

INNOVATION. MEDIA. MINDS.

EU SUPPORT TO PUBLIC
SERVICE JOURNALISM
IN WESTERN BALKANS

#EU4MediaMindsWB

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Questions and answers _ Grants for independent investigative 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 organizational 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 investigative media/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.

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3. Who can apply?

Eligible applicants are legal entities that:

- Operate as an investigative media/media organisations with legal bodies established in one of the following IPA beneficiaries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia;
- Independent media outlets registered for at least 3 years;
- Have a signed official document (contract/agreement/statement) with at least one of the Western Balkan PSM that signed a memorandum of understanding with 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 (social media, websites, YouTube). (Please refer to Guidelines, section 2.1.).

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

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.

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 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/>

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2. Access the application form for Innovation project grants using the following link: <https://portal.gap.goethe.de/en-US/>.
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), catering (only if directly linked to the media content production activities), human resources costs for employees of the independent media outlets/organisations,
- Lump sums for travel, accommodation/per diems directly connected to production of media content,
- Costs for new productions such as fees for freelance contracts (filming team), materials for filming,
- Lump sums for travel, accommodation/per diems directly connected to production of media content,
- Expenses for additional technical support such as rent of equipment including new and innovative technical solutions to improve value for money and effective programming, content production, translation/interpretation costs, costs for adaptation of media content for persons with disabilities, etc.

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 cost. Please refer to Guidelines section 2.2. *Eligible and ineligible expenditures and principles of funding*.

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

The applications that pass the formal and eligibility assessment will be further evaluated by the selection committee. Members of the selection committee will be

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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**. In the second call, the IMM Programme plans to award at least **two (2) grants**. Upon availability of more funds, the IMM Programme reserves the right to award additional grants.

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 for independent investigative media 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.-1.1.7. *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

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the beneficiary but will contribute to an easier reporting and monitoring of expenses during implementation period.

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 Grants for independent investigative 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;
- Financial statements for the last two fiscal years;
- Any official document 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 (**mandatory**). Project proposals having formal agreements with more than one Western Balkan PSM will have an advantage.

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

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.

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17. If the applicant reaches an agreement with a PSM to have a joint production team, should PSM's media professionals be included in the budget?

Human resources costs are eligible just for the applicant (independent media outlet or media organization) and not for the PSM's team. Applicants can hire freelancers but these freelancers cannot be PSM's employees. PSM's team's accommodation and travel expenses are eligible expenses within this grant scheme.

18. Goethe-Institut's policies favor public transportation and have very low limit on gas cost for using cars. How are production crews expected to travel with all the filming and other equipment by public transport? Can applicants budget travel expenses for gas costs?

Using a company car or renting a vehicle are eligible costs. Applicants need to explain it in the narrative budget description why public transportation is not possible.

19. Can a lead applicant be an independent TV from Serbia, and the project partner a smaller media house from Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Yes, this kind of application is acceptable. Lead applicants can have partner applicants from any country in the Western Balkans region.

20. Does IMM Programme has a policy to consider geographical representation within the grant awarding process, in order to distribute the funds evenly around the Western Balkans region?

For each grant type, the IMM Programme has a policy for geographical distribution of funds. However, geographical representation is not the only deciding criterion in the evaluation and selection process. The most important is the quality of the project proposal, topic(s), and cooperation with at least one PSM. If we do not have applicants from all Western Balkan countries or if the main criteria are not fulfilled, in this case, IMM Programme will award grants to project proposals fulfilling all of these criteria, i.e., awarding grants to the best evaluated project proposals.

21. What are the visibility requirements for the produced media content?

All visibility requirements are stipulated in the Communications and Visibility Guidelines available on the IMM website and GAP. All three IMM logos have to be used in the content and the logo of the applicant, as well as appropriate disclaimer (depending on the media content type).