EU support to the Confidence Building in the Western Balkans

**Guidelines for submitting project proposals to the first public call for civil society organizations**

14 June 2023

The purpose of the Guidelines is to inform interested civil society organizations and associations about the process of submitting project proposals to the Public Call for Civil Society Organizations to submit project proposals, as part of the “EU support to the Confidence Building in the Western Balkans" project.

The regional project “EU Support to Confidence Building in the Western Balkans” is financed by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The project implementation began on January 1st, 2023, and will last for four years. The project provides expertise and support to the judiciary and law enforcement agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Kosovo.[[1]](#footnote-1) More specifically, in the Republic of North Macedonia, the project focuses on strengthening the capacities of the judicial authorities and on awareness-raising activities for dealing with conflicts legacy and promoting reconciliation through the re-granting of civil society organizations.

Overall, all interventions aim to improve dialogue within societies and between ethnic groups in relation to past conflicts, driven by the vision of achieving sustainable peace in the region and creating more resilient societies and robust social cohesion.

In North Macedonia, fostering inter-ethnic and inter-community dialogue continues to be a crucial matter, which is compounded by the challenges confronting the country and its society within the broader regional context. Even though inter-ethnic relations remain stable, the Ohrid Framework Agreement continues to be implemented, and the government has a positive approach to regional cooperation and good neighborly relations, there is still a need to increase trust and bring communities from different backgrounds closer together.

Therefore, in North Macedonia, the project will collaborate with grassroots actors to raise public awareness, including fostering dialogue and exchanges amongst a wide range of stakeholders, especially youth and future opinion leaders to contribute to building trust through public advocacy and activism to promote reconciliation, inter-ethnic dialogue, and dialogue about the past.

The project also effectively includes a gender component, through the systemic application of a gender perspective and gender-responsive justice and rights-based services in the design and implementation of activities and policies.

## REGRANTING MECHANISM

The re-granting mechanism is implemented through a competitive and open call for project proposals. The objectives of the re-granting mechanism are:

* dealing with conflict relapse and promoting reconciliation (e.g., inter-societal and inter-generational dialogue, transitional justice education, youth engagement),
* improving public awareness of past conflicts,
* conducting and publishing research (among other things, documenting crimes, loss of human life, positive examples of inter-ethnic solidarity),
* public advocacy,
* research on history and teaching, development, and implementation of pilot curricula for transitional justice and confidence building.

## DURATION AND BUDGET OF THE PROJECT

Financial resources to support the re-granting mechanism amount to EUR 1,200,000 and will be distributed among the five (5) participating jurisdictions based on the final decision of a regional Selection Committee and in accordance with the project documentation.

Financial resources to support the re-granting mechanism for the Republic of North Macedonia amount to EUR 57,400.00 euros and will be distributed based on the final decision of a regional Selection Committee and in accordance with the project documentation.

**Duration of the proposed project**: Minimum four (4) months, maximum twenty-four (24) months.

**Deadline for the application process**: 12 July, 2023, Wednesday, until 5:00 p.m.

**The minimum amount per grant is EUR 5,000**

**The maximum amount per grant is EUR 20,000**

Note: Each grant can be awarded to a project implemented by one entity that meets the project conditions, or by two or more entities (consortium) that meet the project conditions; if the second option is chosen, only one entity is the lead applicant (lead organization), and if selected, that entity shall sign a Low Value Grant agreement with UNDP North Macedonia and shall then be responsible for the implementation before the donor.

## CANDIDATES WHO MEET THE PROJECT REQUIREMENTS (ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES)

Eligible candidates for receiving grants are:

* civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations registered in the appropriate legal form in the Republic of North Macedonia, which work on the promotion and protection of transitional justice, human rights and social dialogue; non-governmental sports associations and clubs may also be eligible, in combination with the other criteria listed above;
* non-governmental academic or educational institutions;
* non-governmental organizations focused on promoting cultural development;
* civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations that have proven experience in working with young people, especially on topics related to reconciliation, inter-ethnic dialogue, conflicts and conflict resolution, legal aspects of conflicts and the consequences of (armed) conflicts;
* civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations that have proven experience in implementing projects, writing analyses/papers or organizing dialogues about the armed conflict in North Macedonia from 2001.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

Organizations selected for re-granting should be particularly focused on promoting **activities and results in the following areas**:

* Public debates, media campaigns, including social media, and other public outreach activities to promote fact-based dealing with the past;
* National/regional research, academic exchange and internship programs for social science researchers focusing on transitional justice, the promotion of inter-ethnic relations and solidarity;
* Developing and/or piloting new university curricula for transitional justice and peace studies that include gender aspects, with an emphasis on the context of the region;
* Promoting various forms of inter-societal and inter-ethnic dialogue, especially youth dialogue and youth engagement, to overcome the legacy of the past and promote reconciliation and closer inter-ethnic relations;
* Promoting dialogue about the legacy of the past that includes gender aspects with feminist approaches to reconciliation;
* Strengthening or building sustainable partnerships between civil society (including spontaneous initiatives) and institutions – at national or local/municipal level – aimed at promoting inter-ethnic reconciliation and fact-based remembrance (remembering) as well as dialogue about the past;
* Supporting artists and cultural actors and promoting artistic activism in dealing with the legacy of the past and promoting reconciliation.

The selection of the project proposal will be made based on, among others:

* the estimated impact of the project proposal on raising public awareness for the promotion of inter-ethnic dialogue and reconciliation,
* the potential of the proposed project to contribute to systemic changes,
* sustainability of the intervention,
* expected costs (cost-effectiveness).

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|  | Criteria | Value | Maximum points |
| 1 | Qualifications and experience of the lead candidate and partners | 40% | 400 |
| 2 | Relevance of the project proposal, methodology, approach and implementation plan | 40% | 400 |
| 3 | Sustainability of the project proposal | 10% | 100 |
| 4 | Economy and relevance of the budget | 10% | 100 |
|  | Total | 100% | 1000 |

Within the selection criteria, additional weight will be given to project proposals that:

* have an impact on capacity building and sustainability in the development of local self-started initiatives and organizations;
* involve authorities and institutions, inter alia at local/municipal level as partners in promoting gender mainstreaming and inclusive inter-ethnic remembrance and fact-based dialogue about the past;
* include significant inter-ethnic partnerships (at national and regional level);
* promote the education and rise of young leaders (in public opinion shaping, professionals, in politics, etc.) in transitional justice and reconciliation that include the gender component;
* promote the role of women as emerging professionals and leaders in the field of transitional justice and reconciliation;
* serve to develop and test innovative approaches that include the gender component in the mechanism of truth-telling in transitional justice and advocate for accountability for war crimes and reconciliation.

## INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT

The selected organization will sign a Low Value Grant Agreement with UNDP North Macedonia.

Submission of applications in partnership by two or more civil society organizations or other institutions at the central or local level is encouraged. In such cases, the lead applicant must be identified and a partnership agreement between the organizations submitted. The partner organization can use part of the project funds and carry out related activities, while the lead organization (the lead applicant) signs an agreement with UNDP and bears responsibility for the implementation, quality assurance and reporting of the overall project. In this case, the roles and responsibilities of the partner organization should be clearly stated in the project proposal, including the action plan and budget.

Selected civil society organizations provide regular narrative and financial reports in accordance with UNDP guidelines and requirements, based on the budget and action plan.

## APPLICATION PACKAGE

**Mandatory project documentation** for civil society organization candidates must contain the following:

**Annex 1 Project proposal**

**Annex 2** **Budget breakdown**

**Annex 3 Declaration of (absence of) Double Funding**

**Annex 4 Declaration of Partnership (if applicable)**

Additional documentation for applicants must include the following:

* Copy of a valid certificate of registration of the entity/organization (leading organization /applicant and project partners, if any);
* Copy of the statute of the organization (leading organization and partners);
* Copy of the final annual financial report for the previous 3 years (balance sheet and income statement for 2020, 2021 and 2022) approved by the steering committee of the lead candidate, unless the organization was established in the current year (lead organization);
* Copy of the organization's annual narrative report for the previous year (lead organization);
* Copies of the employment contracts of the core project team contracted for the implementation of the project or Letters of Intent signed by the individuals who would be contracted if the proposal is approved and their biographies (CVs);
* A certificate or confirmation by the CSO stating that they have no outstanding tax and contribution obligations up to the month prior to the publication of the Public Call, i.e. the submission of the application (certificate is issued by the relevant tax authority) (leading organization and project partners).

## SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION PACKAGE

All required documents should be submitted to the following email address: **maja.stojanoska@undp.org****. This email address is the only address to which applications and all inquiries regarding the Call for Proposals should be submitted.**

The subject of the e-mail, which contains the application package as an attachment, should read “EU support to the Confidence Building in the Western Balkans: Project proposal of the first Public Call for Civil Society Organizations in 2023.”

The deadline for submitting applications is **12 July 2023**. In case the applicant fails to submit part of the documentation, the UNDP office in North Macedonia shall contact them to submit the necessary documents within **a maximum of five working days**.

All candidates who submitted applications to the Call, and who are accepted or rejected, will be notified in writing of the decision regarding their project proposal. The results will be published on: [www.undp.org/north-macedonia](http://www.undp.org/north-macedonia).

## SELECTION AND EVALUATION PROCESS

Grant applications will be submitted to each of the participating UNDP offices in the region, based on the territory where the applicant or lead applicant, in the case of a consortium, is registered. In the case of North Macedonia, applications are submitted to the UNDP Office in the Republic of North Macedonia in Macedonian language.

The initial selection of the applications is carried out by the Local Selection Committee established at the level of the UNDP Office in the Republic of North Macedonia. The final selection is made by the regional Selection Committee, in which each UNDP office involved in the project is represented by its own representative, based on the principle of compliance with the selection criteria and quality. In case of proposals of equal quality, the regional Selection Committee may also take into account the criteria of fair distribution and representation among the proposals nominated by the UNDP offices. UNDP ensures that there is no conflict of interest among any of the members of the selection committees at the local and regional level.

The evaluation consists of two types of verification – administrative verification and verification of the project proposal.

## ADMINISTRATIVE VERIFICATION

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Terms/Documents  | Yes | No |
| 1. | The application package has been submitted within the prescribed period  |   |   |
| 2.  | Mandatory documentation is submitted in the prescribed forms  |   |   |
| 3. | The proposed budget is in accordance with the public call (5,000-20,000 EUR) |   |   |
| 4.  | Copy (Sample) of a valid certificate of registration of the subject/organization (for the project owner/main candidate and project partners, if any); |   |   |
| 5. | Copy of the statute of the organization (lead organization and project partners); |  |  |
| 6. | A copy of the final annual financial statement for the previous 3 years (balance sheet and income statement for 2020, 2021 and 2022) approved by the steering committee of the lead applicant, unless the organization was established in the current year (lead organization); |   |   |
| 7. | Copy of the organization's annual narrative report for the previous year (lead organization); |   |   |
| 8. | Copies of the employment contracts of the core project team contracted for the implementation of the project or Letters of Intent signed by the individuals who would be contracted if the proposal is approved and their biographies (CVs); |   |  |
| 9.  | Signed declaration of (absence of) double funding |  |  |
| 10. | Signed Declaration of Partnership (if applicable) |  |  |

Reasons for disqualification:

* If the civil organization submitted incomplete documentation even after the request for submission of missing documentation
* If the civil organization submitted incorrect information
* If the civil organization tries to collect confidential information, influence the evaluation commission or UNDP during the evaluation process.

## EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT PROPOSAL

The assessment of the quality of the project, including the proposed budget, will be carried out in accordance with the criteria established in the Table of Evaluation, which is an integral part of this document. The Table of Evaluation consists of 4 parts, each of which carries a certain number of points. The maximum number of points an applicant can receive is 1000. Each member of the Local Selection Committee signs an individual table, and all members sign a collective Table of Evaluation for each proposed project. The ranking of project proposals is done in such a way that the one with the most total points is ranked first. After the Local Selection Committee makes a decision, it sends the project proposals to the Regional Selection Committee for final selection.

**TABLE OF EVALUATION**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Value** | **Maximum points** |
| 1 | **QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF LEAD CANDIDATE AND PARTNERS** | 40% | 400 |
| 1.1 | The lead candidate has experience in project management:1. 1-2 years of project management experience – **40 points**
2. 3-4 years of project management experience – **75 points**
3. More than 5 years of project management experience – **100 points**
 | 10% | 100 |
| 1.2 | There is a clear record of the lead applicant's previous experience in areas related to the (sub)objectives and criteria of the Call for Project-Proposals (PP):1. **Low level of previous experience** (1 project relevant to the PP topics carried out in the past 3 years) – **40 points**
2. **moderate level of previous experience** (2 projects relevant to the PP topics carried out in the past 3 years) – **75 points**
3. **high level of previous experience** (more than 3 projects relevant to the topics in PP carried out in the past 3 years) – **100 points**
 | 10% | 100 |
| 1.3 | Number and qualifications of persons employed in, or contracted by, the organization that will implement the project:1. 2-3 qualified persons – **40 points**
2. 4-5 qualified persons – **75 points**
3. 6 and more than 6 qualified persons – **100 points**

\* Qualifications will be measured based on the contracts and CVs of the project team | 10% | 100 |
| 1.4 | The annual turnover of the main candidate for the last three years is:1. 10.000 EUR - 15.000 EUR – **40 points**
2. 15.001 EUR - 20.000 EUR – **60 points**
3. More than 20.001 EUR – **80 points**
 | 8% | 80 |
| 1.5 | Relevance of the partners involved in the project (civil organizations are encouraged to cooperate with other civil organizations):1. A new partnership has been established for this Call for Proposals - **5 points**
2. Partners who have been implementing similar projects for more than 2 years – **10 points**
3. Partners who have been implementing similar projects for more than 4 years – **15 points**
4. Partners who have been implementing similar projects for more than 6 years – **20 points**
 | 2% | 20 |
| **2** | **RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT PROPOSAL, METHODOLOGY, APPROACH AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN** | **40%** | **400** |
| 2.1 | The proposed approach and strategy for achieving the project results are solid and correspond to the PP:1. somewhat correspond - **40 points**
2. mostly correspond – **75 points**
3. fully correspond – **100 points**
 | 10% | 100 |
| 2.2 | The proposed activities clearly contribute to the expected results in accordance with the analysis of the problem and the purpose of the PP:1. somewhat contribute – **40 points**
2. mostly contribute – **75 points**
3. fully contribute – **100 points**
 | 10% | 100 |
| 2.3 | Risk management and monitoring plans are clearly defined and linked to expected results:1. somewhat clearly defined – **10 points**
2. mostly clearly defined – **30 points**
3. fully clearly defined – **50 points**
 | 5% | 50 |
| 2.4 | The proposed objectives and activities clearly include the perspective of gender equality:1. somewhat include – **40 points**
2. mostly include – **75 points**
3. fully include – **100 points**
 | 10% | 100 |
| 2.5 | Additional weight is given to project proposals with the possibility of creating systemic changes. The project proposals should:* to have an impact on capacity building and sustainability in the development of local self-started initiatives and organizations
* to involve authorities and institutions, inter alia at local/municipal level as partners in promoting gender mainstreaming and inclusive inter-ethnic memory and fact-based dialogue about the past
* to include significant inter-ethnic partnerships (at the national and regional level)
* to promote the education and the rise of young leaders (in shaping public opinion, professionals, in politics, etc.) in transitional justice and reconciliation that include the gender component
* to promote the role of women as emerging professionals and leaders in the field of transitional justice and reconciliation
* serve to develop and test innovative approaches that include the gender component in the mechanism of truth-telling in transitional justice and advocate for accountability for war crimes and reconciliation

Up to 3 criteria – **25 points**3 to 6, including 6 criteria – **50 points** | 5% | 50 |
| **3** | **SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT** | **10%** | **100** |
|  | The expected results of the project are sustainable:1. somewhat sustainable – **30 points**
2. mostly sustainable – **75 points**
3. fully sustainable – **100 points**
 | 10% | 100 |
| **4** | **ECONOMY AND RELEVANCE OF THE BUDGET** | **10%** | **100** |
|  | The proposed budget is economical, relevant and realistically achievable:1. somewhat realistic – **40 points**
2. mostly realistic – **70 points**
3. fully realistic - **100 points**
 | 10% | 100 |
| **Total** | **100%** | **1000** |

## PARTNERSHIPS

Candidates can apply independently or in partnership with other civil society organizations. Тhe same applicant can be the leading organization in a maximum of one project and at the same time a partner organization in another project, with an assessment of the human and technical capacities to implement the proposed project activities of the Public Call.

The partnership between the project partners is regulated by the Declaration of Partnership (Annex 4), which is an integral part of the project application. The attached form of the Declaration of Partnership is not mandatory, but the Declaration must contain information about all partners involved in the implementation of the project, as well as a clear description of the nature of the partnership, as well as the obligations of the partner organization and the mutual relationship between the organizations. The partners of the leading organization participate in the creation and implementation of the project, in such a way that they can implement certain project activities. In that case, the partner organization can also be the beneficiary of the financial resources of the project, according to the Declaration of Partnership. In that case, the lead NGO is responsible for transferring part of the funds to the partner organization. Also, the leading organization is responsible to the donor for the total amount of financial resources and the realization of all activities, including those activities and resources realized by the civil organization that is a partner in the project. During the execution of the activities, all the rules for the implementation of the project apply equally to the leading and partner organizations.

Collaborators are those organizations and institutions that contribute to the realization of the project activities, but the project funds for the realization of the project activities, awarded with this Public Call, cannot be transferred to the collaborators.

1. For the European Union, this designation does not contradict the positions on the status and is in accordance with the Resolution 1244/1999 of the Security Council of the UN and the opinion of the ICJ on the declaration of independence of Kosovo. For UNDP, all references to Kosovo are understood in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)