

Mobility grant scheme

Guidelines for applicants

Deadline for submission of full application:

18th April 2023

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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. In this document these geographical names are also used as abbreviations for the constitutional names of the Western Balkans Fund (WBF) Contracting Parties. 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 ultimate goal of eventually joining the European Union.

The establishment of the Western Balkans Fund (WBF) has marked a new era of cooperation in the WB6 region at the highest institutional level. The Agreement for the creation of WBF, signed on Contracting Parties' behalf by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in November 2015, became operational in October 2017. To date, as part of the WBF activities, five calls for proposals have been launched and four of them have been successfully implemented in the region. These Guidelines pertain to a new Call for Proposal under a new grant mechanism, the WBF MOVE Grants.

The WBF annual grant-making practice has been very successful, but it has also shown how the demand for regional cooperation vastly exceeds the funding opportunities provided by the Fund. Through the diversification of its grant-making, **WBF aims to fill some of these gaps and meet more of the growing appetite for people-to-people links, by providing additional opportunities for funding beyond the annual calls**. This will enable the Fund 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.

WBF MOVE Grants provides meaningful and consistent access to tailored support programs to civil society and other relevant actors who engage in regional collaboration, to strengthen the regional social infrastructure for the people-to-people cooperation and advance regional interdependence, thus contributing to reconciliation, peace, and stability in the Western Balkans. This objective is backed by the Fund's theory of change and is rooted in the belief that through direct support to a broad variety of stakeholders and a variety of tools, the Fund creates and mobilizes both the capacity and the demand for closer regional cooperation and partnership.

Considering that **WBF MOVE Grants are complementary to annual calls**, more accessible to actors' needs, **it will be positioned as a grant mechanism which will be running three times per year, creating a timely structure that helps all eligible actors to plan their activities and apply when support is needed**.

Mobility Grant Scheme Mechanism is one of the WBF MOVE Grants instruments which will focus on supporting one-time, ad-hoc or short-term exchanges and mobility initiatives in the WB6 region. This scheme is open to individuals and organizations from various sectors including civil, public, and private, with an emphasis on people-to-people interactions.

These guidelines are intended to inform potential applicants about the rules of the Mobility Grant scheme and guide them through the process of preparing and submitting their projects.

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 of independence

1.2. Objectives and areas of intervention

WBF launches the MOVE Grants with the goal to support and promote the mutual cultural practice on regional cooperation. Mobility of different actors in the region will increase direct participation, exchange, and regional cooperation. The key element that brings to life WBF MOVE Grants is the financial support for short-term mobility in the WB6 region (between at least two Contracting Parties), thereby increasing opportunities and access to support the needs and potential of various actors in the region.

The **priority areas** for this Call for Proposal are:

- Arts & Culture
- Education & Scientific exchange
- Media
- Environmental protection & Climate change
- 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 also **mainstream cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, social inclusion, non-discrimination, and the overall promotion of human rights**. It is important to note that mainstreaming cross-cutting issues will be considered in the evaluation methodology of this Call for Proposals, as outlined in Section 2.3.

1.3. Financial allocation provided by the Contracting Authority

The overall budget available for the MOVE Grant scheme for 2023 is EUR 210,000² which will be allocated for Mobility and Matching grants. The Contracting Authority, reserves the right to not award all of the funds or cancel the grant if the quality or number of proposals received is not sufficient.

The grants will be balanced in terms of distribution among the six Western Balkans Contracting Parties.

Size of grants

The WBF would 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:

For individuals up to EUR 5,000.

For organizations up to EUR 10,000.

1.4. Target groups

The target group for the Mobility Grant scheme includes organizations and individuals from various sectors such as:

- Civil society organizations (CSOs)
- Media, educational and academic institutions

² The total amount may be subject to changes depending on availability of funds and good quality of project proposals.

- Artistic, cultural and sports organizations
- Individual CSO activists, journalists, educators, academic researchers, artists, musicians, sportsmen/women, entrepreneurs, and digital services professionals (software development, graphic design, social media community management, etc.)

2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

2.1. Eligibility criteria

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

(1) The actors:

- The “**individual applicant**”, the natural person submitting the application form (2.1.1.)
- The “**lead applicant**”, the legal entity submitting the application form (2.1.1),
- The “**co-applicants**” (where it is not specified otherwise the lead applicant and its co-applicants are hereinafter jointly referred as ‘applicants’) (2.1.1).

(2) The actions:

- Actions for which a grant may be awarded (2.1.2).

(3) The costs:

- Types of costs that may be taken into account in determining the amount of the grant (2.1.3).

The eligibility of project proposals will be evaluated against the criteria outlined in the guidelines.

2.1.1. Eligibility of applicants

Individual applicant

In order to be eligible for a grant as an individual applicant, the person must:

- 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 WBF³.

Lead applicant

In order to be eligible for a grant as a lead applicant, the organization must:

- be a legal person, **and**
- be established in one or more of the following Contracting Parties of the WBF (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia), **and**

³ The applicant should be employed or engaged in a public or non-public organisation/entity. If shortlisted for a grant the applicant should provide a certificate that is employed or engaged in a public or non-public organisation/entity.

- be a non-profit organization; applications from for-profit organizations could be considered only if they are not related to commercial activities, **and**
- be a specific type of organisation from one of the following types of organizations:
 - A civil society Organization⁴ (CSO/NGO)⁵ active in areas such as human rights, peacebuilding, youth, environmental protection, media literacy, and grassroots civic activism;
 - An educational institution such as university/faculty⁶, school, institute, library, research centre, academy of science/music/arts;
 - Media outlets and journalists' associations;
 - An institution of culture or sports such as museums, art galleries, theatres, libraries, or associations of cultural institutions, sport clubs and associations, etc.;
 - A business association such as: association of enterprises, agriculture association, chamber of commerce, tourism association, etc.

The above list is not exhaustive, other type of institutions may be considered eligible, as long as they meet the first three criteria specified above.

- Directly responsible for the preparation and management of the project and the relevant activities in collaboration with the project co-applicants (if any, also defined in this document as project partners), and not acting as an intermediary.
- Not to be in any of the exclusion situations, listed below:

Exclusion situations

Potential applicants may not be able to apply for these grants or receive funding if:

For individual applicants

- They have a criminal record.
- They are not citizens of one of the WBF Contracting Parties.

For organizational applicants

- They are bankrupt or having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, or have suspended/stopped business operations.
- They are not in compliance with their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions and/or any taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the Contracting Party in which they are established.
- They are not following the legal requirements for paying social security contributions

⁴ Clarification: An organisation's must be established under the national law and its seat is located in one of WBF contracting parties;

⁵ It should be noted that the operational activity of the CSO is not limited and organizations that have been operational for less than two years can apply, as long as they have a good track record.

⁶ Privately owned universities can also apply for this funding opportunity, but their projects should not be for the purpose of generating profit. Universities can also apply on the level of faculties.

and/or taxes in the Contracting Party where they are based.

- They, or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them, have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization, money laundering or any other illegal activity.
- They are directly involved in political campaigning.
- They only serve religious purposes.

In Annexes – C1 (Declaration by the Lead Applicant), or C2 (Declaration by the Individual Applicant), the applicant must declare that the Individual and/or Lead Applicant itself, and the co-applicants are not in any of these situations.

The lead applicant may apply with one or more co-applicants. The eligibility criteria outlined above apply to both the lead applicant and the co-applicants.

If awarded the grant contract, the lead applicant will become the grant beneficiary and be identified as the coordinator. The coordinator is the main interlocutor for the Contracting Authority and is responsible for representing and acting on behalf of any other co-beneficiary (if any) and coordinating the design and implementation of the project, as well as reporting.

Partnership

Partnership criteria is not obligatory under this call for proposal since one of the main objectives of mobility is to contribute to establishing new or strengthening existing partnerships, promote people-to-people networks and new synergies.

Individual applicants do not need to enter partnerships with individuals or organisations. However, each individual application with the potential to establish or strengthen partnerships/people-to-people networks between organisations is scored in the evaluation methodology of this Grant Mechanism as formulated in Section 2.3 below.

Organizational applicants may form project partnerships with one or more co-applicants (Project Partners). Partnerships are not mandatory, and organizational applicants may choose to apply alone. However, if they choose to apply in partnerships with organisations from different Contracting Parties, it would be considered an added value.

Co-applicants

Co-applicants (also referred as 'project partners') play a significant role in designing and implementing the project, but they may not incur expenses similar to those incurred by the lead applicant. The lead applicant is responsible for managing the funds and submitting the reports on expenditures.

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

Definition: An action can consist of one or a set of **activities**, with a maximum limit of three activities.

Duration: The duration of the WBF funded project must not **exceed 6 months**. Applicants may apply within the frame of an existing/planned project which last longer, but the WBF funded activity should be limited to 6 months as indicated. The proposed action should be submitted at least three months prior to the

planned start of the project (activity/initiative) which shall be supported from WBF.

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. The inclusion of more than two Contracting Parties will be highly valued during the evaluation process outlined in Section 2.3 of the Grant Mechanism.

The WBF requested fund for mobility cannot be used for complementing any other WBF ongoing or funded projects.

This call for proposals can financially support the following types of activities, which is not an exhaustive list:

- Academic or educational mobility, including cultural residencies, exchanges among professionals (such as journalists), internships, and learning opportunities in another Contracting Party, and study visits.
- Mobility grants, which aim to provide people and organizations from the WB6 region access to opportunities to interact with peers from other Contracting Parties.

Types of activities. The possible types of indicative activities that may be financed under this call include:

- Learning or professional internship;
- Cultural and artistic residencies;
- Presentations of papers, studies, research work, articles, documentaries, films, books, other creative artistic and cultural works, and best practices in regional activities;
- Exchange visits for sharing practices;
- Study Visits
- Representation in festivals, concerts and other cultural or artistic events;
- Summer or winter professional, educational or sports camps;
- Capacity building activities, such as trainings, formation courses and academies;
- Representation in championships, marathons, or other activities that promote sports, science, or education (not for national representatives);
- Representation in fairs and promotional activities for regional originated products or services;
- Establishment or strengthening of partnerships with regional relevance.

In more specific thematic terms, activities might be conceptualized along the lines of following examples (list is not exhaustive):

Arts & Culture

- Cultural & Artistic Residencies – to support mutual cultural practice of those working in the arts. The grants are for artists and arts managers from the region to jointly create new artistic works or texts aiming to create opportunities for regional and international cultural exchange and professional connections;
- Participation of artists and representatives of the cultural institutions in peer exchange events to strengthen existing and/or establish new partnerships.
- Participation of musicians and artists at regional festivals and similar events.

Education and scientific exchange

- Academic Research and Residencies: dedicated to academic and/or professional's exchanges, internships with academic/scientific institutions, visits to the archives and other mobility initiatives focused on academic research through collaborative efforts with peers and youth summer/winter camps;
- Participation of academic researchers and representatives of educational institutions in peer exchange events to establish partnerships, discuss joint initiatives and future cooperation projects (at least between two Contracting Parties).

Media

- Support to journalists to cover regional topics, exchange good practices and share experience with their colleagues from other Contracting Parties;
- Participation of representatives of media associations, artists, and representatives of cultural institutions in peer exchange events, intended to discuss joint initiatives and future cooperation projects (at least between two Contracting Parties), as well as the joint problems journalists are facing in WB6 region.

Environmental protection & Climate change

- Participation of environmental protection professionals from the academic sector in peer-exchange events, study visits, etc.
- Participation of Civil Society Organizations/environmental activists in environmental events, regional grassroots gatherings, exchange visits, environmental awareness raising events and protected areas in the region.

Economic development & digital innovations

- Supporting participation of representatives of civil society, social enterprises, youth, and grassroots initiatives, as well as representatives of business support associations at regional events, intended to facilitate the exchange of good practices and establishment of partnerships such as Start-ups/Venture forums, Innovation Fairs, etc.
- Study visits of representatives of business support associations to recognized regional centres of excellence with a focus on business innovations, especially in regard to the environment-friendly technologies.

Peacebuilding

- Participation of representatives of organizations in regional events dedicated to peace education, reconciliation, and regional cooperation;
- Study visits of school representatives to their regional counterparts, focusing on curriculums and learning practices concerning shared objectives (e.g., history teaching, intercultural understanding, environmental awareness).

Sports

- Participation only in regional sport events (Competitions, championships, exchange activities);
- Exchange of best practices to increase awareness on a healthy and active lifestyle.

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.

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

Visibility: Every action must include at least one public outreach activity, which would aim to engage all project beneficiaries, and promote the results of the action 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 action (e.g., poster, essay, theatrical performance, social and traditional media content, research brief, testimonials of participants in the form of a blog).

Number of applications and grants that could be awarded to lead applicant and co-applicants

Individuals and organizations may submit one application per each call for proposals. The lead applicant may only be a co-applicant in another application at the same time and may only be awarded one grant under the call for proposals for 2023.

A co-applicant may only be a co-applicant in two applications under this call for proposals and can only benefit a maximum of one grant. If these requirements are not met, the application(s) will be rejected.

2.1.3. Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included
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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, in particular 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'.

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 have to be eligible costs, and **ONLY** the costs presented in the budget will be considered for financing. Detailed project costs together with financing sources have to 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;
- Allowances costs;
- Bank charges;
- Fee for participation.

It is important to note that eligible costs must comply with the rules of WBF in regard to financial estimations and maximum cost ceilings as indicated in the budget form (Annex B) of the application.

Contingency reserve

The budget may include a contingency reserve not exceeding 7% of the estimated direct eligible costs. It can only be used with the **prior written authorisation** of the contracting authority.

Ineligible costs

The following costs cannot be covered by the Mobility grant:

- Staff costs.
- Rent of premises and related technical services.
- Translations costs.
- Printing materials or any other visibility material produced during the action.
- Depreciation, rental, or leasing costs for equipment (new or used) and supplies specifically dedicated to the purposes of the action.
- Costs of services and supplies awarded by the beneficiary(ies) for the purposes of the action.
- Cost of work conducted by volunteers.
- Project office costs.
- Costs incurred for Applicant's activities undertaken before signature of the grant contract.
- Tangible and intangible assets (e.g., purchase of certain equipment or property).
- Beneficiary's own indirect costs (e.g. utilities, central telephone bills).
- Beneficiary internal costs (rent of one's own premises, salaries or financial remuneration of employees, expenses related to employment based on the labour code, including allowances and part-time work, per-diems, performance-based bonuses included in staff costs etc.).
- Debts and debt service charges (interest).
- Provisions for losses or potential future liabilities.
- In kind contributions (except for volunteers' work).
- Costs declared by the beneficiary(ies) and financed by another action or programme receiving a European Union grant.
- Currency exchange losses.
- Credit to third parties.
- Beneficiary's activities aimed at profit making activities.

- Beneficiary's activities those are directly affiliated with or supportive of political parties.
- Fines, financial penalties, and expenses of litigation.

2.2. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

2.2.1. *Where and how to send full applications*

Lead applicants are invited to submit a full application, in the English language, through the use of the Online Grant Management System (OGMS). The OGMS is designed to make the application process easier and user-friendly. The online system will provide detailed information about the annexes which must be uploaded in the system, such as Annex A, B and C.1 or C.2.

A full application includes the following documents:

Annex A. Application form

Annex B. Budget

Annex C.1 – If the Lead applicant is an organization. Declaration by the Lead Applicant signed and stamped.

Annex C.2 – If the applicant is a natural person. Declaration by the Individual Applicant signed.

The full application must be submitted electronically through the designated webpage of the OGMS. Applications sent by any other means, such as fax, mail or email will not be accepted and will be rejected.

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 Lead Applicant must complete. If the confirmation email is not received within 48 hours, the applicant should contact the WBF by email at WBFapplications@westernbalkansfund.org.

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

2.2.2. *Deadline for submission of full applications*

Applications can be submitted three times per year during the specific application periods. The online system will open on the March 15th, June 1st, and October 1st and will remain open for a period of 30 calendar days.

2.2.3. *Additional Information*

Applications that do not meet the eligibility requirements will be automatically rejected by the online system.

2.3. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF PROJECT PROPOSALS

The Mobility Grant Mechanism will open for applications three times a year, on March 15th, June 1st, and October 1st and will remain open for a period of 30 calendar days. The decision on the selected

applications will be announced within 40 days after the application deadline.

Applications will be evaluated by the WBF with the potential assistance of external assessors. The final decision on the awarded projects will be made by the WBF Council of Senior Officials and endorsed by the WBF Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

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 Chapter 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 80 as presented below.

Name of the project:			
Project number:			
Evaluator			
Scoring sections:	Specific Criteria: (up to 5 points per criteria)	Score 1- 5	Justification
Relevance of the project <i>(up to 20 points)</i> <i>(Please refer mainly to the 'Relevance of the project' section, but not limited)</i>	The project effectively addresses a well-defined topic and explains it clearly		
	The project contributes to the objective of the call and addresses at least one of the designated priority areas		
	The project has a clear focus on the region and the potential to establish or enhance regional partnerships for organizational applicants, or foster "people-to people" connections and networking		
	The project is relevant and clearly contributes to the mission and objectives of WBF		
Quality of the project and sustainability <i>(up to 20 points)</i> <i>(Please refer mainly to the 'Description of the project' section, but not limited)</i>	The project' outputs and deliverables are selected and can be linked to specific activities, allowing for easy measurement and verification		
	The project includes specific and clear activities that directly contribute to the achievement of the defined outputs and deliverables		
	Activities are feasible and can be implemented within the timeline proposed in the project		
	The project has mainstreamed cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, social inclusion, non-discrimination, and the overall promotion of human rights		
Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action <i>(up to 10 points)</i>	The budget costs are eligible, essential, feasible and justified.		
	The planned resources are necessary and sufficient to achieve the projected results of the project.		

(Please refer mainly to the 'Budget' form, but not limited)			
Partnership (up to 10 points) (Please refer mainly to the Section 1, 2, 3, 5, but not limited)	The quality and the geographical scope of the project partnership / network contributes to the objectives of the Call and the priorities of WBF.		
	The role/s of project's host entity and/or partners are clear and relevant to the project.		
Follow-up (Sustainability component) of the project (10 points)	The project has the potential to be sustainable and have a continuation at regional level and/or become a good practice/model of cooperation at regional level		
	The project includes follow-up activities that ensures the sharing of the results.		
Visibility (up to 10 points) (Please refer mainly to the 'Visibility and dissemination plan' section, but not limited)	The visibility objectives are specific and achievable.		
	The applicant utilizes a diverse range of visibility and communication tools, channels, and platforms. The proposed visibility plan is of high quality and has the potential for widespread dissemination and a positive impact in the region.		

Applications that received a score less than 50 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:

For individual applicants:

- 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).

For organizations:

- Statute of organisation and the registration certificate of the Lead applicant;
- A copy of the lead applicant's latest financial statement;
- Legal entity sheet (Annex D of these guidelines) duly completed and signed by the lead applicant and (if any) by each co-applicant;
- A copy of any partnership agreement (if any).

The declaration by the lead applicant will be cross-checked with the supporting documents provided by the lead applicant. Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between the declaration by the lead 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 after they have verified the supporting documents.

2.4. NOTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION

2.4.1. Content of the decision

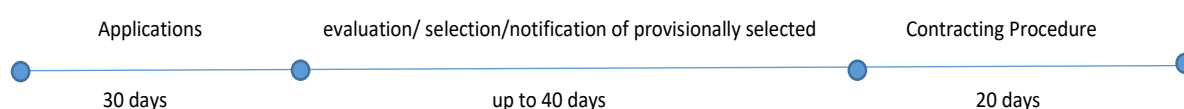
The applicant will be notified in writing, via email, by the Contracting Authority on the decision regarding their application.

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. Complaint should be made via e-mail, and it should provide the arguments related to the contested quality of the evaluation and/or procedural omissions. The Contracting Authority would review the complaint and provide an official response within 10 working days upon receipt of the complaint.

2.4.2. Indicative timetable

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application, whether approved or denied, no later than 40 calendar 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	March 15 th , June 1 st , and October 1 st	Up to 30 calendar days
Evaluation of applications / Selection / Notification of Information provisionally selected applicants	April 15 th , July 1 st , and November 1 st	Up to 40 calendar days
Contracting procedure	May, August, and January	Up to 20 calendar 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/>