

# CULTURE AND Creativity FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS

Open Call for Proposals

Ref: CC4WBSOR 002/2024



Funded by  
the European Union

# Culture and Creativity for the Western Balkans (CC4WBs)

## Open Call for Proposals: ROUND 2

Ref: CC4WBSOR 002/2024

Total amount available under this Open Call: 1,650,000.00 EUR

Applications must be submitted by 17:00 (CET) on 27 May 2024

### 1. Background information

The joint project ‘**Culture and Creativity for the Western Balkans**’<sup>1</sup> (CC4WBs) implemented by UNESCO, the British Council and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), aims to improve the performance of the cultural and creative sectors in order to enhance skills, knowledge, and access to financial aid to increase competitiveness and sustain co-production and circulation of goods and services in the Western Balkans. 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 local sustainability.

The project was launched in April 2022 and is of duration of 48 months. Within this period the project will include a range of activities such as technical advice on data analysis and management for the culture sector, capacity-building for inclusive policy-making and regional exchanges, establishment of public/private partnerships to promote the cultural and creative valorisation of public spaces, cultural leadership programmes, connecting independent media portals to create and share content on culture in the region, mentoring and peer learning to bridge skills and knowledge gaps, activities to promote cooperation/co-production fostering a regional approach for inclusion and intercultural dialogue, mechanisms to stimulate private financing, market access and internationalization, small-scale cultural heritage projects to boost local participation and community engagement for sustainable development, and sharing good practices within the region and with EU Member States on community involvement in managing cultural heritage.

This is the second round of the Open Call for Proposals within four Thematic Windows of this Regional Joint Project, following the successful awarding process of the first round. The awarded grantees in the first round are found [here](#). The CC4WBs project will complement the first round with fresh ideas around 4 Thematic Windows and will cooperate with eligible parties in the region from the public and civil society sectors.

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<sup>1</sup> [Culture and Creativity for the Western Balkans \(CC4WBs\)](#)

## 2. Who can apply?

### LEAD APPLICANT

Participation in this Open Call for Proposals as a LEAD APPLICANT 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<sup>2</sup>.
- **Civil society organisations** (CSOs): foundations and non-profit organisations, registered in one or more of the WBs IPA Beneficiaries<sup>3</sup>.
  - Upon award of the grant, the Lead Applicant will sign a contract or partnership agreement<sup>4</sup> 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 January 2023**.
- **Important Notice for Lead Applicants:** All previously awarded Lead Applicants in the Round 1 of the CC4WBs Open Call for Proposals (ref. CC4WBS001OR/2023) are **not eligible** to apply as Lead Applicants in this Round 2 of the Open Call for Proposals, while they can participate in the role of Partners or Associates. **Applications submitted by the same Lead Applicant previously awarded in Round 1 will be automatically excluded.**

### PARTNER(S)

Participation in this Open Call for Proposals as a CROSS BORDER PARTNER 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 Beneficiaries.
  - Upon award of the grant, the Partner(s) will sign a contract or partnership agreement<sup>5</sup> with the Lead Applicant.
  - The Partner(s) must be organisations/institutions established in one of the WBs IPA Beneficiaries, before 1 January 2023.

The Proposal must clearly define which activities will be implemented by the Partner(s). There can be more than one partner linked to the same proposal. A **minimum of one Partner established in a**

<sup>2</sup> Western Balkans IPA Beneficiaries are: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo\* (as per UNSCR 1244/99).

<sup>3</sup> Civil society organisations (CSOs) include foundations and non-profit organisations registered at any level of government in one or more of the WBs IPA Beneficiaries.

<sup>4</sup> The contract or 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).

<sup>5</sup> See footnote n. 4 above.

**different WBs IPA Beneficiary than the Lead Applicant is a requirement for the Proposal to be eligible.** The project budget must clearly specify the amount of funds to be implemented by the Lead Applicant and the Partner(s) respectively, in separate columns as per the documentation attached to this Call.

The partner(s) take part in the project design and implementation while the Lead Applicant is responsible for the transfer of the funds assigned 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 assigned to its Partner(s).

### **ASSOCIATE(s)**

Associate(s) can be established in one of the WBs IPA Beneficiaries and/or European Countries.

Associates can be any of the following entities: businesses, companies, MSMEs<sup>6</sup>, universities and research institutes, CSOs and public institutions.

Associate(s) are the added value subjects to the implementation of project activities and can be reimbursed by the Lead Applicant and/or Partner for their contribution to the delivery of a particular service within the scope of the project proposal. Their engagement should be duly justified in the Form 1 Project Proposal.

They can also play an advisory role on a free-of-charge basis. Unlike Partner(s), (any) respective costs for the Associates shall not be specified in the separate budget column within Form 2 Project Budget.

### **Eliminatory Criteria**

**Partnership:** All submitted project proposals **must include at least two Western Balkans IPA Beneficiaries**, that is, proposals must involve the Lead Applicant and at least one partner organisation/institution from another IPA Beneficiary of the Western Balkans region, other than that of the Lead Applicant. Failure to apply in partnership will automatically exclude the application from further consideration.

Proposals **must contain information on all partners** involved in project implementation, as well as a clear description of the nature of the partnership and roles, responsibilities and obligations of the Lead Applicant and respective Partner(s).

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<sup>6</sup> Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises are herewith considered enterprises with a staff headcount of less than 250 units and a turnover of less than 50m Euro (or a balance sheet less or equal to 43m Euro). For additional information consult this link.

### 3. Fundamental principles for selecting the Proposals

**Regional Cooperation:** Regional Cooperation must be ensured through the creation of a partnership among actors (Lead Applicant and at least one Partner) from different WBs IPA Beneficiaries. Other possible contributions to the reinforcement of regional cooperation will have a positive impact on the evaluation.

**Gender equality and female entrepreneurship:** All projects should ensure gender balance across 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 should ensure substantial 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 will 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, and/or different ethnic and social groups working together, will be given preference in ranking as an evaluation criterion to be applied in case of equal scores.

**Do no-harm:** Proposals shall adopt a “do no harm” approach, i.e. avoid exposing people to additional risks, by 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 organized **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.

Based on the nature of the proposed activities and the project's overall design, the activities can be implemented in the Western Balkans region and other European countries. It is preferable, though not restrictive, that most of the activities are implemented within the Western Balkans IPA Beneficiaries.

1

ENHANCED LOCAL CULTURAL SPACES  
THROUGH IMPROVED SOLUTIONS AND  
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

2

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

3

REGIONAL NETWORKING, CULTURAL AND  
FESTIVAL CO-PRODUCTION AND PROMOTION  
FOR ENHANCED CULTURAL COOPERATION AND  
ACCESS

4

PROTECTING AND LEVERAGING CULTURAL  
HERITAGE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

## THEMATIC WINDOW 1:

### IMPROVED LOCAL CULTURAL SPACES THROUGH IMPROVED PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Applicants are invited to submit proposals to steer local creativity and cultural entrepreneurship and promote cultural and creative valorisation of public spaces, thus contributing to sustainable local community development, including youth and women. This Thematic Window promotes the **public-private partnership (PPP) model** as an increasingly effective strategy for drawing together the resources and know-how that are needed to foster the sustainable management of cultural and creative spaces.

This Thematic Window promotes:

- the regeneration of **rural, 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;
- 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 interventions, performing arts workshops and seminars, publishing projects, artistic residencies, art galleries and/or street-art sites, music venues, recording studios, etc.

In the short term, the results of the selected proposal(s) will contribute to **regenerate heritage across the Region stimulating social inclusion, creativity and cultural entrepreneurship**. Moreover, the selected proposal(s) are expected to increase civic engagement and participation, promote access to heritage, and enhance cooperation between public and private partners.

In the medium and long term, the selected proposal(s) will have a **positive impact on the overall socioeconomic development and sustainability of the concerned areas**.

Proposals under this TW **must 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.*

**Please note that either the Lead Applicant itself, or (one of) its Partner(s), must be a local public entity. Either parties must contribute with a public or communal infrastructure (digital, spatial) where project activities will be implemented.**

**Budget:** Applications will not exceed the requested amount of up to 50,000.00 EUR.

## THEMATIC WINDOW 2:

### ARTISTS, MEDIA PROFESSIONALS, STUDENTS, BUSINESSES, MSMEs, AND CULTURAL and TOURISM OPERATORS MOBILISED, CONNECTED AND ENABLED TO PROMOTE THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS IN AND FROM THE WESTERN BALKANS

Applicants are invited to submit project proposals aimed at:

- I) Stimulating regional cooperation on specific topics (e.g. culture and creativity or media for social innovation) involving partners from the different targeted IPA beneficiaries in order to enhance interaction and capacity-building for the improvement, diversification and promotion of cultural goods and services across different WB IPA Beneficiaries with the possibility of sustainable future cooperation.

Proposals can include a blend of activities, **including (digital) skills development** for an improved performance in the chosen area of the cultural and creative sector(s) including media aiming at the mobility of stakeholders, regional exchanges and cooperation and co-production, and supporting the internationalization of the applicant's main area of expertise.

- II) Organization of **regional residencies in cultural and creative venues** across the WBs, aimed at the professional development of artists, creators, and other cultural professionals in any CCIs subsectors, including visual arts and design, audiovisual and performing arts (film, music, dance, theatre).

Residencies will stimulate peer-to-peer exchange of ideas, experience and artistic skills, and provide participants with the opportunity to meet, interact and work together in a culturally diverse and inspiring environment. By fostering cultural mobility and cooperation, the residencies will stimulate regional partnerships as well as quality co-production of multicultural contents, which in the long run will enrich intercultural dialogue and creativity in the WBs region.

Residencies will equip participants with knowledge and skills on how to create artistic expressions using multimedia tools and how to access the WBs and EU markets. Residencies will also envisage workshops and talks with speakers from the WBs on various topics, including the professional status of artists and the improvement of their economic and social working conditions in light of the specific WBs context.

**Budget:** Applications will not exceed the requested amount of up to 25,000.00 EUR.

**Note:** This lot is open to applicants from UNESCO Member States<sup>7</sup> in the Western Balkans.

<sup>7</sup> UNESCO Member States in the Western Balkans are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia.

### THEMATIC WINDOW 3:

## REGIONAL NETWORKING, CULTURAL AND FESTIVAL CO-PRODUCTION AND PROMOTION FOR ENHANCED CULTURAL COOPERATION AND ACCESS

### LOT 1:

Applicants are invited to prepare proposals with the aim to facilitate production, skills and capacities development of small and bigger festivals through on-the-job learning, mentorship, exchange of best practices and featuring multi-cultural content.

Festivals in the region are invited to apply in a partnership including one well-established and experienced festival and at least one emerging and newly established festival. The joint project proposal should demonstrate a collaboration through coproduction, including opportunities for learning, exchanges, promotion of young talents, and multi-cultural content sharing.

**As a minimum requirement, all proposals should include:**

- **joint festival coproduction and multi-cultural content sharing**

**Complemented by at least one of the following activity areas:**

- **peer-to-peer learning** – learning sessions **delivered by Lead Applicant or Partner to exchange knowledge and experience between themselves.**
- **peer-to-peer learning** - learning sessions **organized by Lead Applicant or Partner, delivered by peer/s coming from other European festivals** to share knowledge and experience from a similar European peer festival/s.
- **on-the-job training** activities between two organisations - targeting specific topics/skills gaps.
- **mentorship** - more experienced professionals providing mentoring to less experienced colleagues from partners organisations.

Whenever possible, the hybrid delivery model to be used to enable a wider participation on learning events.

Parallely and in addition to the grant scheme implementation, capacity-building support to existing or new festivals (selected grant beneficiaries) will be delivered through **Festivals Academy**, which will be organized by the CC4WBs project to address skills and capacities gaps in festival management, with a specific focus on audience development, new formats of festivals, business models for cultural tourism, etc. Festivals Academy will be a skills and network development action that will be tailored to specific needs identified through training needs assessment of selected grant beneficiaries. The awarded grantees will be strengthened by a unique opportunity to nominate at least one member from their respective organisations to participate in the capacity-building activities delivered in collaboration with a leading European festival authority. Participants will be able to learn from European experts on new festival development and to connect with festival professionals across the WBs and with other European countries.

**Budget:** Applications will not exceed the requested amount of up to 30,000.00 EUR.

### LOT 2a and LOT 2b:

Applicants may submit proposals for **artistic co-productions** that aim 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 visual arts and performing arts, audio video content including film and music releases, photography, publications, design, fashion, creative economy-related projects, 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.

**Artistic co-productions** grants will empower WB producers to reach beyond their standard practice, create links beyond their current geographical scope and promote young talents, in particular women.

Applicants can apply for either:

**LOT 2a)** - Budget **up to 10,000 EUR** - this is an opportunity for applicants to empower their staff and support them in becoming competitive producers of cultural and creative content.

**LOT 2b)** - Budget **from 10,001 EUR to 20,000 EUR**- this is an opportunity for applicants to co-produce cultural content with fresh ideas while capacitating distributors to obtain new quality for regional and international audiences.

### LOT 3:

Under this Lot, two typologies of project proposals may be funded, as follows:

- 1) Applicants are invited to submit proposals for the **co-production and co-organization of a regional networking event targeting UNESCO Creative Cities**, with the aim of supporting peer-to-peer exchange of knowledge and experience at the regional level.

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in 2004 to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development. 350 cities around the world currently make up this network, working together towards harnessing culture and creativity as part of their local development strategies, and displaying innovative practices in human-centred urban planning by cooperating actively at the international level. The Network covers seven creative fields: Crafts and Folk Art, Media Arts, Film, Design, Gastronomy, Literature and Music.

Potential applicants to this specific Lot are **cities from the WBs IPA Beneficiaries that are already members of the [UNESCO Creative Cities Network \(UCCN\)](#).**

In addition, proposals must:

- directly involve the local administration of the UCCN member from the WBs IPA Beneficiaries either as the Lead Applicant or as a Partner;
- involve a city from a different European country that is already member of the UCCN as an Associate.

Please note that, complementarily to the first abovementioned condition, the Lead Applicant or Partner can be another local administration or a CSO.

- II) Applicants are invited to submit proposals for **stimulating regional cooperation** on specific topics involving partners from the different WBs IPA Beneficiaries through the following approach:
- Organizing **specific networking event(s)** in one (or more) of the WBs IPA Beneficiaries for larger groups of industry professionals, aiming at becoming a leader in the networking and facilitation of collaboration among relevant cultural and creative industries. These events may provide support to existing or new festivals, exhibitions, conferences, forums, annual or periodic gatherings or similar networking events focusing on audience development, production development and professional exchanges in any of the artistic and cultural domains, including crafts and folk art, media arts, film, design, gastronomy, literature and music as well as contribute to the development of sustainable cultural tourism at regional level, the promotion of young talents, notably women, and co-productions featuring multi-cultural content.
  - Importantly, Organizers of the Call will require from successful applicant(s) to target CC4WBs pre-selected participants and organize the specific event(s) **for up to 100 people** to create and stimulate innovative networking practices within the Western Balkans region. These event(s) can be linked to a specific domain of the CCS, or adopt an across-industries approach. In addition, one of the sessions should be allocated to the CC4WBs team and will be used for brainstorming on future networking events.

**Collaboration with European organizations and institutions in the relevant fields is encouraged (in the capacity of Associates).** Cultural events are preferably to be held on a rotating basis in different venues within WBs IPA Beneficiaries and European countries.

**Budget:** Applications will not exceed the requested amount of up to 30,000.00 EUR.

**Note:** This Lot is open to applicants from UNESCO Member States in the Western Balkans<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> UNESCO Member States in the Western Balkans are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.

## 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. The engagement of local community actors should support the **definition, improvement, or implementation of inclusive and sustainable management systems and plans for cultural heritage sites**<sup>9</sup>.

The following domains may be covered (non-exhaustive list):

- ✓ projects to develop new management plans for cultural heritage sites or improve existing ones through people-centred, participatory approaches;
- ✓ enhancement of physical and cultural accessibility of cultural heritage sites, including through enhanced heritage interpretation competences and services;
- ✓ development of sustainable and culturally sensitive tourism in cultural heritage sites;
- ✓ creation or improvement of visitor/information centres of cultural heritage sites;
- ✓ digital solutions for cultural heritage sites;
- ✓ development of heritage-based creative industries including the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

Applying consortia should 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.

In the short term, the results of this activity will **improve the management of cultural heritage at the local level** in line with relevant systems/plans; **increase heritage understanding** and appreciation; provide opportunities for **business development and job creation**; **increase civic engagement and participation**; foster inclusion and access to heritage; enhance cooperation between public and private partners as well as at transnational level in the WBs.

In the medium and long term, the activity will have a **positive impact on the overall socio-economic development and sustainability of concerned sites/territories**.

Proposals must 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.*

**Budget:** Applications will not exceed the requested amount of up to 80,000.00 EUR.

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<sup>9</sup>"Cultural heritage sites" are works of man, or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites, which are of value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.

## 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 the Lead Applicant and the Partner(s), respectively. The amount of budget requested should be within the following financial thresholds:

TW/	LOT	Amount (EUR)	Budget Form
1	-	Up to 50,000	Form 2 A Budget Template
2	-	Up to 25,000	Form 2 A Budget Template
3	1	Up to 30,000	Form 2 B Budget Template
3	2a	Up to 10,000	Form 2 B Budget Template
	2b	Up to 20,000	
3	3	Up to 30,000	Form 2 A Budget Template
4	-	Up to 80,000	Form 2 A Budget Template

### Co-financing requirements

1. For grant values up to 10,000 EUR, no co-financing is required.
2. For grant values exceeding 10,000 EUR, the minimum amount of co-financing is 10% of the requested amount for grants while the maximum co-financing is 40%.

*Example: The required grant is 20,000 EUR; the minimum amount of co-financing is 2,000 EUR (10%). The total budget would in this case be 22,000 EUR.*

The source of co-financing can be obtained from the Lead Applicant and/or the Partner(s), and/or from the external third party, as per agreed proportion.

Co-financing provided by the Lead Applicant and/or Partner(s) may also be an in-kind yet monetized contribution. The amount and type of co-financing (financial or in-kind) should be clearly indicated in the Project Budget document.

The amount and type of co-financing (financial and/or in-kind) should be clearly indicated in the Project Budget (Form 2A or 2B).

What is in-kind contribution? Co-financing provided by the Lead Applicant and/or Partner(s) and/or third parties may also be an in-kind yet monetized contribution. This may include goods, services and the use of premises, professional services in the form of time that employees spend on the implementation of activities, the use of (own) equipment or materials deemed necessary for carrying out activities and achieving the project’s objectives which can be monetized through amortization rate. The Lead Applicant and/or its Partner(s) must indicate as exact as possible the value of the in-kind contribution in the proposed budget. This value must not be subject to subsequent changes. If a cost cannot be valued on the market, it cannot be accepted as in-kind contribution. Market value should be evidence-based. 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 relevant legislation of the WBs IPA Beneficiary of the applicant.

**Note:** The Organizers 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.

**The Organizers 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 expenditures<sup>10</sup>):** 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, which must be elaborated in the budget under the heading of Project Expenditures. If (existing) or newly recruited staff works 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. The Equipment category under project expenditures is eligible if unambiguously necessary to implement the grant and if the ownership will be transferred, in accordance with the rules of the European Commission for the CC4WBs 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.

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

**Equipment expenditures:** Applicable **only** for **Form 2 B Budget form (TW 3 / LOT 1, LOT 2a and 2b)** - up to 25% of the total budget can be spent on equipment expenditure.

**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.**

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<sup>10</sup> 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.

## 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;
- Settling interest debt;
- Return of capital;
- Costs incurred during the suspension of the implementation of the Agreement;
- Payment of VAT and duty charges that are recoverable/deductible by the Lead Applicant and Partner(s);
- Bonuses, provisions, reserves or non-remuneration related costs. Employers' contributions to pension or other insurance funds run by the Lead Applicant and Partner(s) may only be eligible to the extent they do not exceed the actual payments made by these schemes and that the amount provisioned does not exceed the contribution that could have been made to an external fund;
- Banking charges for the transfers from and to the Contractor;
- 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 Partner(s) i.e. activities that are not carried out specifically for the purpose of implementing the project;
- 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.
- Costs of purchase of land or buildings,
- Entertainment costs such as: gifts, alcohol, restaurant bills or hospitality costs for personnel not directly participating in the project;
- Costs declared by the Lead Applicant or the Partner(s) under another agreement financed by the European Union budget (including through the European Development Fund);
- Currency exchange losses;
- In addition, projects funded under this Call cannot be used to pay for the engagement of public officials<sup>11</sup> in this project.

## 7. Project duration

The duration of the Project shall be at least three **(3) months and up to fifteen (15) months** from the date of the contract's signature.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

## 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 (filled out and signed, PDF)
- Form 6** Financial Identification Form (filled out and signed, PDF)
- Form 7** Declaration of Eligibility for Lead Applicant and Partner (filled out and signed, PDF)
- Form 8** Partnership Statement (filled out and signed, PDF)

- Forms are provided in the [LINK](#) to this Open Call for Proposals and their format should not be altered.
- Video tutorials to support you through the preparation of your application are available at the following: [LINK TO VIDEO TUTORIALS](#)
- Handwritten form submissions will not be accepted.
- 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.

## 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**.

Applications must be submitted electronically, no later than **27 May 2024** 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).

*Example: Lead Applicant's Name\_Thematic Window 3 / LOT 1*

### Please note:

- Applicants will receive an email confirming the receipt of their application.
- Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

- Applications must be sent as an email, containing eight (8) mandatory forms as ‘attachments’, that should not exceed **35 MB** and **should not be shared through We Transfer, One Drive, Google Drive, or similar platforms.**
- Applications received in any other form other than as described above will not be considered.
- **Last-minute submissions are strongly discouraged, due to the potential technical glitches.**
- **If the application is not received on time, applicants must prove with email outbox that the file has been submitted prior to 17:00 hrs (CET) on Monday, 27 May 2024. In case applicants fail to submit proof, their application will be rejected.**

## 10. Number of Project Proposals & 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 Proposals.

A Lead Applicant in one project may be a Partner in another project, meaning that the same applicant potentially can be awarded the grant as a Lead Applicant in one project and another grant as a Partner in a different partnership. No applicant can be selected for more than a **total of two (2) projects**, one in the capacity of a Lead Applicant, and one of a Partner.

## 11. Evaluation of Proposals

The evaluation of the submitted Proposals is conducted in a two step-process:

### 1. ADMINISTRATIVE CHECK

An administrative check will be performed in accordance with the table below. The Proposal is considered approved for technical evaluation if the administrative requirements are met according to the Administrative Check List below. **Failure to pass the administrative check**, i.e. obtaining the value 'YES' in all columns as per the below table, the Proposal will be automatically rejected, and will not be submitted for the Technical Evaluation.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHECK LIST		
Compliance with administrative criteria:	YES	NO
1. Application submitted within the deadline		
2. Application fulfils the partnership (eliminary) criteria		
3. Applicant has not been awarded with the grant in the previous cycle of CC4WBs Calls for Proposals (Round 1 Ref: CC4WBS001OR/2023) in the same capacity as a Lead Applicant		
4. Filled out project proposal form provided in the requested format (Form 1)		
5. Filled out Project Budget Form provided in the requested format (Form 2 A or 2 B)		
6. Filled out Project Log frame provided in the requested format (Form 3)		
7. Filled out Activity and Visibility Plan provided in the requested format (Form 4)		
8. Filled out Administrative Identification Form provided in the requested format (Form 5)		
9. Filled out Financial Identification Form provided in the requested format (Form 6)		
10. Declaration of Eligibility provided in the requested format (Form 7)		
11. Partnership Statement provided in the requested format (Form 8)		

#### The applications will also be rejected if:

- The organizers of the Open Call for Proposals were provided with false information;
- The Lead Applicant and/or Partner(s) attempted to obtain confidential information or influence the Evaluation Committee.
- Applications submitted by the same Lead Applicant previously awarded in Round 1 will be automatically excluded.

## 2. TECHNICAL EVALUATION

The technical evaluation 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 Lead Applicant and Partner(s) lack 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 and Partner(s) meet 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.

Technical Evaluation Chart

Criterion	Maximum score	Points
<b>1. Financial and operational capacity</b>	<b>20</b>	
1.1 Do the Lead Applicant and Partner(s) have experience and capacity for <b>project management</b> ?	5	
1.2 Do the Lead Applicant and Partner(s) have sufficient <b>professional and technical capacity</b> ? (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	
<b>2. Relevance</b>	<b>30</b>	
2.1 To what extent does the proposal respond to the chosen <b>Thematic Window and Lot</b> defined in the Open Call for Proposals?	5	
2.2 To what extent are the <b>final beneficiaries</b> and target groups clearly defined and strategically selected, by also upholding the principles of <b>inclusivity</b> (diversity, vulnerability, representation of urban and rural communities)?	5	
2.3 Does the Project Proposal provide clear explanations of the <b>needs of the target group and end beneficiaries</b> , as well as the approach adopted by the project to respond to identified needs?	5	
2.4 To what extent is <b>gender equality and/or female entrepreneurship</b> addressed in the Project Proposal?	5	

2.5 Is the project aiming to help <b>regional cooperation</b> in the target WBs IPA Beneficiaries or between WBs and the EU?	5	
2.6 To what extent is <b>youth and/or youth entrepreneurship (job-shadowing for Thematic Windows 1 and 4 is required)</b> addressed in the Project Proposal?	5	
<b>3. Methodology</b>	<b>20</b>	
3.1 Do the proposed <b>activities</b> logically and practically match the objectives and expected results?	5	
3.2 Are <b>measures to mitigate risks</b> in place?	5	
3.3 Does the project contain <b>objectively measurable performance indicators</b> , 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), Associate(s) – if any) clearly defined and strategically assigned?	5	
<b>4. Sustainability</b>	<b>15</b>	
4.1 Will the project activities have a <b>concrete and long-term impact</b> on target groups?	5	
4.2 Does the project have the <b>potential</b> 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 <b>sustainable</b> ? (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	
<b>5. Budget and Cost-Effectiveness</b>	<b>15</b>	
5.1 Is the ratio between estimated costs and expected results satisfactory?	5	
5.2 Are the proposed costs <b>necessary</b> 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	
<b>Maximum total score</b>	<b>100</b>	

**THE EVALUATION COMMITTEE WILL NOT CONSIDER PROJECT PROPOSALS IF:**

→ The **project duration** is not in line with Section 7 (3 -15 months);

## 12. Further information about the Open Call for Proposals

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](#) 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 via the [link](#).

Answers to the received questions will be provided **publicly** each Monday during the whole period of the Open Call for Proposals. The publicly provided answers will be available via the [link](#).

#### Timetable for further information and clarification:

<b><u>Deadline for requesting clarifications:</u></b>	Friday, 17 May 2024
<b><u>Last publication of FAQ (Questions and Answers)</u></b>	Monday, 20 May 2024

## 13. Notice of Decision

All applicants will be notified in writing of the decision regarding their project proposal **within 75 days** from the deadline for submission of applications.

The results will be published on the Project's [Action Page](#) .

## 14. Steps following the decision on Grant Award

### Signing of contract

Following the decision on grant award prior to contract signing, the designated Contractor<sup>12</sup> may request the Lead Applicant to introduce changes to the project proposal, including budget adjustments to comply with the Contractor's rules and procedures and with the recommendations of the Evaluation Committee, 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. Upon satisfactory completion of the due diligence procedure, the contract with the designated Contractor can be signed.

**Documents pertaining to the administration of the grant in support of the contract with the designated Contractor 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.**

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 regulated by the Contract.**

As part of the due diligence procedure, the following documents are required, either in the original language or translated in English, to be available for review by the Contractor. If the Lead Applicant or the Partner fails to provide any of the below documents, the application risks to be disqualified. The Contractor reserves the right to request the original documentation (in hard copy).

<sup>12</sup> Designated Contractor represents one or more of the Organizers of this Open Call for Proposals.

- 1 Valid legal entity's registration form** (applicable for the Lead Applicant and Partner(s)). Please note that the Lead Applicant and Partner(s) must be established prior to 01 January 2023.
- 2 Statute** (for Organisations) or other document confirming the mandate of the organisation (for Institutions), applicable for the Lead Applicant and Partner(s).
- 3 Balance sheet and income statement** for 2022 and/or 2023 certified by a chartered accountant or authorised person, or equivalent (financial statements), if applicable, for the Lead Applicant and Partner(s).  
In case of public entities, equivalent financial reports and certificates are accepted. Please note that these reports need to be signed and stamped by an authorised person within the entity/organisation.
- 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 2024. In case of public entities, equivalent financial reports and certificates are accepted. Please note that these reports need to be signed and stamped by an authorised person within the entity/organisation.

### **Reporting on implementation of project activities and financing of justified costs**

The Lead Applicant 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.

## 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 the Organizers of this Open Call for Proposals, 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](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 Member States, 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 sections before submitting the application, as per the links below:

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