- ii. If any requested information or documents are missing or incorrect, the application will be rejected and not evaluated further.

STEP 2 – Technical evaluation

The project applications that have successfully passed the administrative and eligibility checks will be evaluated on the relevance and design of the proposed action. The evaluation will be based on criteria outlined in the evaluation grid, with applications receiving a score out of 75 as presented below.

#	Assessment questions	Guiding principle for assessment	Numerical assessment	Section in Application
A	COHERENCE CRITERIA			
A.1	Description of the project	The project effectively addresses a well-defined topic and explains it clearly	1-2-3-4-5	
		The extent the requested project duration is justified in relation to achieving the desired result	1-2-3	
		The project addresses common regional challenges, topics and/or opportunities in the region – <i>there is a real need for the project.</i>	1-2-3-4-5	
B	RELEVANCE CRITERIA			
B.1	Relevance of the project	The project main (overall) objective contributes to the WBF MOVE Program (within the chosen area of intervention).	1-2-3-4-5	
		The extent the project allows personal growth – to explore, create, learn, participate, or connect regionally.	1-2-3-4-5	
		Regional dimension is clear, and the quality of the regional mobility is significant.	1-2-3-4-5	
		All roles (applicant's and host entity') are defined and justified.	1-2-3-4-5	
		The project includes introduction of new practices/ relevant topics and/or solutions.	1-2-3-4-5	
C	OPERATIONAL CRITERIA			
		Proposed activities are realistic, proportionate and	1-2-3-4-5	

C.1	Activities and outputs	will result in the appropriate deliverables. Activities are logically linked, clear and described in detail (how, where, when and by whom they will be undertaken).		
		All outputs / deliverables are linked to specific activities and developed in such manner that allows easy measuring and verification.	1-2-3-4-5	
		Time plan is realistic and feasible (activities, deliverables/outputs are in a logical time sequence and can be achieved in given timeframe).	1-2-3-4-5	
		The project is sufficiently well described benefits / influence in the future for the applicant.	1-2-3-4-5	
	Follow-up	The proposal includes follow up activity	1-2-3	
C.2	Visibility and outreach	The communication approach chosen is appropriate to reach visibility objectives. The selected visibility objectives are achievable.	1-2-3-4-5	
		The communication activities and proposed content are appropriate to reach the relevant target groups.	1-2-3-4	
C.3	Budget and cost-effectiveness of the project	The budget reflects project activities and real involvement (it is balanced compared to the planned activities). Costs in the budget reflect the narrative description of activities and deliverables.	1-2-3-4-5	
		The proposed budget is well justified, essential, and feasible. <i>(The budget costs are in line with the GfA point 2.3).</i>	1-2-3-4-5	
		The stated costs are realistically quantified and priced compared to the expected results, outputs and activities (<i>e.g. number of nights in hotel during trip/s</i>). There are no overestimated or underestimated amounts.	1-2-3-4-5	

Applications that received a score less than 40 points on the ranking list, will not be recommended for funding by the Evaluation Committee.

STEP 3 – Verification of additional documentation for provisionally selected applicants (including partners (if any))

The Contracting Authority will further verify additional documentation of the applicants that have been provisionally selected based on their score and the budget available for this call for proposals.

The following documents will be requested from the shortlisted applicants to confirm their eligibility with the WBF:

- A copy of the applicant's government-issued identification card (e.g., passport or ID card).
- A document from a government agency that confirms that the applicant does not have a criminal record.
- A document from the organization/institution where the individual applicant is employed/engaged (if applicable) that confirms their employment/involvement status.
- An official letter of invitation from the host organization located in one or more of the WB6 Contracting Parties, indicating the date, program, and reason for inviting the participant(s).
- A partnership agreement between the home and host organizations (if any).

The declaration by the individual applicant will be cross-checked with the supporting documents provided by the individual applicant. Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between

the declaration by the individual applicant and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the application on that sole basis.

The eligibility of applicants will be verified according to the criteria set out in Sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2.

If the application is rejected, it will be replaced by the next best application on the list that fits within the budget for this call for proposals. Please refer to the provisions of Section 1.3 above for more information.

The final decision on awarding the grants will be made by the WBF Council of Senior Officials endorsed by the Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, who will consider the recommendations of the WBF Evaluation Committee.

2.4. NOTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION

2.4.1. *Content of the decision*

The applicant will be notified in writing, via email, by the Contracting Authority on the decision regarding their application.

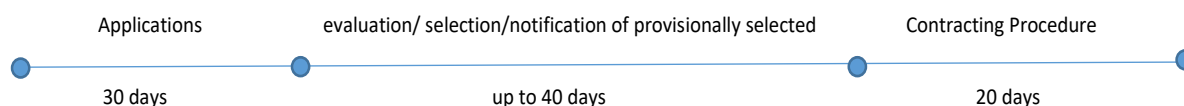
2.4.2. *Right for delivering a complaint.*

If an applicant believes that an irregularity occurred during the grant application/evaluation process, they may file a complaint within 7 calendar days from the receipt of the notification. Complaints should be made via e-mail, and it should provide arguments related to the contested quality of the evaluation and/or procedural omissions. The Contracting Authority will review the complaint and provide an official response within 10 working days upon receipt of the complaint.

2.4.3. *Indicative timetable*

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application, whether approved or denied, no later than 40 days after the deadline of the call. The grant contract must be signed within 20 days starting from the day of the notification of the award decision, and the project must commence on the day following the signing of the contract.

	DATE	TIME
Opening of the application system	February and October	Up to 30 days
Evaluation of applications / Selection / Notification of Information provisionally selected applicants	April	Up to 40 working days
Contracting procedure	May	Up to 20 days



All times are in the time zone of the Contracting Authority. Please refer to calendar days. This indicative timetable is an estimation and may be updated by the Contracting Authority during the implementation. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the WBF website <https://westernbalkansfund.org/>

2.5. What happens when the application is approved?

2.5.1. Signing of the Grant Contract

If the applicant is selected for funding within WBF Mobility Grant Scheme for Individuals:

- The mobility budget will be reviewed, and the approved funding amount will be confirmed;
- The applicant will receive the draft of the grant agreement, to be completed with relevant information, signed and returned to the WBF;
- After the grant contract has been signed by both parties (the applicant and the WBF), the applicant becomes a Beneficiary of the WBF Mobility Grant Scheme and receives 80% of the approved funding amount;

Upon the signature of the Grant Contract, the applicant can begin implementing the mobility. The applicants who need visa for the destination and need to undergo other administrative procedures, are highly advised to start their mobility projects at least two months after receiving the official notification from WBF.

2.5.2. Final checks and modification of the project

- The beneficiary is requested to implement the project during the following time period – 1st of June 2024 – 30 November 2024.
- The project should start from the specified location indicated in the application form and subsequently return to the same starting point. The changes can apply only when approved by the WBF team, otherwise the costs for mobility starting from a different location other than stated in the initial application form, can't be accepted or will be recalculated and will be deducted from the final calculation;
- It will not be possible to change the destination or the number of days of the project. If the grantee is unable to go to the initial destination or to stay for the number of days requested, the grantee must inform the WBF well in advance before this happens, otherwise, the WBF will consider it as an abandon/drop out. If the grantee decides to stay longer in the destination planned for mobility, it will be at the grantee's own expense, but the grantee must inform the WBF about these changes too.

The grantee is allowed to change the timing of the mobility (i.e., when to start the mobility project if it does not exceed the 6 months) and will be requested to inform of the new indicative dates of the project the WBF. In this case, the grantee must provide an official reason and circumstances why the planned mobility can't be implemented and after official approval by the WBF team, can start the project within the updated period. Before accepting the changes, the grantee shall deliver to the WBF an updated invitation letter from the host institution with the updated travel dates.

2.5.3. Reporting and Final payment

The grantees commit, within one month of the end of their project, to submit an activity report consisting of a narrative and financial report, including required supporting documents.

Grantees will receive the balance of their funding amount (up to 20%) after submission and approval of the report.

Payments will be made in Euro to the account mentioned in the grant contract.

Mobility report consists of two parts:

1. Narrative report:

Description of the activities implemented, and results achieved (template provided by the WBF)

Attachments: Videos, a minimum of 3 pictures demonstrating some activities of the mobility project, and social media posts demonstrating some activities during the project (if any).

2. Financial report:

Budget form including supporting documents:

1. For the real costs: proof of expenditure (invoices, proof of payment, e.g., conference fee);
2. For the lump sums: proof that the travel occurred and lasted the number of days foreseen;
3. For the travel: boarding passes for both ways proving the place of origin as indicated in the application form and the destination country(ies)/city(ies), train tickets, bus tickets;
4. For the cost of stay: Invoices of accommodation and local receipts or invoices (local bus tickets, local taxi invoices, etc.) in the destination that contribute as proof of stay in the indicated destination.

4.5. Principles of Mobility Grant Scheme for Individuals

Non retroactivity:

Grantees may begin implementing their project only after their grant agreement is signed. **Costs incurred before the signature of the grant agreement are not eligible.**

Non-cumulative award:

The WBF will support a maximum of one project per person within the indicated Call. The WBF will not cover costs that are otherwise covered, for example by other grant schemes.

To avoid the risk of double funding, the applicant must indicate in the relevant section of the budget form, the sources and the amounts of any other funding received or applied for in the year.