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Delegation of the European Union to Serbia

**Call for proposals
Support to the independent media sector in Serbia**

Information session

EuropeAid/180725/DD/ACT/RS

26 March 2024



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Please note that this presentation is prepared solely to be used as supporting material to be used during the Information session.

The Guidelines for Applicants published for the Call for Proposal remain the sole written reference to the applicable conditions and rules.



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Support to the independent media sector in Serbia

- Protection of media freedom and pluralism is high on the agenda of the EU: Media Freedom Act; Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act; protection of those working on issues of public interest
- Annual report 2023: “Serbia should implement its media strategy and action plan without further delay”



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Global objective of the call for proposals

Support media organisations and media associations in their contribution to the implementation and monitoring of the Media Strategy of Serbia, aiming at strengthening freedom of expression and ensuring media quality and plurality



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Specific objective of the call for proposals

To support innovative activities of media organisations and associations in Serbia to ensure the implementation of the National Media Strategy and address the needs of the media sector, as well as to improve access to evidence based and quality content and hence fight against disinformation and fake news



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Priorities of the call for proposals

1. To support monitoring and advocacy actions to ensure the implementation of the Media strategy, media laws and policies of Serbia
2. To support integrity, safety and security of journalists, including among others against cyber threats, SLAPPs, online attacks, violence against female journalists, supporting mental health and others as appropriate, at national and/or at local level
3. To support media to develop editorial capacities, quality content, evidence based journalism, and the use of digital tools, in particular at local level, with a focus on coverage of local and diverse topics, reaching out to marginalised and diverse communities. Access of the public to evidence based and quality content will help fight against disinformation

Budget

- The overall indicative amount made available under this call for proposals is **EUR 1,000,000**. The contracting authority reserves the right not to award all available funds
- Any grant requested under this call for proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:
 - minimum amount: EUR 250,000
 - maximum amount: EUR 500,000

Budget

Any grant requested under this call for proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum percentages of total eligible costs of the action:

- Minimum percentage: 65 % of the total eligible costs of the action.
- Maximum percentage: 95 % of the total eligible costs of the action



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Eligibility criteria – the lead applicant:

- be a legal person **and**
- be a specific type of organisation such as: print/electronic/on-line media, radio or television channel, media organisation, news agency, media production house or media association **and**
- be established in the Republic of Serbia **and**
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary

Eligibility criteria – co-applicants:

- The lead applicant must act with at least two co-applicants. At least one co-applicant must be established outside of Belgrade.
- Co-applicants participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the lead applicant.
- Co-applicants must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable to the lead applicant himself.
- In addition to the categories referred to in Section 2.1.1, the following are however also eligible: Civil society organisations and Cultural and educational institutions/organisations

Eligibility criteria – eligible actions

Duration

- The initial planned duration of an action may not be lower than **24 months** nor exceed **36 months**

Location

- Actions must take place in the Republic of Serbia



Eligibility criteria – types of actions

The types of action that may be funded under this call for proposals can be (non-exhaustive):

- monitoring and advocacy actions to ensure the implementation of the Media strategy, media laws and policies of Serbia
- supporting the right to safety and security for journalists and media workers victim of threats, including against cyber threats, SLAPPs, online attacks, violence against female journalists and/or supporting mental health, etc., at local and/or at national level
- ensuring response mechanisms and safer working conditions for all media professionals, free from fear and intimidation, whether online or offline
- capacity building of journalists to develop editorial skills, quality content, evidenced-based and collaborative journalism, with a focus on coverage of local and diverse topics, reaching out to marginalised and diverse communities including among others women, youth, people with disability and minorities
- capacity building of journalists in the use of digital tools
- enhancing the image and narrative on marginalised or discriminated groups

Eligibility criteria – types of actions

The following types of action are ineligible:

- actions that are not in line with the Serbian Code of ethics for journalism and/or actions that are against the European Convention on Human Rights, notably with regard to accuracy and objectivity;
- actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and congresses;
- actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- actions essentially focused on construction activities, purchase of equipment, purchase and/or renovation of building or offices;
- actions aiming predominantly at charitable donations and profit making activities;
- actions which are already funded by other European Union programmes and undertaken before the date of contract signature.



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Eligibility criteria – types of activities

- Training
 - Networking and collaboration
 - Advocacy
 - Exchange of experience and good practices
 - Content creation
 - Online tools
 - Guidelines/mechanisms
 - Mentoring/coaching
 - Reports/analyses/studies
- etc ...



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Financial support to third parties (FSTP)

- Applicants may propose financial support to third parties.
- The maximum amount of financial support per third party is EUR 60 000 except where achieving the objectives of the actions would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult, in which case this threshold can be exceeded. A threshold below EUR 60 000 can be set if appropriate.

For further details on FSTP, please refer to the Guidelines for Applicants.



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Number of applications and grants per applicants / affiliated entities

- The lead applicant may not submit more than one application under this call for proposals.
- The lead applicant may not be awarded more than one grant under this call for proposals.
- The lead applicant may not be a co-applicant or an affiliated entity in another application at the same time.
- A co-applicant/affiliated entity may not be the co-applicant or affiliated entity in more than one application under this call for proposals.
- A co-applicant/affiliated entity may not be awarded more than one grant under this call for proposals.

Important points to note (part 1)

Submission online via PROSPECT is obligatory for this call, as well as registration in PADOR.

To apply for this Call for Proposals, please use the following:

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/prospect-details/180725PROSPECTSEN>

Guidelines – **Read them and ensure you understand all the sections.** If you have doubts, send your questions. We shall publish replies to all questions received.

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than 21 days before the deadline for the submission of concept notes to the address(es) below, indicating clearly the reference of the call for proposals: E-mail address: DELEGATION-SERBIA-FCS@eeas.europa.eu

Actions – show which actions can be financed under this Call.

Activities - show how the action can be achieved.

Eligibility requirements – eligibility of applicants, actions, costs, etc..

Visibility -

Think about visibility.

Be creative.

Write about it in your proposal



Important points to note (part 2)

Submission of documents

- The lead applicant is strongly advised not to wait until the last day to submit the applications, since heavy Internet traffic or a fault with the Internet connection (including electricity failure, etc.) could lead to difficulties in submission.
- Technical issues with submission: should be addressed to the IT helpdesk at EuropeAid-IT-support@ec.europa.eu via the online support form in PROSPECT.
- The documents listed under section 2.2.5 of the GFA shall be uploaded in PADOR **by the full application deadline (statutes, LEF, FIF, etc.)**
- A copy of the lead applicant's accounts of the latest financial year (the profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts have been closed) and audit report produced by an approved external auditor (where needed) **must be uploaded in PADOR by the full application deadline**
- The requested supporting documents must be supplied in the form of originals, photocopies or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals. Originals should be kept on file for controls



Important points to note (part 3)

Submission of documents (cont.)

- **Declaration on honour:** the lead applicant as well as all co-applicants and affiliated entities shall fill in and sign the declaration on honour certifying that they are not in one of the exclusion situations (see Section 2.6.10.1 of the PRAG) Please note that the declaration on honour should be submitted **via PROSPECT**.
- **Self-evaluation questionnaire on SEA-H:** the lead applicant as well as all co-applicants and affiliated entities shall fill in the self-evaluation questionnaire assessing the organisation's internal policy and procedure against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEA-H) (Annex L) (see Section 2.5.6 of the PRAG). Please note that the self-evaluation questionnaire on SEA-H should be submitted **via PADOR**.

The screenshot shows a web application interface with a navigation bar at the top containing tabs for 'Profile', 'Financial data', 'User list', 'Signature', 'Contracts', and 'Internal check'. Below the navigation bar is a section titled 'Additional documentation'. Under this section, there is a document entry: 'Self-evaluation questionnaire on policy against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEA-H) . (Applicable as of PRAG 2021)'. To the right of this entry is a dropdown menu currently displaying 'No document' and an upload icon (an upward-pointing arrow).

- If not submitted as described above: the requested supporting documents must be submitted in a sealed envelope by registered mail, private courier service or by hand-delivery to the postal address of the DEU Serbia, in original.



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Documents to be completed

Annex A: Grant application form (Word format)

A.1 – Concept note

A.2 – Full application form

Annex B: Budget (Excel format)

Annex C: Logical framework (Excel format)

Annex D: Legal entity sheet

Annex E: Financial identification form

Annex H: Declaration on Honour

Annex L: Self-evaluation questionnaire on SEA-H

Annex F: PADOR registration form (only if impossible to register in PADOR)

Documents for information

Annex G: Standard grant contract

Annex II: general conditions

Annex IV: contract award rules

Annex V: standard request for payment

Annex VI: model narrative and financial report

Annex VIII: model financial guarantee

Annex IX: standard template for transfer of ownership of assets

Annex I: Daily allowance rates (per diem), available at the following address: https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-technical-assistance/guidelines/managing-project/diem-rates_en

Annex J: Information on the tax regime applicable to grant contracts signed under the call.

Annex K: Guidelines for assessing simplified cost options. These documents should also be published by the contracting authority.



Full applications

Tips on Annex B: Budget

Please take into consideration the following when preparing your budgets for the action:

- All 3 relevant sheets of "Annex B- Budget" are consistent with each other and PROSPECT – Total eligible costs of the action should be exactly the same in sheet 1. Budget and sheet 3. Expected sources of funding and as requested in PROSPECT;
- The description of items must be sufficiently detailed and all items broken down into their main components. The number of units and the unit value must be specified for each item;
- If staff are not working full time on the Action, the percentage should be indicated alongside the description of the item and reflected in the number of units (not the unit value);
- Specify the typology of costs- if you do not use the specific SIMPLIFIED COST OPTION procedure, DO NOT use the terms LUMP SUM, FLAT RATE or APPORTIONMENT when defining the unit, but think of the way to define the unit properly (for e.g. per month/ per travel, per event, per service etc.
- Contingency - a justification for the possible need for the contingency must be included in the justification in Annex III Budget (2nd sheet)



Full applications

Tips on Annex B: Budget (continued)

Please take into consideration the following when preparing your budgets for the action:

- Provide a narrative clarification of each budget item demonstrating the necessity of the costs and how they relate to the action (e.g. through references to the activities and/or results in the Description of the Action)
- Provide a justification of the calculation of the estimated costs. Note that the estimation should be based on real costs. Please avoid estimates based on "*previous experience by the applicant*" or the like
- Do not forget to include costs for Expenditure Verification
- In sheet 3 of *Annex B – Budget - Expected sources of funding - Other contributions*, the source of other contributions must be properly named and respective amounts identified for each contributor, i.e. lead applicant, co-applicant, affiliated entity, other donor (to be named)



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TIMETABLE

	DATE	TIME
1. Information meeting - ONLINE	26/03/2024	11:00
2. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the contracting authority	05/04/2024	17:00
3. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the contracting authority	15/04/2024	-
4. Deadline for submission of concept notes	26/04/2024	17:00
5. Information to lead applicants on, administrative checks and concept note evaluation (Step 1)	May 2024	-
6. Invitations to submit full applications	May 2024	-
7. Deadline for submission of full applications	August 2024	-
8. Information to lead applicants on the evaluation of the full applications (Step 2)	September 2024	-
9. Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (Step 3)	October 2024	-
10. Contract signature	October 2024	-

All times are in the time zone of the country of the contracting authority.

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THANK YOU!

ANY QUESTIONS?

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