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TERMS OF REFERENCE

WBF is seeking to recruit external experts (assessors) to assist in the evaluation of grant applications received in the framework of the 4th Call for Proposal

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Western Balkans Fund (WBF) has been established in the year of 2015 upon the “Agreement for the Establishment of the WBF”, and was signed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of WB6 region. The Fund’s main objective is to boost cooperation between its members, to strengthen relations and regional cohesion, to advance integration into the European Union.

1.1 Mission & objectives

WBF’s mission is to promote:

- The development of closer cooperation between the Western Balkans Fund Contracting Parties
- The strengthening of ties between the Western Balkans Fund Contracting Parties
- The integration of the Contracting Parties into the European Union
- Common presentation of the WBF Contracting Parties to third countries

The objectives contribute to cross border and interregional cooperation and to the strengthening of regional cohesion, in particular in the following areas:

- Promotion and development of cultural cooperation
- Promotion and development of scientific exchanges, research and cooperation in the field of education between the Contracting Parties
- Promotion and development of exchanges between young people
- Promotion of sustainable development of the Contracting Parties

For further information please consult our website at: www.westernbalkansfund.org and our social media channels.

1.2 WBF Call for Proposal

On November 8th 2021, the Western Balkans Fund (WBF) launched the European Union Co-founded 4th Call for proposal, with the overall budget of EUR 400.000, with a maximum amount per project 15. 000 EUR.

The overall objective of the WBF/EU fourth Call for Proposals is to promote participation of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and grassroots organisations, in the Western Balkans, to participate in regional cooperation projects on social, cultural, scientific, and economic topics, including gender equality and disability inclusiveness to enhance good neighborly relations and reconciliation.

2. OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE & EXPECTED RESULTS

2.1 Overall objective

The WBF is looking for External Evaluators for Project proposal evaluation process (hereinafter called “the Experts); to support the WBF internal assessors up to twelve (12) days in the selection of the best proposals under the WBF 4th call for proposal, to achieve a high-quality, complete and coherent selection process of project proposals in line with the criteria set in the guidelines for applicants.



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2.2 Results to be achieved by the contractor

External Evaluators will carry out the technical and financial assessment of the project applications and related annexes, in accordance with the guidelines to be provided by Contracting Authority (WBF) and based on the published evaluation grids. Each project proposal has to be assessed independently by 2 assessors.

3. SCOPE OF THE WORK

3.1 General

External Evaluators will be engaged to carry out detailed examination/evaluation of all those applications that after submission are considered as administratively compliant under the 4th Call for Proposal.

Evaluators must familiarise themselves with the documents related to the call for proposal. The information below refers to certain key points, but does not substitute a thorough reading of e.g. the Guidelines for Grant Applicants, their annexes and the FAQs published for the Calls for Proposals within WBF.

The proceedings of the evaluation are confidential and all parties involved are bound to adhere to the principles of confidentiality, impartiality and no conflict of interest. The experts must sign a declaration to this fact.

Only WBF representatives are authorized to have contact with an applicant during and after the evaluation process. This includes communications related to clarifications, announcement of the results of each phase as well as dealing with requests for information and questions raised by any applicant about the results.

The evaluation of project proposals will be conducted respecting relevant Guidelines for Applicants i.e. evaluation grids and checklists of the application form contained within the Application Package. To ensure impartial, professional and smooth assessment process, experts will be given proper documentation and guidelines.

The evaluation grids should be completed in English language.

3.2 Specific activities

External Evaluators are bound by a declaration of impartiality and confidentiality¹ to be signed before starting the assessment. If an expert believes that there might be a situation of conflict of interests in relation to applicants and/or co-applicant/s, he/she must declare it immediately. He/she will have to immediately withdraw from the evaluation of the concerned proposal and provide written explanation to the WBF ED. All assessors are required to uphold the integrity of the evaluation process. No information about any aspect of the assessment may be disclosed to any third party outside the panel evaluation unit.

¹ A standard document will be made available by the Contracting Authority.



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The experts shall contribute to the successful completion of the evaluation process by providing:

- Qualitative evaluation of the project proposals in line with the guidelines for applicants, including the published evaluation grids, and the relevant documents;
- His/her own experience of the sector and project implementation to bear in the analysis of each proposal;
- Signed evaluation grids for each project application form evaluation, with each grid providing a scored assessment and textual comments;
- Coherent comments and scores, implying that comments must reflect the scores given, illustrating the scores per question and section of the evaluation grids;
- A list of identified issues per project application and its annexes proposed for funding requiring clarification;
- His/her participation in meetings and/or specific training sessions organized for the execution of the evaluation tasks;
- Further additional comments in exceptional and justified cases at the request of the Contracting Authority;

4. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

4.1 Location

The Evaluators will work ten (10) days remotely and two (2) days in the premises of WBF in Tirana, Albania, under the supervision of the Chair and Secretary of the Panel Evaluation Unit.

The Evaluators are expected to be part of the induction training prior the evaluation process conducted by WBF team.

4.2 Start date and period of implementation

Precise timetable of the assignment will be defined after the selection process.

The Evaluators are required to conduct project evaluation process impartially, in a totally independent and confidential manner, in his/her personal capacity and apply to the best of his/her abilities and professional skills, knowledge and ethics, in accordance with the guidelines and time-schedules provided by the Fund.

Each evaluator shall sign a statement of exclusivity and availability for the period of implementation of this assignment at the moment of signing his/her contract. Whenever an expert is not available any more for the execution of the tasks for which he/she was hired, the Contracting Authority (WBF) will replace him/her with one or more of the candidates at the top of reserve list compiled after the recruitment procedure.

5. REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Technical requirements:

- Proven track record in grant-making, proposal assessment and project evaluation, ideally in initiatives of regional cooperation and development in the Western Balkans;
- Experience in grant implementation and evaluation;
- Ability to work well in a team, to communicate effectively with others and to contribute to organizational learning;



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- A strong knowledge of the civil society sector and existing regional initiatives, of governmental policies in the relevant sectors (development, education, culture), and of donors' giving strategies in the WB region;
- Familiarity with the political, economic and social situation in the Western Balkans region;
- Ability to produce well written reports based on strong analysis;
- Proficiency in English (fluent in speaking, reading and writing);
- Proficiency in MS Office.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Interested candidates are requested to submit the following documents to the following address: info@westernbalkansfund.org by **January 10th, 2022**.

- ✓ Curriculum Vitae in English (Euro-Pass format) with detailed information on relevant experience;
- ✓ Further documents proving their skills and expertise i.e. for example list of previous assignments where proposal assessment skills were applied, including former supervisors/colleagues in the respective organizations who may be contacted as references (please include name, function, phone number)
- ✓ Financial offer (experts fee).

SELECTION PROCESS

The Evaluators shall be selected on the basis of their professional and technical ability to perform the assessment tasks. The WBF as an inter-governmental organization remains committed to achieving workforce diversity in terms of gender, nationality and culture. Individuals coming from all WB6 parties are equally encouraged to apply. All applications will be treated with the strictest confidence.

CONTRACT AWARD

Contract will be awarded to highest scored candidate (technical score + financial scores)/100
Rating will be as follow:

Rating the Technical Requirements (TR):

- TR Rating = (Total Score Obtained by the Offer) 50%

Rating the Financial Proposal (FP):

- FP Rating = (Total Price of the Offer) 50%

**Total Combined and Final Rating of the Proposal: The higher combined score is recommended*