WBF closes the Second Call for Regional Project Proposals

On December 13th, the WBF 2nd Call for Regional Project Proposals was officially closed. The first records indicate an estimated number of 250 regional project proposals received. We would like to thank each applicant for the interest, hard work and effort to participate to the WBF call.

Message from the Executive Director of WBF

The end of a year is a good time for reflecting on achievements, and to see what still needs to be accomplished! For all of us, at Western Balkans Fund (WBF) 2018 was a remarkable year, full of exciting tasks, memorable contacts, and beautifully implemented projects and very stimulating ideas for our future work. During this year we celebrated our First Anniversary and successfully conducted the First Call for Regional Projects.

WBF Council of Senior Officials Meeting

On December 19-20, the WBF Council of Senior Officials met in Tirana for the third time this year, to analyze and take stock of the achievements of the initiative during this active period. In this meeting were taken significant decisions aiming to design the Fund’s activities for the upcoming year. Good moment for the WBF Secretariat experts to provide members of the Council with an overview regarding actions and key WBF work strands.

Digital Girl of the Year

“Digital Girls of the Year” is a regional project financed by Western Balkans Fund and implemented by CID Balkans Development, Innovation Centre Kosovo and Estima. The main goal of this project is to increase the participation and open doors for girls and young women to study and work in the digital working environment. It will be accomplished by building capacities and support networks in ICT field for young women in the WB Societies.

WBF Survey on the grant application process!

In order to constantly improve our grant application process, we asked our applicants to spend 5 minutes of their time to answer to our survey. Give it a read on page 7
Message from Mr. Gjergj MURRA, Executive Director of the Western Balkans Fund

Dear Partners, Colleagues and Friends of WBF,

The end of a year is a good time for reflecting on achievements, and to see what still needs to be accomplished!

For all of us, at Western Balkans Fund (WBF) 2018 was a remarkable year, full of exciting tasks, memorable contacts, and beautifully implemented projects and very stimulating ideas for our future work.

During this year we celebrated our First Anniversary and successfully conducted the First Call for Regional Projects, with eighteen projects granted, gathering more than 85 partnerships all over the region.

Continuing on a high note from the previous Call, in November 2018, WBF opened its Second Call. The experience and knowledge gained from the First Call, reflected on successfulness and high turnout of applications received.

Once again, our region has shown great interest to increase cooperation, by creating new partnerships and enhancing trust toward WBF.

We are more than happy to continue working with our applicants in making their vision of cooperation a sustainable reality!

The Western Balkans Fund is fully committed to enhance people-to-people links in our region, as a mean of fostering regional cooperation and good neighborly relations. The work of the WBF is a successful example of values of working together, in open dialogue, to better ensure a collective responsibility towards a greater understanding between communities in our region.

On this occasion, on behalf of WBF Team, I wish to thank all our collaborators, supporters, partners, grantees and our friends. Without your support and encouragement, WBF couldn’t be as successful as it is, for what we would like to express our gratitude for your constructive partnership and wish you a successful New Year!

Best wishes for a happy holiday season and a prosperous New Year 2019!

WBF Team

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WBF closes the Second Call for Regional Project Proposals

On December 13th, the WBF 2nd Call for Regional Project Proposals was officially closed. The first records indicate an estimated number of 250 regional project proposals received. That’s a lot!

Dear applicants and partners:

WBF Secretariat team thanks you for your interest, hard work and efforts to participate on WBF 2nd Call for Regional Project Proposals. Your contribution is a clear sign of a strong will of our region to cooperate towards a better future, based on values of “good neighborly relations”.

For us, You are Regional Cooperation Champions!

Good luck, success and again:

SOME STATISTICS FROM THE WBF SECOND CALL

Allocation per Contracting Party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Tirana</td>
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<td>Belgrade</td>
<td>74</td>
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Allocation of partnerships per Contracting Party

<table>
<thead>
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<th>City</th>
<th>Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Belgrade</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WBF Secretariat Team concluded on December 27th the first assessment phase, eligibility check. We are very impressed by the high quality of applications with very few project proposals that did not fulfill the application criteria.

Looking forward to go deeper into reading your inspiring ideas!
CURIOUS FIGURE REGARDING WBF WEBSITE VISIBILITY

DURING THE OPEN CALL PERIOD WE HAD WEB VISITORS FROM ALMOST ALL CONTINENTS!

WBF EVENTS AND MEETINGS

On December 19-20, the WBF Council of Senior Officials met in Tirana for the third time of the year 2018. This meeting helped WBF to better analyze and to acknowledge achievements during this active period. The meeting was attended by WBF Senior Officials of: Sarajevo, Podgorica, Skopje, Pristina, Belgrade and Tirana. Members of the Council thoroughly discussed about the Fund’s activities for the upcoming year and endorsed significant decisions. During the meeting, WBF experts provided attendees with an overview of the main actions and detailed information regarding the key WBF work strands.

* On December 14th, we had a pleasure to welcome at the WBF Secretariat Premises Mrs. Majlinda Bregu, Secretary General Appointed of Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). During the meeting, the WBF team had an opportunity to learn more about the steps that Mrs. Bregu plans to take as RCC Secretary General together with other regional organizations to foster well informed dialogue.
On December 13th, we welcomed at our premises in his first official visit, Mr. Ilir Melo, Director for the Region and Neighboring Countries at the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania. Representing MEFA Albania, Mr. Melo has recently joined Western Balkans Funds’ as member of Council of Senior Officials. The full support of MEFA Albania to the work of WBF Secretariat was reiterated during the meeting.

Following the WBF Organizational Development Workshop on November, within the framework of WBF Strategic and Organizational Development, on December 10th and 11th, in the premises of WBF Secretariat was held the two-day intensive workshop on WBF Strategic Planning. Aim of this workshop was to “create the institutional memory” of our organization and for better shaping its actions and structures in the future. Grateful to experts from the region that are assisting/guiding us in this process and to PeaceNexus for the opportunity provided. We concluded the series of WBF Strategic and Organizational Development workshops and in a short future the final document will be completed.

Social innovation is one of the significant tools to oppress brain drain and develop globally competitive skills among people of Western Balkans region. On December 4th, Podgorica, the WBF participated and greeted the Upbeat Forum of Social Innovation vol.2, organized by the ADP-Zid Podgorica (a partner of WBF), as leading partner of YouSee! platform for Social Innovation in Western Balkans, in cooperation with SIC Social Innovation.

“Within a short period of time, Western Balkans Fund is becoming an important regional actor on strengthening relations between the WB6 Governments … A new mentality and vision regarding regional cooperation is taking roots in our region”

Western Balkans Fund Executive Director, Dr. Gjergj Murra, interview for Deutsche Welle Albania.

Please click the link below for the full article: https://www.dw.com/sq/popujt-ballkanit-kan%C3%A9-d%C3%A9shir%C3%A9-n%C3%BAt-me

“The best way to fight prejudices in WB is to work hard on knowing better our neighbors… The Fund is building new opportunities towards this goal”

Slovak Daily Newsletter “Pravda”.

Please click the link below for the full article: https://spravy.pravda.sk/svet/clanok/495571-pomoze-fond-podla-vzoru-v4-znicmit-konflikty/
In order to constantly improve our grant application process, we asked our applicants to spend 5 minutes of their time to answer to our survey. Take a look at some of the statistics below!

According to the responses, WBF application guidelines were very clear and well understood by our applicants since 97.37% of them have positively rated the WBF documents for project application.

According to the responses, the WBF Secretariat responding to applicants inquires resulted in great satisfaction, since 75.79% of them were very happy with the information provided.

In the process of implementing WBF Projects of the First Call

In this section, we bring to you some news, activities and photos related to the main project activities

“Digital Girls of the Year” is a regional project financed by Western Balkans Fund and implemented by CID Balkans Development, Innovation Centre Kosovo and Estima. The main goal of this project is to increase the participation and open doors for girls and young women to study and work in the digital working environment. Aiming to build capacities and support networks in ICT field for young women in the economy and society, and to increase employment and self-employment opportunities among young women in innovation digital sector, on 15th of December, as part of the series "Digital Girls of the Year" competitions, Estima organized in Skopje the sequential competition. Following the Skopje event, on December 28th, Innovation Centre Kosovo organized in Pristina one other successful event.

Congratulations to our young girls for their innovative ideas! Confident that in the near future the region will have a cross-region community of well-informed “digital girls”
Projections of activities for the upcoming month

- 8 January - 18 February - Individual Project Proposal Reading
- 2 - 5 March - Panel evaluation
- 6 - 13 March - Writing of the evaluation report
- 14 - 29 March - Council of Senior Officials / Final Decision of the List of Awarded Projects
- 1 April - 22 April - Negotiation/Contracting process & Awarding Ceremony

NOTE: In our web page at the Calendar section you may find the latest information regarding the timing of the concrete activities of WBF projects, as they are updated accordingly.

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- https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLuEaTSASEoaUu4cz5DIvnr

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