

F.A.Q. Bando Balcani 2025

ELIGIBILITY AND PARTNERS

1. Can an applicant non-resident in the WB country who proposes a project to be implemented in the WB country hire a local association or company to provide the "on-site logistics organization" service? Is there a share of the total contribution that can be used for this service provided by a third party?
If there is a project partner and the applicant already knows it, its data must be indicated by specifying its role in the implementation. The call for proposals does not indicate any restrictions in terms of budget distribution. The applicant's financial and implementation capacity is subjected to evaluation, but the choice on budget distribution remains up to the applicant.
2. Is an applicant resident in a WB country eligible as long as the project activities take place in another WB country?
The Call for Proposals does not provide for specific restrictions to where the project activities must take place, as long as the activities benefit the Western Balkans and its citizens.
3. Is a non-profit humanitarian organization with its headquarters and foundation in a Balkan country eligible under this Call for Proposals?
The call is open to private entities and this kind of association meets the requirement.
4. Can we also apply as an organization since we are newly founded, but we have staff with long professional experience?
Since your organization is already established there is no legal impediment and you are eligible to apply.
5. Should the project include and take into account a partner of Italian interest? Should a partner from another country in the Balkan region be included or would a partner from within the same country be acceptable?
There is no mandatory requirement for international partners in the Call for Proposals.
6. Does the project have to address an issue of Italian interest in the Western Balkans?
The priorities of the Call are described within the Call itself.
7. Does the inclusion of participants from other EU countries (e.g. Croatia) count as eligible?
The Call for Proposals does not provide for specific restrictions in this respect.
8. In the event that the territory concerned is a border area, such as Ukraine, and therefore of particular relevance to the countries involved, do you think it could still be considered eligible for the purposes of the call?
Please refer to art. 3 of the call for proposals, which states that contributions are granted to proposals for initiatives having the aims set out in art. 1 and relating to specific thematic areas in the Western Balkans region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia). Therefore, the project proposal must either take place in the countries of the Western Balkans or the project activities must benefit the above-mentioned countries and their citizens.
9. In the application form there is a reference in line 1.3 to "Project Partners", while no reference appears in the Call for Proposals, does a partnership agreement or supporting documentation need to be signed?
The application form is a template aimed at helping the applicant in writing the project. An applicant may have a partner or not, in this case it is not required to complete this section.
10. Are applications allowed from individual organizations or only from a consortium (more than one entity)? In the case of a consortium, would a partnership between an Italian organization and an

organization registered in one WB Country be allowed? Or must both organizations be based in the Western Balkans?

The Call for Proposal does require a single applicant to apply, being the sole responsible for the project. However, the applicant may rely on project partners, contributing to the project, that, if any, have to be indicated in the application form. Partners may be located in different countries.

There is no restriction in the Call for Proposal regarding the legal seat of the Applicant and its partners, if any. However, project activities have to compulsory target the Western Balkans and/or single States in the region. The project activities may insist on beneficiaries from a specific State (bilateral) or involve participants from more States (regional).

11. Is it possible to propose activities that will be carried out only in Italy although contemplating the participation of young Italians and young people from the Balkans?

The Balkans Call for Proposals finances activities and projects - presented by Italian and foreign private entities - that benefit the Western Balkans and their citizens.

In particular, art. 3 of the Call for Proposals states that *"The contributions are granted to proposals of initiatives with the purposes referred to in article 1 and related to the following thematic areas, in the Western Balkans region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia)[...] The proposed initiatives may be bilateral or regional"*.

Please also refer to the evaluation criteria listed in article 8 of the same Call, in particular letter d).

12. Are we eligible to apply on your call until September 30, even if we have an ongoing project financed by you, especially since we intend to apply for the second phase of the project we are developing through your current financing?

Since, according to art.6 of the call for proposal, project activities have to start by 31 December and your current project is expected to end earlier, we can confirm your eligibility to apply.

13. Does the requirement *"proposed initiatives may be bilateral or regional"* in Art.3 of the Call for Proposals mean that there must be at least two organizations applying as Applicant and Co-Applicant from two different target countries or is it not compulsory?

Art. 3 stipulates that project activities can either focus on beneficiaries from a specific Country (bilateral initiatives) or involve participants from several Countries (regional initiatives).

14. Are entities as partners required to meet the expectations of the call?

The required criteria only apply to the applicant body.

15. In the case of a project that foresees a series of exchange activities taking place both in Italy and in the Balkan region, is a balanced distribution required between the resources to be allocated to the activities in Italy and in the identified Western Balkan region? Or is it possible to allocate larger amounts to the initiatives to be carried out in Italy, given the involvement of citizens of the Balkan countries?

The Call for Proposals does not provide for specific restrictions in this respect.

16. If there is also a partner in the project, should the funds for the implementation of its activities be transferred to their bank account, and should the partner also submit the supporting documentation, if the partner is from Italy?

Our grant is transferred only to the organization that submits the application which is the sole responsible for its administration in case of eventual controls. If there are expenses supported by a partner organization you will need to collect and keep the pertinent invoices.

APPLICATION FORM AND DOCUMENTATION

17. In the application form, do the limits on the number of characters in the question boxes refer to 'characters with spaces' or 'characters without spaces'? As the number of characters is limited to only 1000-2000 (depending on the section), is it possible to have more precise instructions on how to fill in each section correctly?

The requirement refers to characters with space. These limits serve to contain the length of descriptions. Consequently, if the limit is 2000, more detailed descriptions are required than if the sections are limited to 1000 characters.

18. In the point 2.4 of the AF, could you precise what you mean by "*justifications*"?

By "*justifications*", we mean the reasons and motivations underlying the design of your project and the definition of the objectives to be achieved; they could be related to the environment of implementation of the project activities and/or to any problems/challenges identified in the region that your project aims to address/mitigate.

19. Referring to section 3.2 of the AF "*Work plan and time schedule*", is it necessary to create some kind of legend to accompany the chart?

The timetable provided is only an example; you can adapt it or use another format.

20. Does the point 3.3 of the AF mean that we have to co-construct the project with the beneficiaries? If not, could you clarify the meaning?

It requires a description of how the project beneficiaries will be involved, not only passively as recipients and as participants in the planned activities, but also actively e.g. in organizing events, leading workshops, community initiatives, as well as what tools they will be equipped with and what knowledge/skills they will acquire at the end of the project.

21. Referring to Article 4.2 "*Submission of the Project Proposal*", in the case of an applicant organization registered outside the EU, should the project proposal only be submitted in printed copy to the Italian Embassy in the country? Or must it also be sent in electronic format to the same Embassy?

Regarding the submission of the proposal, please note that it is mandatory to submit the application through the Italian Embassy (electronically, as a preferential rule).

22. Referring to Article 5.1 "*Supporting Documents/Annexes*", what do you mean by the term "headed paper"? Can the personnel of the applicant organization carry out the translation of such documents and annexes or is a certified translator required?

-Annexes a), b), c) and d) have to be provided in a certified copy to the original. Please note that in order to be valid in Italy, deeds and documents issued by foreign authorities must be apostilled in accordance with the Convention of 5 October 1961 (HCCH 1961 Apostille Convention) or, if the Convention does not apply, legalized by Italian diplomatic-consular Representations abroad.

- Annexes e) f) g) h) may be provided in the headed paper of your organization, in English language.

23. Should documents issued by public institutions need to be certified by a notary public, or an electronic signature from the organization's governing bodies would suffice?

In order to be valid in Italy, deeds and documents issued by foreign authorities must be apostilled in accordance with the Convention of 5 October 1961 (HCCH 1961 Apostille Convention) or, if the Convention does not apply, legalized by Italian diplomatic-consular Representations abroad. The Apostille is issued by the competent National Authorities.

With reference to the CfP Bando Balcani, the procedure asks for a certified electronic signature, or a signature accompanied by an ID document of the signature's holder, on docs A, A1, A2 and B. These are statements that the legal representative will provide under his/her legal responsibility. In case

your application will be successful, you will be asked to sign an additional declaration to not incur in any exclusion cause according to EU Directive 2014/24 art. 57.

The application procedure requests that the attachments listed at art.5.2, letters a, b, c, d have to be provided in a certified copy of the original, with Apostille issued by the competent National authority or legalized by the consular Representation. Documents written in foreign language must be accompanied by a complete translation in all its parts into Italian language, which must be certified as compliant with the foreign text by the diplomatic-consular authority or by official translator or interpreter who certifies conformity with the foreign text. The attachment e, f, g, h, have to be provided in Italian or in English, too: these are legal representative's statements, as A, A1, A2 and B.

EXPENSES AND BUDGET

24. Is it allowed to include, in the grant application, expenses related to the purchase of uniforms/clothing/personal protective equipment/visibility items for the benefit of the volunteers of both the lead organization and the partner organizations?

The Call for Proposals does not provide for specific restrictions in this respect.

25. Is there a DGUE/MAECI accounting manual on budget rules, or at least a document from which some basic criteria can be deduced?

The basic indications for the construction of the budget are contained in Annex A1 and in the pre-filled Annex A2.

26. Can activities scheduled for the beginning of November be included in the budget? When is the eligibility of project expenditure supposed to start?

Eligibility of expenses starts from the date of project approval. The actual start of activities must be ensured by 31 December.

27. Can "project design" be included in the justified expenses?

The Call for Proposals does not provide for specific restrictions in this respect.

28. Referring to Art.3.3 of the CfP, do "*general expenses*" include the costs of staff and utility needed to implement the project or the costs of the project management (project coordinators, assistant, etc.)?

"General Expenses" should be limited to the portion of project budget that the applicant cannot account for (like administrative expenses) and shall be limited to 8% of the overall project budget. Functions as such as coordination, administrative and accountancy support are considered "general expenses".

29. Referring to Article 10 "*Method of reporting the expenses incurred for the project*", should the organization implement the project with its own resources and only be reimbursed at the end of the project? Would it be possible to apply for a grant in advance (before the start of activities)?

As a rule, the grant will be disbursed upon accountancy in one lump sum (art. 10.1). It is possible to request an advanced payment (art. 10.4). You can receive an advanced payment of up to 75% of the grant by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, before starting the activities. In this case, the remaining part of the contribution will be disbursed once all activities of the project are terminated.

30. In the first budget sheet, named "*Detail of costs*", there are two distinct levels of detail: the expenditure chapters (indicated with numbers, e.g. 1. Staff; 2. Travel; 3. Hospitality) and the individual lines (indicated with letters). In some cases budget lines (a, b) have already been indicated, is it mandatory to follow a/b scheme everywhere?

The Financial Plan (Sheet 2) must refer to the Cost Details (Sheet 1); therefore, the letters to be entered in Sheet 2 must necessarily refer to the cost items indicated in Sheet 1. The letters indicated "E.g. 1a, 2b etc" refer to examples of compilation (depending on the cost items covered by its own budget or by the DGUE budget, or by that of possible partners). Therefore, the applicant will fill in the Financial Plan for each cost item indicating whether that item is covered by its own budget, by the DGUE budget or by others.

31. What is meant by "*in-kind contribution*" in Column D of Excel spreadsheet no. 2 "*Financial Plan*"?
The in-kind contribution refers exclusively to any non-cash contributions that the applicant or one of its partners intends to make to the project (typically staff costs, as documented in the reporting).
32. Is there an obligation to report on "*in-kind contribution*" by the project partners, other than administrative, organizational and coordination costs?
The project is subject to reporting, as indicated in art.10 of the call for proposals.
33. How can "*in-kind contribution*" that do not result in an invoice but are limited to the production of a good (e.g. a translation, a book) be justified?
Contributions in kind must in any case express demonstrable and accountable costs, incurred in the context of the project.
34. What is meant by "*% of total project cost*" in Column E of Excel spreadsheet no. 2 named "*Financial Plan*"?
The "% of total project cost" column will return, once the sheet is filled in, the percentage of project cost incurred by each party (DGUE, applicant and partners, if any).
35. In the third budget calculation sheet, named "*Detailed list of expenses incurred*", is a final balance sheet required? Does failure to fill it in beforehand constitute cause for ineligibility?
The third Excel sheet refers to the final balance sheet and does not have to be filled in at the application stage, unless the project has already started with its own funds and independently of the DGUE contribution and for which the required details are already known.
36. Since, according to our Country legislation, an auditing report is not required for small expenses, does the lack of this document, as foreseen by Art. 5.2 (d), would automatically disqualify our application?
Since, according to your legislation, an audit report is not required for your organisation due to the limited expenses, we would just need a written statement explaining why you are not subject to auditing in order to accept your application.