

WBF GEFund Call – Frequently Asked Questions

A. Application Form and Annexes

Q1. We have registered on the portal but cannot locate Annex A (Application Form), Annex B (Budget) and Annex C (Declaration by the Lead Applicant). Where can we find them?

All three annexes are embedded inside the WBF Online Grant Management System (OGMS) at <https://wbfportal.org/applicant>. Annex A and B are not provided as separate downloadable files:

- **Annex A** – Application Form is completed directly inside OGMS, by filling in the form fields once you create a new application.
- **Annex B** – Budget of the Action is completed in the budget module of OGMS.
- **Annex C** – Declaration by the Lead Applicant is downloaded from OGMS, signed and stamped by the legal representative of the Lead Applicant, scanned, and then re-uploaded into the system.

Applications submitted by e-mail, fax or post will be rejected. The system will not allow submission until all mandatory sections are completed.

Q2. Can a blank Application Form be shared in Word format so we can draft internally before submission?

The official application can be prepared and submitted only via OGMS. Once you create a new application in OGMS, all required fields become visible and you can save your progress at any time. We recommend opening an application early in the process so your team can review the structure. You can also draft the content in your preferred internal tool, and then transfer the final text into OGMS well before the deadline.

B. Who Can Apply — Eligibility

Q3. Are Labour Unions eligible as Lead Applicant or Project Partner?

The eligible categories under this Call are Civil Society Organisations (CSO/NGO), educational institutions, associations of culture or sports, business associations, and media associations. Labour unions are not listed as a separate category. A labour union can therefore be eligible only if it is registered as a non-profit legal entity in one of the WBF Contracting Parties and clearly fits within one of the categories above. Political parties and religious institutions are not eligible in any role.

Q4. I am an individual professional in one of the Western Balkans, not affiliated with an NGO. Can I apply directly for a grant?

Individuals and unregistered entities are not eligible to apply. Funding is open only to registered legal entities falling within the categories listed in Section 2.1 of the Guidelines. If you would like

to contribute your expertise, we encourage you to connect with a registered eligible organisation. You may also register on the WBF Partnership Platform (<https://wbfpartnership.com/>) to identify organisations looking for collaborators.

C. Partnership Composition

Q5. Can an NGO be the Lead Applicant, with three schools from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Albania as Project Partners?

Yes. This composition satisfies the eligibility rules:

- An NGO is eligible as Lead Applicant.
- Schools qualify as educational institutions and are eligible as Project Partners.
- The partnership covers at least three different WBF Contracting Parties.

Please remember that the Lead Applicant must also be registered in one of the six WBF Contracting Parties (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) and that the partnership as a whole must include at least one Lead Applicant and at least two Project Partners from at least three different Contracting Parties.

Q6. Could a single organisation implement the project on its own — for example, an art teacher organising a mural and a short film with pupils from one school on the theme of gender equality?

Partnership is an essential requirement of this Call. Each project must be implemented by a regional consortium of at least one Lead Applicant and at least two Project Partners from at least three different WBF Contracting Parties. A project carried out by a single organisation in a single Contracting Party is not eligible, regardless of how well it addresses the priority areas.

To make it eligible, the idea could be redesigned as a joint regional initiative — for example, partner schools or organisations in two other WB6 Contracting Parties producing parallel murals and short films, with a joint exchange or exhibition. The WBF Partnership Platform (<https://wbfpartnership.com/>) can help you identify suitable partners.

D. Required Templates and Supporting Documents

Q7. Where can we find the Partnership Agreement form and the Financial Capacity Form?

Both documents are required only at Step 3 of the evaluation, after the application has been shortlisted. They are not part of the initial online submission. Shortlisted applicants will be notified through OGMS and provided with both templates — Partnership Agreement (WBF Format) and Financial Capacity Form (WBF Format) — together with the instructions for uploading them.

Q8. We are a newly established organisation and do not yet have annual financial statements. Would a bank account statement, a bank guarantee, and a declaration of financial support

from our founder be accepted as "equivalent financial documentation"?

Section 10 (Step 3) of the Guidelines refers to "the latest available annual financial statements, audit report, or other equivalent financial documentation". For newly established applicants without a closed financial year, equivalent documentation will be assessed by the WBF Secretariat on a case-by-case basis at Step 3, together with the Financial Capacity Form. The package you describe (bank statement, bank guarantee, founder's declaration of financial support) is the type of evidence that can be reviewed at that stage. WBF cannot confirm in advance that any specific bundle will be deemed sufficient — the financial capacity of newly established applicants is assessed in light of the project's size, the partners' financial contribution, and the overall risk. We encourage you to submit your strongest possible application; if shortlisted, the WBF Secretariat will follow up with you directly on this point.

E. Financial and Budget Questions

Q9. Is the grant paid to the Lead Applicant, who then distributes funds among the partners, or directly to each partner?

The grant is disbursed exclusively to the Lead Applicant, who is the sole signatory of the Grant Agreement with WBF and is responsible for sound implementation, funds expenditure and reporting. The Lead Applicant then can transfer the funds to Project Partners in accordance with the Partnership Agreement signed between them. Disbursement to the Lead Applicant is made in two tranches: 80% upon contract signing and the remaining amount upon approval of the final report.

Q10. Are VAT and similar taxes eligible costs? For example, can the 19% VAT applied in Bosnia and Herzegovina on travel, accommodation, food and supplies be covered by the project budget?

VAT that is non-recoverable under the applicable national VAT legislation — i.e. VAT that the organisation cannot reclaim from the tax authorities — is eligible. In such cases, the non-recoverable VAT may be eligible and will be explicitly declared in the Declaration by the Lead Applicant (Annex C). Recoverable VAT cannot be charged to the project. HR-related taxes and withholding taxes are not subject to this rule and remain eligible as part of staff costs. Each organisation should verify its VAT status under its national legislation before finalising the budget.

G. Budget Structure and Use of Internal Expertise

Q11. Our organisation already employs researchers and trainers whose expertise corresponds directly to the planned project activities. Engaging external experts would be inefficient when the required know-how is already inside our team. Is there any flexibility on the 25% staff-cost ceiling for organisations whose core expertise is embedded in their permanent staff?

The 25% ceiling on Human Resource costs applies to all applicants and cannot be increased. It is calculated on the total amount granted by WBF (for example, up to 10,000 EUR of HR cost on a 40,000 EUR grant) and is a fixed rule of this Call.

Permanent staff of the Lead Applicant or Project Partners cannot be re-classified under "Experts" or "Volunteering" to bypass the HR ceiling — both budget lines explicitly exclude employees of the applicant or partner organisations.

H. Multiple Applications and Partnership Integrity

Q12. We plan to appear as a Project Partner in two separate proposals with different Lead Applicants. If both score positively, our institution can only be awarded once. What happens to the second proposal — does it lose its minimum-partnership status because we are no longer counted as a partner?

An applicant may appear in several proposals as Project Partner but can only be awarded once in that role (the highest-scoring proposal). Here is how this is applied in practice:

- At the **evaluation stage**, each proposal is assessed on its own merits with the consortium as submitted. Your institution is counted as a partner in both proposals during scoring.
- At the **award stage**, the WBF cross-checks selected proposals. If your institution would be awarded twice as Project Partner, only the higher-scoring proposal retains you. In the lower-scoring proposal, your institution is removed from the awarded consortium.
- The **remaining consortium** in the lower-scoring proposal must still satisfy the eligibility rule of at least one Lead Applicant and at least two Project Partners from at least three different WBF Contracting Parties. If removing your institution causes the consortium to fall below this threshold, that proposal becomes ineligible at the contracting stage and the grant moves to the next-best-placed application for the respective Contracting Party.

To mitigate this risk, we encourage Lead Applicants who plan to involve a partner that may be present in other consortia to either (i) build the consortium so that the minimum requirement is met without that partner, or (ii) discuss the matter transparently among the consortia before submission. The partnership-integrity check is performed strictly on the basis of the consortium as submitted in OGMS.

I. Eligible Project Ideas

Q13. Would a contemporary interdisciplinary theatre play addressing gender inequality be an eligible project idea?

In principle, yes — artistic and cultural formats are not excluded under this Call, and associations of culture (theatres, art galleries, cultural institutions, etc.) are listed among the eligible organisation types. Awareness-raising campaigns and public outreach, including community events, are explicitly listed among the eligible types of activities.

To be competitive, however, a theatre-based proposal would need to be designed as more than a single artistic production. The evaluation criteria reward:

- **Regional reach.** A play developed and toured jointly by partners from at least three WBF Contracting Parties — rather than staged in a single city — directly addresses the Relevance

and Added Value criteria.

- **A clear gender-equality objective.** The DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker requires a "principal score of 2" — meaning gender equality is the main objective of the project, informed by a gender analysis, with measurable indicators and sex-disaggregated data. Artistic ambition alone will not pass this test; the proposal must show how the play advances one of the six priority areas (for example, Countering Anti-Gender Backlash, Protection from Violence, or Empowerment of Women in Economic and Public Life).
- **Sustainability beyond the performance.** Workshops, audience discussions, educational materials, partnerships with schools or CSOs, or a digital afterlife of the production can all strengthen the Capitalization potential criterion.

In short, the artistic idea is eligible; turning it into a competitive application is a matter of design.

Q14. Are project proposals eligible if, in addition to international migration, they address internal/local migration challenges affecting women — for example rural-to-urban migration, depopulation of smaller communities, and related impacts on women's economic participation and access to the labour market?

The themes you describe fit within the Call. They can be framed under more than one priority area, depending on the angle:

- **Priority 1 — Empowerment of Women in Economic and Public Life**, particularly the expected results on women's economic empowerment and on barriers to women's economic participation, including marginalised groups. Rural women, women in depopulated areas, and women in informal labour mobility patterns clearly fall within scope.
- **Priority 6 — Gender Equality, Peace and Security**, which lists awareness of gender dimensions in migration among its expected results and includes Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)17 and CEDAW General Recommendation No. 38 among reference frameworks.

Applicants are required to indicate one priority area in the application. We recommend selecting the priority that best matches the main objective of the project, and using the project description to show how internal and international migration dimensions are linked.

J. Eligibility of For-Profit Entities

Q15. Is a micro-enterprise led by a woman eligible to apply for the GEFund Call?

Eligible applicants must be non-profit-making legal entities falling within one of the listed categories (CSO/NGO, educational institution, association of culture or sports, business association, or media association). If the micro-enterprise is set up as a commercial entity it will not meet the non-profit-making criterion, regardless of the gender of its founder or manager.

A woman-led micro-enterprise can, however, contribute to a project as an associated partner if its involvement strengthens the project's logic or impact. Associated partners do not receive project funds, with the exception of per-diem and/or travel costs where justified, and their role must be

clearly explained in the application.

Women-led businesses can also be reached as a target group of project activities — for instance, in initiatives advancing women's economic empowerment, gender-responsive economic policies, or investment in the care economy.