



Culture and Creativity for the Western Balkans (CC4WBs)



Open Call for Proposals
Ref: CC4WBS001OR/2023

Guidelines for Applicants from the
Western Balkans IPA Beneficiaries



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the European Union

Culture and Creativity for the Western Balkans (CC4WBs)

Open Call for Proposals
Ref: CC4WBS001OR/2023

Total value of funds allocated for this Call for Proposal will not exceed 1,128,000.00 EUR

Applicants are required to submit their proposals by 17:00 (CET) on 31 March 2023

1. Background information

The Western Balkans (WBs) are home to a rich and diverse cultural heritage, reflecting significant parts of European history and identity. The region is also a vibrant hub of contemporary creativity, with lively cultural scenes, promising creative industries and abundant cultural festivals and events.

However, several constraints prevent the region from fully harnessing the potential of the cultural and creative sectors. For instance, compared to the contribution of culture to economies in the WBs, public spending on culture is very low and exposed to further cuts due to the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the interest in regional cooperation and co-creation among cultural workers in the region is high, the lack of support mechanisms and mobility opportunities are barriers for collaboration. The low level of diffusion and advancement of inclusive, participatory and integrated management approaches to cultural heritage is accompanied by scarce training opportunities and a fragmented approach to capacity-building that often fails to include all components necessary to effectively develop sectoral capacities.

In line with the [enlargement perspective for EU engagement with the Western Balkans](#), this joint programme will promote intercultural dialogue and enhance the socio-economic impact of the cultural and creative sector in the Western Balkans. Through a multi-sectorial approach targeting public authorities, the private sector and civil society organisations in culture, the joint programme will (1) improve the performance of the cultural and creative sector in the Western Balkans; (2) strengthen the cultural cooperation within and with the Western Balkans and (3) enhance inclusive cultural heritage for local development. The ultimate beneficiaries will be citizens in the Western Balkans.

The joint project ‘**Culture and Creativity for the Western Balkans**’¹ (CC4WBs) implemented by UNESCO, the British Council and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), aims at a broad participatory approach across all categories of sectoral stakeholders. This systemic and people-centred approach to development is intended to deeply embed progress across the sector, while ensuring ownership and engagement as key requirements for sustainability.

This Open Call for Proposals is organised around **four thematic windows** for Applicants to choose from, thereby contributing to the solving of sectoral and cross-sectoral challenges.

¹ [Culture and Creativity for the Western Balkans \(CC4WBs\) \(unesco.org\)](#)



2. Who can apply?

All proposals must be submitted in partnership. Consult criteria for applying under Section 3.

LEAD APPLICANT

Participation in this Open Call for Proposals is open on equal grounds to:

- Public institutions (museums, galleries, theatres, institutes for the protection of cultural and natural heritage, universities, cultural institutions, research institutes, tourism offices and others, in accordance with the legislation), local governments (municipalities/cities) from the Western Balkans IPA Beneficiaries.
- Civil society organisations (CSOs): foundations and non-profit organisations, registered in one or more of the WBs IPA Beneficiaries².
 - Upon award of the grant, the Lead Applicant will sign a contract or partnership agreement³ with the partner institutions/organisations. In the application phase, the Lead Applicant and its partner/s are only required to submit a Partnership Statement, not an agreement.
 - **The Lead Applicant is accountable to the donor for the total amount of funds and the implementation of all activities, including those activities and resources implemented by its partner(s). In the implementation of the activities, all project implementation rules apply to the Lead Applicant and the partner organisation(s) alike.**
 - The Lead Applicant must be an organisation/institution established in one of the WBs IPA Beneficiaries, before 1 December 2020.

PARTNER/S

Project partners must be other public institutions (see non-exhaustive list above) and/or civil society organisations (CSOs) from a WBs IPA Beneficiary different from the Lead Applicant's one. Partner organisations/institutions implement part of the project's activities and receive part of the project's funding accordingly.

Partnerships can be of different types; that is, between Public Institutions, between CSOs, or between a combination of CSOs and Public Institutions. The Proposal must clearly define which activities will be implemented by the Lead Applicant and by the partner(s), as well as state their responsibilities in the implementation of project activities. The project budget must clearly state the amount of funds to be implemented by the Lead Applicant and the partner organisation(s) respectively.

Partner/s must be organisations/institutions established in one of the WBs IPA Beneficiaries, before 1 December 2020.

²Civil society organisations (CSOs) include foundations and non-profit organisations registered at any level of government in one or more of the WBs IPA Beneficiaries.

³ The contract or a partnership agreement shall contain information on all partners involved in the project's implementation, as well as a clear description of the nature of the partnership, including the obligations of the partner organisation(s) and the relation between the involved organisations. The Lead Applicant's partner(s) take(s) part in the project's design and implementation in that it/they can carry out certain project's activities. In this case, the partner organisation(s) or institution(s) may also be the beneficiary of (part of) the project's funding, in accordance with the Partnership Agreement. In this case, the Lead Applicant is responsible for the transfer of a part of funds to the partner(s). The Lead Applicant is accountable to the donor for the total amount of funds and the implementation of all activities, including those activities and resources implemented by project's partner(s). In the implementation of the activities, all project implementation rules apply to the Lead Applicant and the partner organisation(s) alike.



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ASSOCIATES

Associates are those businesses, organisations and institutions contributing to the implementation of project activities, but which do not benefit from the transfer of a part of the project's funds disbursed through this Open Call for Proposals, meaning that they cannot be held responsible for the implementation of project activities. In case associates' engagement is necessary, their role should be clearly explained in the project proposal.

3. Criteria

1. Eliminary criteria:

Partnership: All submitted project proposals **must include at least two Western Balkans IPA Beneficiaries**, that is, involve the Lead Applicant and at least one partner organisation/institution from another IPA Beneficiary of the Western Balkans region.

Proposals must contain information on all partners involved in project implementation, as well as a clear description of the nature of the partnership and obligations of the Lead Applicant and respective partner/s. The partner/s take part in the project design and implementation. The Lead Applicant is responsible for the transfer of the funds assigned to partner/s. The Lead Applicant is accountable to the donor for the total amount of funds and the implementation of all activities, including those activities and resources implemented by its partner/s.

2. Some of the fundamental principles for selecting the Proposals are:

Regional Cooperation: Regional Cooperation will be ensured between partners from different WBs IPA Beneficiaries. Other interventions demonstrating streamlining of regional cooperation will be given preference in ranking.

Relevance: Proposals must respond to the Thematic Windows of this Call for Proposals. Consult the Technical Evaluation Table (below) for all Relevance Criteria of the Proposal.

Quality: Proposals should have a clear methodology, aiming at achieving results by focusing on final beneficiaries/target groups. Risks should be taken into account and the proposed activities should positively impact direct and indirect beneficiaries and/or population at large.

Sustainability: Preference in ranking is to be given to applicants presenting a clear sustainability plan for project deliverables.

Gender equality and female entrepreneurship: All projects must ensure gender balance for project target groups (beneficiaries). Proposals envisaging dedicated activities encouraging female entrepreneurship will be given preference in ranking as an evaluation criterion to be applied in case of equal scores.

Youth participation and youth entrepreneurship: All projects must ensure a fair participation/representation of young people. Proposals with clear activities encouraging youth entrepreneurship will be given preference in ranking as an evaluation criterion to be applied in case of equal scores. Whenever feasible and appropriate (i.e. **depending on the requirements for each Thematic Window**, as specified below), proposals for grants will



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be encouraged to include a specific budget allocation for **job-shadowing**, with special attention to students and young professionals, in order to maximize the Project’s impact regarding youth empowerment and job creation.

Inclusivity: Proposals should aim to include disadvantaged groups in both rural and urban contexts; proposals envisaging activities that include vulnerable groups, different ethnic and social groups working together, will be given preference as an evaluation criterion to be applied in case of equal scores.

Do no-harm: “Do no harm” is aimed to avoid exposing people to additional risks through the projects. Proposals shall adopt a “do no harm” approach, looking at the broader context and mitigating potential negative effects on the social fabric, the economy and the environment prior to undertaking any intervention.

Geographical distribution: Without prejudice to the quality of funded projects, selection processes will consider principles of equitable geographical distribution among the WBs IPA Beneficiaries. While securing the highest standards of quality in the selection of eligible applications, the Evaluation Committee will pay due regard to select proposals on as wide a geographical basis as possible.

4. Thematic Windows

This Open Call for Proposals is organised **around four thematic windows** for applicants to choose from. Applicants are required to indicate the Thematic Window they are applying for, including the specific LOT under the thematic window, if applicable.



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THEMATIC WINDOW 1:

IMPROVED LOCAL CULTURAL SPACES THROUGH IMPROVED PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Applicants are invited to prepare proposals to steer local creativity, cultural entrepreneurship and the sustainable use of cultural heritage, and to promote the cultural and creative valorisation of public spaces, thus contributing to local community development, including youth and women.

This thematic window promotes: a) the regeneration of **fringe urban and peri-urban areas** (with a special focus on those lacking cultural infrastructures and opportunities) as accessible spaces for cultural productions, activities and exchanges; b) the regeneration and/or enhancement of public spaces in **historic urban areas**, leveraging urban heritage as a social, cultural and economic asset for the development of cities, including activities to support integrated/inclusive management, participatory planning and co-decision.

Proposals under this thematic window may include, inter alia, the establishment of creative labs in visual arts, sustainable architecture and design, performing arts workshops and seminars, publishing projects, artistic residencies, art galleries and/or street-art sites, music venues, recording studios, etc.

Proposals shall include at least one **job-shadowing** position for students or young professionals, with a specific budget allocation. *Job-shadowing refers to: on-the-job training and learning opportunity for students and young professionals to gain an understanding of the role requirements and job tasks.*

Grants will be aimed at applicants based and operating in the areas targeted by the proposed activities, including local administrations, CSOs and the private sector, to reinforce local impact and ownership.

Financial thresholds I, II, and III described in chapter “5. Budget” are applicable to this Thematic Window.

THEMATIC WINDOW 2:

ARTISTS, MEDIA PROFESSIONALS, AND CULTURAL OPERATORS MOBILISED, CONNECTED AND ENABLED TO PROMOTE THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS IN AND FROM THE WESTERN BALKANS

LOT 1: Applicants are invited to prepare proposals aiming at improving **capacities of media professionals and content creators** covering arts and culture to counter disinformation and misinformation, thereby strengthening freedom of expression and free, independent and pluralistic media. This concerns equipping



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media professionals and content creators with knowledge and skills for the digital age, notably fact-checking and data journalism resulting in new and innovative media content creation. Individual micro-grants for the most successful individual media content proposals by media professionals and content creators should be planned and budgeted in the proposal.

Financial thresholds I, II, and III described in chapter “5. Budget” are applicable to this LOT.

LOT 2: Applicants are invited to submit proposals for the development of a ‘**Creative Gate**’, a digital portal aiming to promote and facilitate cooperation with and between cultural and creative industry (CCI) professionals across the WBs. The Creative Gate portal will consist of three components. One component will be a **registration-based network** supporting CCI professionals in increasing their visibility and connection with the labour market, providing opportunities for greater mobility, cooperation and co-production. The second component will serve as a section of the website dedicated to **sharing content** with the aim to enhance opportunities of reach, visibility and audience engagement through promoting CCI work around the WBs. This will also serve as a platform for participants of other CC4WBs programme strands to share produced content with wider audiences in the region.

The Creative Gate’s third component will be a **digital “Arts Discovery Platform”**, aimed at mapping and promoting cultural and creative venues, artistic events and festivals in the WBs, as well as facilitating cooperation between them and their managers. The Platform shall be envisaged as a virtual, interactive repository of information about in-person and virtual cultural/artistic venues, programmes and events in the region. By allowing the organisers to directly upload and share information on their venues and events, the Platform will boost cultural participation and support cultural tourism in the region. Based on the available information, the Platform will also elaborate and propose thematic cultural routes linking artistic venues and events across the WBs region, and support the elaboration of marketing and promotion plans for each route. In addition to the informative part open to the public, the Arts Discovery Platform will be equipped with a restricted-access section dedicated to cultural venues/events/festivals managers, as means to enable information exchange and networking in order to improve coordination and foster co-programming and co-production.

This LOT is expected to directly contribute to the growth of an existing creative industry organisation, setting ground for local ownership. Alongside the proposal for the development of the digital portal and platform, applicants are required to submit a tentative **afterlife strategy** of the Creative Gate (including the Arts Discovery Platform), with a view to **ensuring its sustainability and continued use**. Applicants proving to have the interest, capacity and expertise to guarantee the **continued management** of the Creative Gate and Arts Discovery Platform in the long term will be ranked higher.

Financial thresholds I, II, III, and IV described in chapter “5. Budget” are applicable to this LOT.

**THEMATIC WINDOW 3:
REGIONAL NETWORKING, COOPERATION AND PROMOTION
FOR ENHANCED CULTURAL PRODUCTION AND ACCESS**

LOT 1: Applicants are invited to submit proposals for any, combination thereof or similar initiatives, as per the below:



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- Inter-city festivals, arts competitions, cultural events and regional cooperation for research and development on culture and creativity for sustainable development. Cultural events are preferably to be held on a rotating basis in different venues within WBs IPA Beneficiaries and EU Member States.
- Stimulating regional cooperation on specific topics (e.g. culture and creativity for social innovation), involving partners from different cities, or creating opportunities for exchanges with and among the **Creative Cities**, in cooperation with the [UNESCO Creative Cities](#) from the WBs and from the EU.
- Developing Joint branding for the Western Balkans' CCS – which would advance the branding and benefit all WBs IPA Beneficiaries.
- Artistic residencies from any type of art or cultural expression within the Western Balkans or with EU countries aiming to support the mobility of artists and cultural operators.

Financial thresholds I, II, and III described in chapter “5. Budget” are applicable to this LOT.

LOT 2: Applicants may apply for grant schemes on sectoral development through proposing sustainable, self-manageable **Culture and Creativity Learning Labs** focused on the topics of business planning, management, community engagement, communication, advocacy, fundraising, production management and technical skills, and artistic and curatorial practice.

Applicants can suggest European expert(s) to contribute to their process of developing Learning Labs, or based on Applicant's expressed need, the CC4WBs project will propose expert(s) to be matched with the Applicant in order to enhance their existing or establish new Learning Labs. The proposed expert(s) costs should not be part of the Applicant's budget as they will be financed outside of the grant scheme.

These Learning Labs will later act as multipliers of best practice in given topics in the region. The capacity-building process should be implemented and cascaded at networking and learning events organised by applicants and their partners for beneficiary organisations across the region, and can include workshops, bootcamps, professional talks, training, and online learning. The aim is to decrease the number of one-off training events and increase the amount of peer-to-peer opportunities, enhance support to existing professional platforms by introducing management and entrepreneurial practices.

Financial thresholds I and II described in chapter “5. Budget” are applicable to this LOT.

LOT 3: Applicants may apply for the grant scheme for **artistic co-productions** that aims to support regional co-productions addressing emerging societal challenges in the region, and to stimulate the development of regional content and circulation. Applicants are encouraged to develop and promote ideas and awareness of global relevance in artistic and cultural production.

Types of co-productions may include:

- Development and promotion of new pieces of collaborative art within the region, such as film and music releases, written publications, visual arts, design, etc.
- Collaborative showcases of contemporary arts across different art forms such as visual arts, design and architecture exhibitions, classical or contemporary music performances, fashion shows, theatre performances, art fairs, etc.

In order to cater to needs of producers in the region to reach beyond their current operation and empower them to co-produce and create links beyond their current geographical scope.



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Applicants can apply for either small or large grants.

Small grants (Financial thresholds I and II) are an opportunity for organisations to empower their younger staff and support them in becoming competitive producers of cultural and creative content.

Large grants (Financial threshold III) aim to support established organisations to co-produce cultural content with fresh ideas, while capacitating distributors to obtain new quality for regional and international audiences.

Financial thresholds I, II, and III described in chapter “5. Budget” are applicable to this LOT.

THEMATIC WINDOW 4:

PROTECTING AND LEVERAGING CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Applicants are invited to prepare small-scale cultural heritage projects to boost local participation and community engagement for sustainable development and to support the **definition, improvement, or implementation of inclusive and sustainable management systems and plans for heritage sites**. The following domains may be covered: projects to develop new management plans for cultural heritage or improve existing ones through people-centred, participatory approaches; enhancement of physical and cultural accessibility; development of sustainable and culturally-sensitive tourism; creation or improvement of visitor/information centres; enhancement of heritage interpretation competence and services; digital solutions for cultural heritage; development of heritage-based creative industries including, whenever relevant, the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

Proposals should include at least one **job-shadowing** position for students or young professionals, with a specific budget allocation. *Job-shadowing refers to: on-the-job training and learning opportunity for students and young professionals to gain an understanding of the role requirements and job tasks.*

Applicants who are based and operate in the same areas targeted by the proposed activities, including local administrations, public bodies and institutions, CSOs and the private sector, are encouraged. Applicants are encouraged to include at least one local authority and one CSO, while the participation of a private business as an associate will be considered an additional asset.

Financial thresholds I, II, III, and IV described in chapter “5. Budget” are applicable to this Thematic Window.



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5. Budget

The Budget should be submitted in EUR, as in “Form 2 Project Budget”. **Please make sure to choose budget form A or B, depending on the LOT.** It should clearly outline which part of the funds will be utilized by partner(s).

Co-financing

Co-financing is required for all grant schemes except for those under financial threshold I (as below). The source of co-financing can be the Lead Applicant, the partner(s) or both, as per agreed proportion.

Example: The required grant is 10,000 EUR; the minimum amount of co-financing is 1,000 EUR (10%). The total budget would in this case be 11,000 EUR.

Financial threshold I – up to 5,000 EUR

No co-financing required.

Financial threshold II – from 5,001 to 30,000 EUR

With minimum 10% of co-financing required.

Financial threshold III – from 30,001 to 50,000 EUR

With minimum 15% of co-financing required.

Financial threshold IV – from 50,001 to 80,000 EUR

With minimum 20% of co-financing required.

Co-financing provided by the Lead Applicant and/or Partner(s) may also be in-kind yet monetized contribution.

The Lead Applicant and/or Partner will co-finance the project with their own resources. Please note that co-financing is not mandatory for financial threshold I. The amount and type of co-financing (financial or in-kind) should be clearly indicated in the Project Budget document.

What is in-kind contribution? An in-kind contribution may consist of either costs incurred directly by CSOs, institutions, and/or Applicant’s other partners, contributing to the project’s objectives. This includes goods, services and the use of premises, professional services in the form of time that employees spend on the implementation of activities, the purchase of equipment or materials deemed necessary for carrying out activities and achieving the project’s objectives. The Lead Applicant and / or its partner must indicate as exact as possible a value of in-kind contribution in the proposed budget, separately from the contributions to the eligible costs. This value must not be subject to subsequent changes. The Lead Applicant and / or its partner must also ensure that in-kind contributions comply with legally required tax and social security rules. During the implementation of the project, each Contracting Authority reserves the right to request supporting evidence of in-kind contributions, according to its internal rules and procedures and the national legislation of the applicant.



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Note: Organisers of the Open Call for Proposals reserve the right to propose budget changes to maximize budget utilization, ensuring that the principles of value for money and the overall project efficiency are applied.

Organisers of the Open Call for Proposals reserve the right not to disburse all funds available for this Open Call for Proposals.

Conditions for the budget to be eligible:

Administrative expenditures (Human resources and overhead expenditures⁴): A grant awarded under this Call may be used to finance administrative expenditures in the proportion of maximum 25% of the total budget.

Project expenditures: Minimum 75% of the total budget value must be earmarked for the project's thematic activities. All of the project's thematic activities need to be elaborated in the budget under the heading of Project Expenditures. If (existing) or newly recruited staff work on the project's thematic activities and content, a clear percentage (or full amount) of their time can be budgeted under project expenditures. Proof of work including time sheets will be required as part of financial reporting documentation. Thematic activities may necessitate materials, tools or similar goods (equipment) and/or services, in which case applicants will carefully elaborate project expenditures of this nature based on cost-effectiveness, and relevance for the full quality of implementation under the project's expenditure. Equipment category under project expenditures is eligible if specifically purchased for the purpose of implementing the grant and ownership will be transferred to the grantee in accordance with the European Commission rules for this project. The cost-effectiveness principle should be followed and demonstrated in the project proposal. The budgeted costs need to be reasonable, justifiable and comply with the principle of Sound Financial Management.

NOTE:

You should use **Form 2 A Budget template** for Thematic Window 1, Thematic Window 2/LOT1, Thematic Window 3/LOT1, and Thematic Window 4.

You should use **Form 2 B Budget template** for Thematic Window 2/LOT2, Thematic Window 3/LOT2 and Thematic Window 3/LOT3.

Visibility, dissemination and promotion expenditures: Expenditures under this category should fall within the 75% of project expenditures.

Further details about eligible expenditures under each category are provided in the Guidelines of the respective "Form 2 A Budget template" and "Form 2 B Budget template".

6. Non-eligible expenditures and/or activities under this Open Call for Proposals

The following expenditures and/or activities are ineligible under this Open Call for Proposals:

- Settling debts and losses or debt contingencies;

⁴ Human resources and overhead expenditures include office costs (phone, utilities), office rent, salaries of managerial and administrative staff, travel expenses of managerial staff, banking transactions costs, accountant expenses.



- Settling interest debt;
- Payment of VAT and duty charges that are recoverable/deductible by the Organisation;
- Individual tuition fees for studies or individual training courses not related to the scope of the Call for Proposals, individual bonuses;
- Procurement of equipment unless required for the project's successful implementation and fully justified;
- Activities supporting political parties;
- Financing regular activities of the Lead Applicant or its partners;
- Physical reconstruction/infrastructure projects should in general be avoided, unless for a specific reconstruction/renovation type of project under Thematic Windows 1 and 4, in which case the project description shall fully justify the needs for reconstruction and/or refurbishment
- Entertainment costs such as: gifts, alcohol, restaurant bills or hospitality costs for personnel not directly participating in the project;
- Activities that are identical in scope and nature to another EU-funded grant scheme where the Lead Applicant and/or partner(s) are already a Grant Beneficiaries
- In addition, projects funded under this Call cannot be used to pay for the engagement of public officials⁵ in this project.

7. Project duration

1. Project duration

The proposal should be prepared according to the principle of best value for money. The duration of the Project shall be a maximum of eighteen (18) months from the date of the contract's signature. Quality projects of short duration shall have a minimum duration of three (3) months to allow for proper preparation, implementation and reporting.

8. Project documentation

Applicants to any of the four Thematic Windows, independently from the specific Thematic Windows, LOTs, or financial threshold they are applying to, shall provide the following documentation:

Form 1	Project Proposal (Word)
Form 2	Project Budget (Excel)
Form 3	Project Logframe (Word)
Form 4	Activity, Communication and Visibility Plan (Word)
Form 5	Administrative Identification Form (Word)
Form 6	Financial Identification Form (bank account)
Form 7	Declaration of Eligibility for Lead Applicant and Partner (filled out and signed, PDF)

⁵ Under this Open Call for Proposals, a public official is any nominated, appointed or delegated person in a public administration body, judicial authority, local government body, public institution, public company, a state fund and another legal entity pursuing activities of public interest.



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Form 8 Partnership Statement (filled out and signed, PDF)

Please include in the Proposal the following mandatory documentation:

- Annex 1** Copy of valid legal entity's registration form (applicable for the Lead Applicant and partner/s). The organisers of this Open Call for Proposals reserve the right to request the original documentation. Please note that the Lead Applicant and partner/s must be established prior to 01 December 2020.
- Annex 2** Copy of the statute (for Organisations) or other document confirming the mandate of the organisation (for Institutions), applicable for the Lead Applicant and partner/s.
- Annex 3** Copy of the balance sheet and income statement for 2021 certified by a chartered accountant or authorised person, or equivalent.
- Annex 4** Certificate from relevant tax authority that the legal entity (Lead Applicant and partner/s) has paid all due taxes in accordance with the local legislation. This certificate should be issued in January 2023 or later.

- Forms are attached to this Open Call for Proposals and their format should not be altered.
- Annexes need to be submitted in accordance with the applicable laws of the WBs IPA Beneficiary that the Lead Applicant and partner(s) are registered at.
- Handwritten form submissions will not be accepted.

9. How to submit the Proposals

Documentation for this Open Call for Proposals in English is available for download at the following link:

[APPLICATION](#)

Applications with the required documentation (Forms 1-8) must be submitted in the **English language**. Other required supporting documents (Annexes 1-4), issued by official institutions, can be submitted in their original languages. Copies of official documents do not need to be certified. Originals may be required as proof during the process of evaluation and/or contracting.

Applications must be submitted electronically, no later than **31 March 2023** by **17:00 hours (CET)** to the **following email address**:

CC4WBS.APPLY@britishcouncil.org

with the email subject line consisting of the Lead Applicant's name and the number of the Thematic Window/ LOT (if applicable).



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Example: Lead Applicant's Name_Thematic Window 2 / LOT 1

- Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.
- Proposals received in any other form other than as described above will not be considered.
- Files in the application should not exceed **35 MB** and should not be shared through We Transfer or similar platforms subject to expiration.

Applicants will receive an email confirming the receipt of their application.

10. Number of Project Proposals and Grants per Applicant

Applicants may submit more than one Proposal under this Open Call for Proposals. However, only **one project proposal** of the Lead Applicant can be approved in the capacity of the Lead Applicant within this Open Call for Proposal.

An applicant that is the Lead Applicant on one project may be a partner in another project, meaning that the same applicant potentially can be awarded with the grant as a Lead Applicant and can apply as a partner in a different partnership. No applicant can be selected for more than 2 projects in either capacity (Lead Applicant or partner).

Each Project Proposal must contain the complete set of the required documentation. Referencing a different application instead of submitting the complete set of the required documentation to other proposals shall not be accepted as a valid process and the incomplete submission of project proposals shall be excluded from the further evaluation process.

11. Evaluation and Selection of Proposals

EVALUATION COMMITTEE WILL NOT CONSIDER PROJECT PROPOSALS IF:

- Proposals do not include activities and partners in at least two of the WB IPA Beneficiaries (for Thematic Window 1 public-private partnership⁶ is highly encouraged);
- Submitted projects do not respond to the Thematic Windows of the Open Call for Proposals;
- The project duration is not in line with the timeframe defined in this Open Call for Proposals;

⁶ OECD definition of Public-Private Partnership: “long term contractual arrangements between the government and a private partner whereby the latter delivers and funds public services using a capital asset, sharing the associated risks (reference [here](#) and [here](#)).



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- The total value of the proposal is not in line with the thresholds specified in the Open Call for Proposals including the co-financing element;
- The Proposal was not submitted within the deadline and/or in the required modality;
- The Proposal does not include all required documentation (8 Forms and required supporting documentation (4 Annexes));
- The organisers of the Open Call for Proposals were provided with false information;
- The Lead Applicant or Partner/s attempted to obtain confidential information or influence the Evaluation Committee.

1. Administrative Check

An administrative check will be performed in accordance with the table below. The Project Proposal is considered approved for technical evaluation if the administrative requirements are met according to the Administrative checklist below.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHECK LIST		
Compliance with administrative criteria:	YES	NO
1. Filled out project proposal form provided in the requested format (Form 1)		
2. Filled out Project Budget Form provided in the requested format (Form 2 A or 2 B)		
3. Filled out Project Log frame provided in the requested format (Form 3)		
4. Filled out Activity and Visibility Plan provided in the requested format (Form 4)		
5. Filled out Administrative Identification Form provided in the requested format (Form 5)		
6. Filled out Financial Identification Form provided in the requested format (Form 6)		
7. Declaration of Eligibility provided in the requested format (Form 7)		
8. Partnership Statement provided in the requested format (Form 8)		
9. Submitted copy of valid legal registration for the Lead Applicant and partner(s) (Annex 1)		
10. Submitted copy of the statute or other mandate document of the Lead Applicant and partner(s) (Annex 2)		
11. Submitted copy of the balance sheet and income statement for 2021, or budget execution report in case of public institution for 2021 (Annex 3), of the Lead Applicant and partner(s)		
12. Submitted copy of the latest certificate from relevant tax authority verifying that the legal entity (Lead Applicant and partner(s)) has paid all due taxes in accordance with the local legislation (Annex 4) <i>if applicable</i> .		



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2. Technical Evaluation

The quality assessment of applications will be done in accordance with the criteria set out in the evaluation table below.

Scoring system:

Evaluation criteria are divided into sections and sub-sections. ***Every section must be scored between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = average; 4 = good; 5 = very good.*** Each Evaluation Committee member signs his/her own individual evaluation table, and all members jointly sign a summary evaluation table for each project proposal. The ranking of project proposals is made in such a way that the first-ranked project proposal is the one with the highest total score, followed by the project that comes in next with its total score and all the way to the lowest total score.

Important:

If the total sum in Section 1 is less than 10 points, the project will be excluded from the rest of the evaluation process, as it is estimated that CSO lacks the minimum capacity for quality implementation of the proposed project.

If the total sum in Section 2 is less than 18 points, the project will be excluded from the rest of the evaluation process, as this assessment implies that, although the Lead Applicant meets the financial and operational capacities, the project idea itself is not relevant or in line with the defined priorities of the Open Call for Proposals and lacks sufficient impact on the needs of the target community or group.

Criterion	Maximum score	Points
1. Financial and operational capacity⁷	20	
1.1 Do the Lead Applicant and partner(s) have experience and capacity for project management ?	5	
1.2 Do the Lead Applicant and partner(s) have sufficient professional capacity ? (Specific knowledge in the relevant field including qualified staff)	5	
1.3 Have the Lead Applicant and partner(s) already implemented projects of similar financial value?	5	
1.4 Do the Lead Applicant and partner(s) have sufficient operational systems in place for disbursement of funds, reporting and internal control procedures?	5	
2. Relevance⁸	30	
2.1 To what extent does the proposal respond to the chosen thematic window defined in the Open Call for Proposals?	5	

⁷ Note on Section 1. Financial and operational capacity. If the total sum in Section 1 is less than 10 points, the project will be excluded from further evaluation process, as it is estimated that CSO lacks minimum capacity for quality implementation of the proposed project.

⁸ Note on Section 2. Relevance. If the total sum in Section 2 is less than 18 points, the project will be excluded from further evaluation process, as this assessment implies that, although the Lead Applicant meets the financial and operational capacities, the project idea itself is not relevant or in line with the defined priorities of the Open Call for Proposals and lacks sufficient impact on the needs of the target community or group.



2.2 To what extent are the final beneficiaries and target groups clearly defined and strategically selected, by also upholding the principles of inclusivity (diversity, vulnerability, representation of urban and rural communities)?	5	
2.3 Does the Project Proposal provide clear explanations of the needs of the target group and end beneficiaries , as well as the approach taken by the project to respond to identified needs?	5	
2.4 To what extent is gender equality and/or female entrepreneurship addressed in the Project Proposal?	5	
2.5 Is the project aiming to help regional cooperation in the target WBs IPA Beneficiaries or between WBs and the EU?	5	
2.6 To what extent is youth and/or youth entrepreneurship addressed in the Project Proposal?	5	
3. Methodology	20	
3.1 Do the proposed activities logically and practically match the objectives and expected results?	5	
3.2 Are measures to mitigate risks in place?	5	
3.3 Does the project contain objectively measurable performance indicators , including visibility actions, and a clear plan for monitoring the implementation to achieve the set results?	5	
3.4 Are the roles of involved parties (Lead Applicant, partner(s), associates – if any) clearly defined and strategically assigned?	5	
4. Sustainability	15	
4.1 Will the project activities have a concrete and long-term impact on target groups?	5	
4.2 Does the project have the potential to be replicated or scaled-up? (<i>Including a possibility of its application to other target groups or implementation at different locations and/or scale-up impacts of activities and exchange of information on the experience gained through project implementation</i>)	5	
4.3 Are the expected results of the proposed activities sustainable ? (Do involved parties clearly state a way of sustaining the project's achievements even after the project's completion / including through additional resource mobilization / have an impact on the target group even after the project's completion?)	5	
5. Budget and Cost-Effectiveness	15	
5.1 Is the ratio between estimated costs and expected results satisfactory?	5	
5.2 Are the proposed costs necessary to implement the project?	5	
5.3 Budget: - Is the budget clear and does it include a narrative description? - Have the principles been met whereby administrative expenditures (human resources and overhead expenditures) do not exceed 25% of the total budget?	5	
Maximum total score	100	



12. Further information about the Open Call for Proposals

Video tutorials to support you through the preparation of your application are available at the following link: [APPLICATION](#) (refer to VIDEO TUTORIALS)

Open door information sessions about the application process for the Open Call for Proposals with potential applicants will be held at various locations throughout the Western Balkans. Times and venues of these events will be shared *inter alia* via the media, CC4WBs [web page](#) /news section and **social media** of all partners organizing this Call for Proposal.

For further information and clarification, potential applicants may send their questions concerning the Open Call for Proposals to the following **email address**:

tirana@aics.gov.it

with a reference to *Clarification: Lead Applicant's Name_* and the number of Thematic Window/ LOT (if applicable) in the subject of the email.

Example: Clarification: Lead Applicant's Name_Thematic Window 1 / LOT 1

Answers to the received questions will be provided directly and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) will be updated each Monday during the whole period of the Open Call for Proposals. FAQs will be available at the following link: [APPLICATION](#) (refer to QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS)

Timetable

<u>Deadline for requesting clarifications:</u>	17:00 CET on 17 March 2023
<u>Last publication of FAQ (Questions and Answers)</u>	Monday, 20 March 2023
<u>Deadline for submitting applications:</u>	17:00 CET on 31 March 2023

13. Notice of Decision

The results will be published on the following [web page](#) /News section.

All applicants will be notified in writing of the decision regarding their project proposal within 60 days of the closing date of the Open Call for Proposals.



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14. Steps following the decision on Grant Award

Signing of contract

Following the decision on grant award prior to contract signing, the Organizer(s) of the Call for Proposals (Contractors) may request the Lead Applicant to introduce changes to the project proposal, including budget adjustments to comply with the Contractor's rules and procedures, including the currency of the contract, realistic cost estimates and availability of funds. After the evaluation of project proposals, the Lead Applicant and the partner(s) may be asked to provide original documents for review together with the due diligence procedure as requested by the respective Contractor(s). **Documents pertaining to the administration of the grant in support of the contract with the designated Contractor⁹ will be collected in accordance with the respective Contractor's rules and regulations. In case of possible conflicts of interpretation, the disposition of the contracts will prevail on the Call for Proposal.**

Upon satisfactory completion of these steps, the contract with the designated Contractor can be signed. The Lead Applicant shall be obliged to then sign the Partnership Agreement with the partner(s).

Disbursement of funds, transfer schedule, the mode of transfer, currency of the contract as well as other mutual rights and obligations, will be more closely regulated by the Contract.

Reporting on implementation of project activities and financing of justified costs

The Lead Applicant (Grant Beneficiary) is responsible to fully implement the project for which it has been granted the funds in accordance with the established budget.

The responsible person and legal representative of the Grant Beneficiary determined under the Contract will be required to submit Project Progress Report/s and a Final Report on Project Implementation, with evidence enclosed on the procurement of tangible and intangible assets and services incurred during the reporting period, as well as other evidence on the funds spent (invoices, contracts, timesheets, bank account and transaction statements).

Monitoring project implementation

In order to ensure that funds are indeed used as earmarked, monitoring activities for the control of their use will be regularly implemented by the Contractor. The modality and timing of monitoring activities will be agreed following the signing of the Contract with the Lead Applicant.

Visibility

Successful applicants will be instructed to follow [“EU visibility guidelines for external actions”](#) as all communication and visibility activities implemented under the framework of the CC4WBs programme will seek to ensure synergy with the EU Communication Strategy.

⁹ Designated Contractor represents one or more of the organisers of the Open Call for Proposals.



15. Privacy Notice

UNESCO (The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), British Council and AICS (Italian Agency for Development Cooperation) are joint Controllers of the information that you provide for the purpose of processing your application and administration of your involvement in the EU-funded programme “**Culture and Creativity for the Western Balkans**”. UNESCO, British Council and AICS comply with their applicable data protection regulations and rules that meet internationally accepted standards. The legal basis for processing your information is agreement with Terms and Conditions of application/Who can apply – section II above.

Your personal information will be shared among implementing partners, i.e. the British Council, UNESCO and AICS, and the following organisations for the purpose of project implementation:

- EU Commission, as Contracting Authority, for monitoring and reporting purposes https://european-union.europa.eu/privacy-policy_en
- partners’ corporate accounts for Microsoft MS365 Products will be used for communication and collaboration <https://privacy.microsoft.com/en-us/privacystatement>
- training and service providers supporting the programme delivery (names of organisations to be confirmed);

In order to achieve the necessary purposes outlined above, your personal information will be securely transferred and/or stored in the following locations: WB IPA beneficiaries, EU countries, UK. We will keep your information for a period of 7 years after the programme closure if your application has been successful, and 5 years if your application has been unsuccessful.

You have the right to ask for a copy of the information we hold on you, and the right to ask us to correct any inaccuracies in that information. If you have concerns about how we have used your personal information, you also have the right to complain to a privacy regulator.

For further detailed information about your rights, how to raise a complaint and how we process personal information, it is strongly advised to applicants to refer to the Privacy section of partners’ websites before submitting the application:

- UNESCO at [UNESCO’s Principles on Personal Data Protection and Privacy | UNESCO](#)
- British Council www.britishcouncil.org/privacy or at CC4WBS.INFO@britishcouncil.org
- AICS [at AICS’s Personal data protection webpage](#)



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