

# INNOVATION. MEDIA. MINDS.

EU SUPPORT TO PUBLIC  
SERVICE JOURNALISM  
IN WESTERN BALKANS

#EU4MediaMindsWB

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## Questions and answers\_Production grants for independent media and media organisations

### 1. What is the objective of Innovation. Media. Minds. Programme?

Innovation. Media. Minds: EU Support to Public Service Journalism in Western Balkans seeks to promote an environment that is supportive of media freedom, improve participatory democracies and the EU approximation process in the region through a strengthened contribution by civil society and media. Its objective is to assist Western Balkan Public Service Media (PSM) in enhancing organisational performance and internal governance while also enhancing the individual capacities of journalists, technical personnel, top and middle management, and staff members. For more information, please refer to Guidelines, section 1.1.

### 2. What is the aim of grants for independent media?

The specific aim of the Grants for independent media is to support independent media outlets/media organisations in the Western Balkans region in order to increase pluralism of expression and to strengthen their cooperation with the Western Balkans PSMs and improve audience relevant reporting.

Within their project proposals, applicants should demonstrate the following selection criteria:

- Innovation: The project introduces new and innovative approaches to media content.
- Sustainability: The project has the potential to be replicated or scaled up.
- Alignment with program objectives: The project is aligned with the specific objectives of the Programme.
- Potential for cross-border collaboration: The project should have the potential to foster collaboration among PSMs and independent and investigative media from different regions.

### 3. Who can apply?

Eligible applicants are legal entities that:

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- Operate as an independent media outlet/media organisation[1] with legal entity established in one of the following IPA beneficiaries[2]: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia.
- Status of legal entity: independent private sector media companies or non-for-profit media organisations. State-controlled media **are not eligible**.
- Transparent ownership structure with no involvement of state or state-affiliated entities (e.g., state-owned/controlled economic operators), nor senior political actors or their close relatives.
- Proven commitment to professional and ethical standards of journalism (e.g. through membership to press councils, adherence or compliance with other recognized mechanisms, and platforms, established to promote professional and ethical standards in journalism).
- Independent media outlet/media organisation registered for at least 3 years.
- Have a signed official document (contract/agreement/statement/letter of intent) with at least one of the Western Balkan PSM that signed a memorandum of understanding[3] to broadcast the media content developed and created within this grant scheme. The produced media content must be broadcasted for at least one month and posted on different Western Balkan PSM's and beneficiary's media platforms (TV, social media, websites, YouTube, etc.).

*\*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999.*

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[1] Media associations/organisations/foundations and/or formally established media networks which produce media content.

[2] The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) is the means by which the EU has been supporting reforms in the enlargement region with financial and technical assistance since 2007. For this grant scheme, eligible IPA beneficiaries are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia.

[3] The following Western Balkan PSMs signed the MoU with Goethe-Institut and DW Akademie: Macedonian Radio Television, Radio and Television of Kosovo\*, Radio Television of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Radio Television of Montenegro, Radio Television of Serbia, Radio Television of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Radio Television of Vojvodina, Radio Television Shqiptar.

#### **4. Is it possible that two media organisations apply together?**

Yes, it is possible that two media organisations or two media outlets or a media outlet and media organisation apply together within this grant scheme.

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## **5. In the case where two or more applicants apply together, who is responsible for completing the application and reporting?**

When two or more applicants apply together, one of the applicants is designated as the lead applicant. This organisation assumes primary responsibility for completing the application, communicating with the Goethe-Institut, and submitting reports. The lead applicant represents a partner applicant and is responsible for overall coordination and management of the project. In the case of a joint application, the contract will clearly define the responsibilities of each applicant, including reporting, financial management, and other relevant obligations.

## **6. How to apply?**

To apply for the call for proposals, applicants should:

1. Register in the Goethe Application Portal (GAP) <https://gap-online.goethe.de/en/>
2. Access the application form for Innovation project grants using the following link: <https://gap-online.goethe.de/cases/1f32225b-065f-47d3-816e-e5b6f905fbdb/create>
3. Provide information according to the instructions or guiding questions provided in the GAP.

For more details, please refer to Guidelines, section 3.

## **7. What are the eligible expenses within this grant scheme?**

Applicants may apply to cover the following costs:

- Costs for new productions such as fees for freelance contracts (filming team), training costs, catering (only if directly linked to the media content production activities), materials for filming, etc.
- Lump sums for travel, accommodation/per diems for staff.

Details on the kinds of expenses can be found in Guidelines section 2.2. *Eligible and ineligible expenditures and principles of funding.*

## **8. Are human resource costs (salaries) for staff responsible for project implementation eligible expenses?**

Cost of applicant's staff and experts directly involved in the implementation of the proposed project, proportionate to their level of involvement are eligible costs. Please refer to Guidelines section 2.2. *Eligible and ineligible expenditures and principles of funding.*

## **9. How will the selection committee evaluate and choose the best project ideas that will be funded within this grant scheme?**

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The applications that pass the formal and eligibility assessment will be further evaluated by the selection committee. Members of the selection committee will be experts with strong background in media field coming from countries outside of Western Balkan region. The selection committee will have three members. Please refer to Guidelines, section 3-1.1.5. *What happens once the application is submitted* for more details regarding the evaluation criteria.

## **10. What is the maximum amount for an individual grant?**

The highest amount per grant that can be awarded through the call is up to **EUR 30,000**. A total budget of **EUR 90,000** will be distributed for this type of grants. Three (3) grants in total will be awarded.

## **11. Are VAT expenses acceptable within this grant scheme?**

Applicants *should NOT include Value-Added Tax (VAT)* expenses in their project budgets. VAT will not be accepted within this grant scheme. Recipients of EU funds in the Western Balkans are exempt from paying VAT. Beneficiaries will be informed about the VAT exemption procedure before signing a grant contract.

## **12. Which types of documents are necessary for reporting?**

After the grant agreement has been signed by both parties (the applicant and Goethe-Institut), the applicant becomes a beneficiary of the Programme's grant scheme. Media outlet/organisation which was awarded the grant will receive funding in three instalments: 45% after signing the grant agreement, 50% after the approved financial and narrative midterm report and 5% after completing all project activities and approved final financial and narrative report.

Within one month of the project's conclusion, beneficiaries are required to submit an activity report consisting of a narrative and financial report, along with necessary supporting documents. The balance of the funding amount will be disbursed after the submission and approval of the report. Payments will be made in Euros to the account specified in the grant contract.

Please refer to Guidelines, section 3., subtitle 3.1.6. *What happens once the application is approved.*

## **13. Do applicants have to have a separate bank account for project funds within this grant scheme?**

In order to have an easier and clear overview of all expenses and to have an easier reporting procedure, it is advised that recipients of grant funds have a separate sub account. Having a separate sub account does not incur additional bank expenses for the beneficiary but will contribute to an easier reporting and monitoring of expenses during implementation period.

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## 14. Is it possible to apply with more than one application (project proposal)?

Applicants may only submit one application. If an applicant submits several applications, only the last submitted application will be considered.

## 15. What kind of supporting documentation applicants need to provide?

Applicants applying for Production grants for independent media need to submit the following supporting documents:

- Registration documents (certificate) confirming the legal entity status as a registered media outlet/organisation within the relevant IPA beneficiary.
- Portfolio of media outlet/organisation on a similar media content topic that the applicant is suggesting in its project proposal.
- CVs of proposed key personnel.
- Editorial guidelines of the lead and partner applicant (if applicable).
- Organisational chart of the lead and partner applicant (if applicable). The organisational chart has to display a reporting or relationship hierarchy. Please include all departments and managing bodies within your organisation, including the steering committee and founders. For the managing positions within the media outlet/organisation, please include the names of employees (persons) currently engaged at these roles, including the steering committee members and founder(s).
- Financial statements for the last two fiscal years.
- Any official document (signed) which confirms the applicant has a formal agreement with at least one Western Balkan PSM on broadcasting the media content that will be produced within this grant scheme. Project proposals having formal agreements with more than one Western Balkan PSM will have an advantage. *If applicants need help in contacting Western Balkan PSMs, please contact the IMM Programme team for more information (contact person: Dajana Celebic, [dajana.celebic@goethe.de](mailto:dajana.celebic@goethe.de)).*
- Self-declaration on exclusion criteria and avoidance of conflicts of interest for the awarding of a grant by the Goethe-Institut[1] (signed by the applicant and co-applicant). Please download the Word version at the following [link](#).

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[1] Template provided on the IMM website (<https://www.goethe.de/ins/gr/de/kul/eup/imm/fsi.html>) and GAP online application form (<https://gap-online.goethe.de/en-US/>).

The application form and all supporting documents (CVs, portfolio, budget) must be submitted in English. Written agreement with a Western Balkan PSM can be submitted in the local language.

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**Note:** Documents confirming the registration of a legal entity (statute, extract from the court register, balance sheet and income statement) can be submitted in the language the documents were originally issued. However, if possible, please submit the registration documents in English.

## **16. If beneficiaries produce content within their projects, who will have the copyrights?**

If during the implementation of project activities beneficiaries produce content that can be broadcasted or used even after the project is completed, beneficiaries will adhere to the procedures specified in the grant contract in accordance with the award of EU funds. This means that the content produced during project execution and financed in whole or in part under this Programme will have a shared copyright between the beneficiary and the Goethe-Institut.

## **17. Are beneficiaries allowed to hire individuals/legal entities outside of their country of establishment?**

Since within this type of grants applicants can apply for project activities implemented on the regional level, hiring individuals and/or legal entities outside the country of establishment. These expenses can be paid through individual service contract, or through a contract with a company which will be engaged within the project. These expenses have to be explained in the budget narrative, why these experts are needed for the implementation of project activities and how these experts will contribute to the quality production of the media content.

## **18. Are the costs for equipment eligible?**

Costs for rent of equipment are eligible within this grant scheme and have to be directly connected to the implementation of project activities. Purchase of equipment is not an eligible cost within this grant scheme.

## **19. Is it acceptable if applicants do not strictly adhere to the topics mentioned in the guidelines?**

The topics proposed in the guidelines are not the only ones that can be addressed in the project. However, it is important that the topic aligns with the Programme's and call's objectives, as well as that the topic is relevant for the Western Balkans region.

## **20. What kind of travel costs are eligible? Can we plan costs for airplane tickets?**

Yes, these costs are acceptable if they are justified and related to the activities. It is not recommended to include taxi costs, which are only eligible in exceptional cases where public transport is not available.

## **21. Can we rent a car for the purpose of implementing activities?**

Yes, that is an eligible cost. However, you need to justify this expense, for example, if you do not have an official vehicle necessary for fieldwork and it is directly connected to the implementation of project activities.

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## **22. Is it possible to start the project after January 1, 2025?**

You can begin the implementation of the project when it is suitable for your media outlet. The latest possible end date for the project is January 31, 2026.

## **23. Is it possible to plan office costs in the budget?**

It is not recommended to plan these kinds of costs, as the goal of production grants is to support production costs during the creation of materials that will be broadcasted later. Office costs must be related to project activities, and you should explain why these costs are necessary.

## **24. Is it possible to plan costs for consultants who are employees of public media service broadcasters?**

Fees for employees of public service media broadcasters are not an eligible cost within Innovation. Media. Minds Programme, as well as any kind of other expenses paid to public service media or employees of public service media broadcasters.

## **25. Is there a template for the document that needs to be signed by PSM?**

No, there is no template. Each PSM has its own administrative procedures. Therefore, it is up to the applicant (the media) and public service broadcaster to agree on a template/type of document. The key requirement is that the document includes information about the project the applicant wishes to apply for (topic of the media content and format of the media content) and that the media content produced will be jointly broadcasted by the applicant and public service media broadcaster.

## **26. Is there a specific percentage of the budget for items like staff or travel expenses that should be taken into account?**

No, there is no set percentage of the budget that needs to be allocated to specific budget items such as human resources or travel expenses.

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