OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS

GUIDELINES FOR BOOST GRANT SCHEME

Contracting authority: ALDA – European Association for Local Democracy

Title:
Support the Civil Society Regional Initiatives in the Western Balkans

Project: BOOST - Balkans for Optimising Opportunities, Sustainability and Transformation of Civil Society

Call Reference Number: 001/24

Date of publishing the call: 25.10.2024

Deadline for submission of full application:

27th of December 2024, at 17.00 CET

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boostbalkans.com

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Contents

1. SUB-GRANTING SCHEME

1.1. Background

[ALDA](#) – the European Association for Local Democracy – is implementing a 3-year project entitled [BOOST](#) - Balkans for Optimizing Opportunities, Sustainability and Transformation of Civil Society This project is being carried out in six Western Balkan countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. It is financially supported by [Agence Française de Développement - AFD](#).

The purpose of the project is to promote the democratic, economic, and social development of the Western Balkans region within the context of EU enlargement, by strengthening civil society in the areas of youth and entrepreneurship, environmental protection, rural development, preservation of cultural heritage and community development. The core activity of the project consists of two rounds of a sub-granting scheme, providing regional and national support to civil society organizations (CSOs) active in six Western Balkan countries.

The regional sub-granting scheme aims to enhance the capacity of CSOs in the Western Balkans by fostering cooperation between civil society and other local stakeholders. Through the establishment of regional partnerships at all levels, the scheme seeks to increase citizen influence in the decision-making process. This initiative is expected to contribute to long-term positive impact on communities and promote sustainable development of their societies. Active civil society participation in policy development processes is crucial for European integration.

One of the goals of the BOOST project is to support the European integration of the entire region, not just individual countries. The project aims to encourage regional cooperation and networking to help achieve this goal together. To support this, the BOOST project has created a Regional Grant Scheme that focuses on building networks and partnerships across the region. This approach is intended to help the Western Balkans move forward collectively towards European integration.

The present Guidelines for Applicants are intended to inform the potential applicants on the general Rules of BOOST Grant Scheme. As such, they need to be carefully followed during all the preparatory work of the Project Proposals.

1.2. Objectives of the program and priority issues

The **overall objective** of this call for proposal is strengthening civil society in the Western Balkan countries through implementation of initiatives related to the **i) youth and entrepreneurship; ii) rural development and environment; iii) preservation of cultural heritage and community development.**

Specific Objectives of this call for proposals include:

- Strengthen the role and the capacities of civil society organizations in the Western Balkans countries, which work for the democratization and sustainable development of the region.
- Set up a network of relevant stakeholders (civil society, local authorities, universities and others) committed to the stable and democratic, economic, cultural and social development of the region.
- Promote and strengthen a shared narrative among civil society and decision-makers that reinforces European values of peace, democracy, and inclusion of young people (men and women, boys and girls) at regional level.

Expected Results

- CSOs have improved their capacity to promote sustainable development initiatives in the three key pillars, at regional levels
- Cooperation and partnership between civil society organizations and public institutions have been strengthened at local, national and regional level
- Promoting and strengthening a shared discourse between civil society and decision-makers that reinforces European values of peace, democracy and inclusion of young people (men and women, boys and girls) at regional level

Priority issues under this call include the three key pillars identified within the BOOST project, along with a cross-cutting focus on civic participation.

I. <u>Youth and entrepreneurship</u> - Activities eligible for financial support include the empowerment of youth in the field of social entrepreneurship, regional activities aimed at youth empowerment, and the active participation of youth in decision-making processes. Additionally, initiatives promoting social entrepreneurship among women and improving youth access to entrepreneurship are essential. Civic mobilization and awareness-raising activities led by youth, along with training and capacity-building for local actors in the three thematic pillars, are also key areas. Networking events for civil society organizations (CSOs) that focus on the three thematic pillars further support this pillar.

II. <u>Rural development and environmental protection</u> - encompasses activities such as rural development projects and support for youth involved in rural initiatives, as well as the empowerment of women in rural development. Environmental initiatives linked to awareness-raising, research, and policy formulation are also vital. This pillar includes environmental campaigns and studies related to the thematic pillars, promoting sustainable practices and enhancing environmental stewardship. As well, networking events for civil society organizations (CSOs) are strongly encouraged.

III. <u>Preservation of cultural heritage and community development</u> - under this pillar, activities should focus on promoting cultural heritage and foster community development. This includes using cultural heritage as a catalyst for local and regional economic development, integrating it into tourism and other relevant sectors, and encouraging active networking among civil society organizations (CSOs). These initiatives aim to preserve cultural heritage while fostering community growth and economic opportunities.

The program aims to tackle several **cross-cutting priorities**, such as Gender equality, European values, and Citizen engagement. The projects should be "gender-sensitive," considering the distinct needs of male and female beneficiaries, and ensure both genders are well-represented and their participation facilitated. Outcomes should be gender-differentiated if applicable, with indicators disaggregated by gender.

Projects should also align with European values such as democracy and peace, particularly in the Western Balkans' pre-accession phase to the EU, including training sessions to promote European identity and shared citizenship. Furthermore, CSOs must be able to influence local and national decisions, reflecting citizens' will through participative governance.

Projects must incorporate civic engagement initiatives and demonstrate partnerships with local authorities and national institutions. Refer to the Council of Europe's Code of Good Practice for methodologies on participatory democracy. These priorities ensure alignment with the program's objectives and values.

Target groups

The **target audience for this call** are all non-state, non-profit organizations such as Civil Society Organizations that have national and regional experience of working on the three thematic pillars of the call: youth and entrepreneurship, environmental protection, rural development, cultural heritage and community development, operating in the six Western Balkan countries targeted by the project.

When creating a project proposal, special attention should be given to the inclusion of the target **group** - young people aged 15-29 who are actively involved in civil society, start-ups, social incubators, and community initiatives, while ensuring equal participation of men and women . It is crucial to ensure gender balance, with a focus on disadvantaged youth from rural areas and diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, particularly women. The program aims to equip these young individuals with skills that enhance their civic participation and involvement in decision-making processes.

Direct beneficiaries - The Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that will receive support through a sub-granting scheme, benefiting at the regional level. Other categories of direct beneficiaries are individuals benefiting directly from activities of sub-granting schemes, networking events, and capacity building initiatives within the participating Western Balkan countries.

The **indirect beneficiaries** are citizens of communities residing in the six countries of the Western Balkans, who will experience improved quality of life, neighborly relations and enhanced regional cooperation on the path towards EU integration.

1.3. Financial allocation provided by the Contracting Authority

The overall indicative amount made available under this Call for Proposals is EUR 450,000.

ALDA shall respect and ensure balanced distribution of funds per each contracting party of the Western Balkans countries (WB6).

The selection process will choose up to 6 projects in three different LOTS

*The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to award all available funds or cancel the call, should the quality or number of proposals received be insufficient.

1.4. Size of grants

ALDA will fund up to a maximum grant per project of 60,000 EUR.

Minimum requested amount of the grant must be 42,000 EUR.

- ALDA Grant shall not exceed 80% of total eligible costs of the action.
- Co-financing amount committed by the applicant must not fall below 20% of the total eligible costs of the action
- In-kind contributions are not accepted as eligible co-financing for this Call for Proposals.

Projects with higher co-financing levels will be prioritized for funding due to their greater potential for impact.

Example of the co-financing formula:

Total proposed Budget: 75.000€

Co-financing amount: 75.000€/times 0.20=15.000€.

This means that for a total proposed Budget of 75.000€, 15,000€ would need to be secured from co-financing sources. The remaining amount (60.000€) could be requested from the BOOST Project.

*This call for proposals is not funded by the European Union; however, co-financing may be provided through other European Union funds.
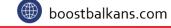
1.5. Duration

The project duration may not be lower than 14 (fourteen) months nor exceed 16 (sixteen) months, excluding the Reporting Period (30 days after finishing of project implementation timeframe). Starting period of project implementation is March 2025.

2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

2.1 Eligibility of applicants

Civil society organizations from all 6 countries, applying in consortiums of minimum 3 CSOs from 3 countries can apply for Regional Grants. The applicants must have experience in working in the Western Balkans region and with various stakeholders (state and non-state).

<u>Lead applicant</u>

In order to be eligible for a regional grant, the lead applicant and its partners must:

● be legally registered in one of the 6 WB countries;
● be non-profit making;
● be a civil society organization (CSO)[1] or a regional registered network of CSOs working on one or more thematic pillars of relevance to this Call for Applications, excluding political, faith based and religious organizations;
● be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the project with their partners, not acting as an intermediary;
● have as a minimum 2 years (i.e. 24 months) experience on one or more thematic pillars of this call under which the application is submitted.

Lead applicants must sign the Declaration by the Lead Applicant Annex E and Partnership Statement Annex D.

Note* National branches of international organizations registered in the 6WB countries may participate in this call only as co-applicants.

If awarded the sub-grant contract, the lead applicant will become the beneficiary identified as the coordinator in the Special Conditions (part of the standard Grant Contact). The coordinator is the sole interlocutor of the contracting authority. It represents and acts on behalf of other co-applicants (if any) and coordinates the design and implementation of the action.

Partners (co-applicants) must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable to the lead applicant itself.

Legal entities and individuals that appear on the Sanctions List https://gels-avoirs.dgtresor.gouv.fr/List of the Directorate General of the Treasury of France are not eligible to apply on this call.

<u>Co-applicant(s)</u>

● Co-applicants participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the lead applicant.
● Co-applicants must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable to the lead applicant himself.

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[1] An organization must be established under the national law and its seat is in one of WB countries.

Co-applicants must participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the lead applicant.

If awarded the grant contract, the co-applicant(s) (if any) will become beneficiary(ies) in the action (together with the coordinator).

2.2 Number of applications per applicants

The lead applicant may not submit more than 1 application under this call for applications. However, it may be a partner in 1 other application of the same call at the same time.

The lead applicant may be awarded more than 1 grant under this call for applications (once as a Lead Applicant, and second as a partner).

A Co-applicant may be the partner (and awarded as a partner) in maximum 2 applications under this call for applications.

2.3. Eligibility of Partnership consortium

Partnership is required to apply for the Regional Call for Proposal. Partnerships must include Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that align with the project's goals:

• Diverse Representation: Partnerships must include participants from at least three (3) different WB countries.

• Partnership Structure: Each partnership should have one (1) lead applicant and at least two (2) project partners (Co-applicants) from WB countries to ensure diversity and effectiveness in tackling regional challenges.

• Lead Applicant's Role: The lead applicant is responsible for submitting the project proposal, signing the Declaration by the Lead Applicant, signing the grant agreement with the ALDA, and representing the partnership. Co-applicants must meet the lead applicant's eligibility criteria.

However, partnerships formed from more than 3 partners are encouraged to apply and will be prioritized when evaluating the proposals.

2.4. Eligibility of costs

Eligible costs will be reimbursed based on the actual expenses incurred, as outlined in the budget. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget must be well-planned, simple, and realistic, using market rates for cost estimations in EUR. Only costs listed in the budget will be financed. Applicants must provide detailed justifications for project costs and financing sources in Annex B .(Budget of the Action).

Recommendations to award a sub-grant are always subject to the condition that the checks preceding the signing of the sub-grant contract do not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (such as arithmetical errors, inaccuracies, unrealistic costs and ineligible costs). The checks may give rise to requests for clarification and may lead the contracting authority to impose

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modifications or reductions to address such mistakes or inaccuracies. It is not possible to increase the grant or the percentage of financing as a result of these corrections.

It is therefore in the applicants' interest to provide a realistic and cost-effective budget.

2.4.1. Eligible costs

Eligible costs are actual costs incurred by the grantees which meet all the following criteria:

✓ incurred during the implementation of the project
✓ indicated in the estimated overall budget of the project;
✓ necessary for the implementation of the project which is the subject of the grant;
✓ identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the beneficiary is established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary;
✓ complying with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
✓ reasonable, justified, and comply with the principle of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

Eligible direct costs, the following direct costs of the grantees shall be eligible:

✓ **Human Resources Costs**: The cost of staff assigned to the project, corresponding to actual gross salaries, including social security charges and other remuneration-related costs. Salaries shall not exceed 40% of the total project budget.
✓ **Travel and Subsistence Costs**: For staff and other persons taking part in the project, provided they do not exceed those normally borne by the grantee according to its rules and regulations or the rates (i.e.Accommodation costs up to 65 EUR/night, Accommodation and board up to 100 EUR/night). Travel costs need to be justified as the most cost-effective option. Travel on a personal vehicle will be allowed only if properly justified and calculated on the basis of 0.25 EUR/km.
✓ **Purchase Costs (Equipment and supplies)**: For equipment (new or used) and supplies specifically for the purposes of the project.
✓ **Costs for project activities: Used for budgeting of direct program expenses.**
✓ **Eligible VAT**: VAT that is not recoverable by any other means.
✓ **Other Costs**: Any other costs arising directly from the requirements imposed by the grant agreement.

The categories listed above represent possible eligible direct costs. If a project does not foresee certain costs (e.g., workshops/seminars/conferences), these categories can be left empty in the estimated budget.

To be eligible, costs must be incurred during the project duration, starting from the grant agreement's entry into force until the project deadline. All eligible direct costs must be justified by supporting documents, such as invoices, timesheets, or evidence of travel or participation in meetings. ALDA reserves the right to request any supporting documents to verify that the costs declared as eligible were actually incurred and paid.

2.4.2. Non-eligible costs

The following costs cannot be covered by the ALDA grant:

o Costs incurred for Applicant's activities undertaken before signature of the contract
o Debts and debt service charges (interest).
o Provisions for losses, or potential future liabilities.
o Applicant's activities aimed at profit making activities.
o Applicant's activities that are affiliated directly with/or supportive to political or religious agendas.
o Re-granting
o Costs declared by the beneficiary(ies) and financed through other grants
o Purchases of land, buildings and vehicles
o Currency exchange losses
o Credits to third parties
o Bonuses included in costs of staff; customs and import duties, or any other charges
o Fines, financial penalties and expenses of litigation
o Beneficiary's individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses
o Alcohol and tobacco costs

This project does not foresee % of indirect costs

2.5. Eligibility of activities

The project shall encompass a range of activities aimed at achieving its objectives and maximizing its impact. Project actions shall include regional events, awareness-raising campaigns, workshops, training and capacity-building for local actors in the three pillars; networking events and advocacy efforts all of which serve to mobilize stakeholders and provoke a positive change in their communities. Any event that is focused on building a sense of community and exchanging best practices, fostering a spirit of cooperation among members, is recommended.

Indicative types of activities which may be financed under this Call for Proposals are given below (please note that this list is non-exhaustive):

LOT 1: YOUTH AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

● **Youth Entrepreneurship Programs:** Cross-community incubators offering training, mentorship, and resources to young entrepreneurs, fostering regional collaboration, acceleration programme for established startups / social businesses.
● **Startup Competitions:** Platforms for young entrepreneurs to pitch business ideas, receive expert feedback, and compete for seed funding.
● **Skills Development Initiatives:** Boot camps or workshops to equip youth with the skills to start and manage businesses.
● **Youth Internship Networks:** Creating networks for internships to provide hands-on experience, skill-building, and connections with potential employers.

- **Innovation and Technology Hubs:** Access to tools, technology, and mentorship for developing innovative products or services.
- **Hackathons:** Events for young people to solve real-world problems using technology and innovation.
- **Social Entrepreneurship Initiatives:** Youth-led projects addressing social or environmental challenges.
- **Regional mobility programs:** Programs like youth exchange initiatives, regional job shadowing
- **Entrepreneurship forums:** Regional or national events to present proposals, gather comments and recommendations from relevant stakeholders.

LOT 2: RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

- **Green Infrastructure Projects:** Developing networks of natural areas to support wildlife and improve the environment
- **Community-Based Forestry Initiatives:** Engaging local communities in sustainable forest management through practices like selective logging, agroforestry, and reforestation.
- **Habitat Conservation Planning:** Protecting important habitats and biodiversity through community involvement and sustainable land use strategies.
- **Revitalization Projects:** Restoring native species and natural processes in degraded landscapes to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.
- **Sustainable Tourism Infrastructure:** Developing eco-friendly tourism that supports local communities, minimizes environmental impact, and raises conservation awareness.
- **Digital Innovation in Agriculture:** including Agro-Tech Solutions
- **Sustainable Waste Management**: Launching waste recycling programs and plastic reduction campaigns.

LOT 3: CULTURAL HERITAGE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- **Preservation of Cultural Heritage**: Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (e.g., traditional music, dance, crafts) and creating digital archives or virtual tours
- **Cultural Education and Awareness**: Organizing workshops, exhibitions, and festivals; developing educational programs; and initiating intergenerational projects to connect elders with youth.
- **Community Engagement Through Cultural Activities**: Facilitating community-driven cultural projects, promoting cultural exchanges, and fostering collaboration between different communities.
- **Economic Development Through Cultural Heritage**: Launching cultural tourism initiatives, supporting local artisans, and creating cultural trails or heritage routes to generate income and preserve local traditions.
- **Innovation in Cultural Heritage**: Using new technologies like augmented reality for preservation, creatively reinterpreting traditional culture, and collaborating with artists and technologists for innovative cultural projects.

2.6. Cross-Cutting and Mandatory Priorities

When creating a project proposal, all projects must necessarily take into account and include following priorities:

Active Promotion of Gender Equality

Related to activities, the projects should be undertaken from a "gender-sensitive" perspective, considering the distinct social needs of male and female beneficiaries. Design capacity-building programs with gender-specific implications and conduct a preliminary analysis of gender issues to propose relevant activities.

While designing the project, ensure both genders are well-represented. If one gender is underrepresented, take measures to facilitate their participation, such as providing accessible training hours and childcare services.

When thinking of the result of the project, differentiate project outcomes by gender if applicable. For example, offer gender-specific training programs to counter discrimination.

It is mandatory that results indicators should be disaggregated by gender to clearly show progress and project impact on different genders.

Active Promotion of European Values and Principles

Projects should align with European values, notably democracy and peace, especially in the context of the Western Balkans' pre-accession phase to the European Union. Actions must be in line with the acquis communautaire, particularly principles related to the rule of law, democracy, and human rights, regardless of the chosen thematic pillar.

It is recommended that Project applications should include training and information opportunities such as workshops, conferences, and seminars. For example, an activity aimed to enhance the cultural heritage of the Western Balkans could include elements to promote European identity and link this promotion to a common history and shared European citizenship

Citizen Engagement Approach

The project must enable CSOs to influence decisions at local and national levels to ensure they are appropriate, legitimate, and reflect citizens' will. Sustainable development requires shared and participative governance.

The project must demonstrate civic engagement actions by sub-grantees, such as citizen consultation through public consultations, surveys, and focus groups. As well, collaboration with local communities and relevant public authorities is recommended and considered beneficial.

As a reference, methodologies on participatory democracy can be found in the [Council of Europe's Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process.](#)

These priorities must be addressed in the project design and implementation to ensure alignment with the program's objectives and values.

3. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

The applicants will be required to complete and submit a full Project Application form through the BOOST Grants Platform (BGP) **ONLY** the applications that pass the administrative check will be further considered to be evaluated.

Each applicant (Lead and co-applicants) **must** be registered in the BOOST Grants Platform prior to submitting the application documents. Please note that the registration process is manual and can take some time, therefore it is strongly recommended that organizations finish their registration to BGP, at least 15 working days before the deadline for application for grant.

*Important note: During the registration process all applicants will be requested to upload the following documents: Registration certificate, Statute of the CSO and financial and narrative reports for the previous two years. All requested documents must be uploaded during the process of registration.

An online info session is planned for **07.11.2024, 11:00 CET**. You can find the link for the registration for the info session here.

Questions regarding this Call can be sent to the email address: boostgrants@aldaintranet.org until the deadline listed below on the Public Call Timeline, section 5.2. Answers to all questions will be published on the BGP, three days after the deadline for submitting questions and clarifications.

Partnership Platform

On the BOOST Grants Platform, CSOs have the opportunity to register and connect with other CSOs from the Western Balkan region. The list of registered CSOs is updated daily, providing applicants with a resource to find suitable project partners as they prepare their Call for Proposals.

The following partner search page supports the identification of potential project partners: https://boostbalkans.com/sgp/

Applications shall be submitted via online BOOST Grants Platform ONLY by the lead applicant, while all CSOs participating in the call (lead and co-applicants) should be registered on the platform prior to submitting the application.

 Where and how to send applications

Lead applicants are invited to submit project applications on behalf of the established partnership, in English language, by using the online BOOST Grants Platform. This Platform is developed to further facilitate the application process and is user friendly.

The project application must be submitted electronically in the below web page: https://boostbalkans.com/grants.html

The online platform will guide you through the application process, including which documents to upload. These documents will be automatically incorporated into the system. (A comprehensive list of required documents can be found at the end of this document.)

Applications sent by other means (e.g. by fax, mail or by email) will be rejected. (In case of a Platform breakdown the applicants will be notified for further application instructions from ALDA).

Upon submission of the Project Application online, the Lead Applicants will receive a confirmation of receipt. Should the confirmation of the receipt be not received within 7 days after the deadline please contact the ALDA in writing by using the following email address: boostgrants@aldaintranet.org

Please note that incomplete applications will be rejected automatically by the system.

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

Clarifications will only be requested when the information provided is not sufficient to conduct an objective assessment.

Deadline for submission of applications

The deadline for the submission of applications is: **27.12.2024. 17:00 CET**

The lead applicant is advised to avoid waiting until the last day to submit the full application, since heavy Internet traffic or a fault with the Internet connection (including electricity failure, etc.) could lead to difficulties in submission.

4. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the Evaluation Committee. The final approval of the awarded projects will be made by the ALDA evaluation committee. If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated above in section 2, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

All applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

STEP 1 – Administrative check

STEP 2 – Evaluation of the applications

STEP 3 – Final evaluation and decision

> **STEP 1** *Opening, Administrative and eligibility checks according to the eligibility criteria for the Lead applicant and partners.*

During the opening and administrative and eligibility checks the following will be assessed:

- If the deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will be automatically rejected.
- If the project proposal satisfies the eligibility criteria specified in Chapters 2.1 – 2.6 of this Guidelines
- If the project consists of minimum 3 project partners coming from three different WB countries
- If the project application was submitted through online BOOST Grants Platform
- If the Declaration by the Lead applicant has been filled in and has been signed and stamped
- If the application is written in English
- If the Budget is completed in the format requested, and stated in EUR

- If the duration of the action is minimum 14 months and does not exceed 16 months
- If the requested contribution (amount) is not exceeding 60 000€ and ensuring the 20% of co-financing
- If the lead applicant is legal entity registered in some of the WB country
- If the project partners are legal entities registered in some of the WB country
- If the project partners are non-profit organizations

If any of the requested information/document is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that sole basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

STEP 2 - Evaluation of the received applications

If the applications pass the administrative checks will be further evaluated on their quality, including the proposed budget and capacity of the applicants. They will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria in the evaluation grid below.

TABLE: EVALUATION GRID

Evaluation grid Section	Maximum Score
1. Relevance	**15**
1.1. How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call for applications?	5
1.2. How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (target groups and beneficiaries)? How relevant is the proposal to the particular needs and constraints of the target groups (youth, women, disadvantaged people, local communities)?	5
1.3. Does the project have substantial regional relevance and involves collaboration and sharing of experiences among participating organizations from the WB Region?	5
2. Design of the action	**20**
2.1. Does the applicant clearly present the Target Group and specify the needs, challenges, or opportunities faced with detailed outcomes and benefits that the project will bring for each target audience?	5
2.2. Does the proposal include indicators/ targets and sources of verification?	5
2.3. Does the project address mandatory cross-cutting issues (Gender Equality, European values, and Citizen engagement)?	10
3. Implementation approach and sustainability	**25**
3.1. Is the action plan for implementing the action clear and feasible? Is the timeline realistic?	5
3.2. Does the proposal include a participatory approach?	5

3.3. Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on local communities?	5
3.4. Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable?	5
3.5. Are plans to promote project visibility clear and effective?	5
4. Financial and operational capacity	**20**
4.1 Do the applicants have sufficient in-house experience of project management (Including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)?	10
4.2. Do the applicants have sufficient in-house technical expertise? (especially knowledge of the issues to be addressed)	10
5. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action	**20**
5.1. Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	10
5.2. Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the results satisfactory?	10
MAXIMUM TOTAL SCORE	**100**

STEP 3 – Final evaluation and decision

Provisional selection

After the evaluation, a list of the applications ranked according to their score will be created. The highest scoring applications will be provisionally selected until the available budget for this call for proposals is reached. In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria. This list will be used if more funds become available during the validity period of the reserve list. As part of the selection process, shortlisted applicants must provide a proof document from the national tax office that includes their Tax Identification Number (TIN).

The Evaluation Committee will take the final decision after negotiations have been concluded. During this stage the results of the evaluation process will be communicated officially to the applicants.

5. NOTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION

5.1. Content of the decision

The lead applicants will be informed via e-mail of the contracting authority's decision concerning their full application evaluation and, if rejected, the reasons for the negative decision. Please note that the lead applicant is the intermediary for all communications between applicants and the contracting authority during the procedure.
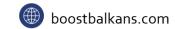
Appeals

Without prejudice, where an applicant believes he has been adversely affected by an error or irregularity allegedly committed as part of the selection procedure, or that the procedure was vitiated by any maladministration, may file a complaint within 5 (five) working days from the day when the rejection email has been sent at boostgrants@aldaintranet.org

In order to be considered, a complaint must:

- be submitted only by the Applicant
- be submitted by email to boostgrants@aldaintranet.org within 7 days from the date when the notification email announcing the result of an evaluation step is sent.
- be written in English;
- clearly describe the nature of the infringement considered as being made by the Evaluation Committee and make clear references to the corresponding provisions of the Guidelines for Applicants with pertinent substantiation.

The appeals that do not respect these criteria may not be taken into consideration. The reply to the appeal represents the final decision regarding the application.

The BOOST Project team must reply to the potential appeals within 10 working days from the date of receipt of the appeal. All correspondence must be addressed in writing, in the English language.

5.2. Indicative timeline

CALL FOR APPLICATION CALENDAR	DATE
Published Call for Regional Grants Applications	25.10.2024
Online Info Session	07.11.2024
Deadline for requesting any clarifications regarding Call for Application	12.11.2024
Last date on which clarifications regarding Call for Application are issued	14.11.2024
Deadline for Submission of Regional Applications (17:00h CET)	**27.12.2024**
Announcements of selection results	03.03.2025
Signing of grant award contracts	March, 2025
Regional training – for awarded project partners	March, 2025

This indicative timetable refers to provisional dates and may be updated by the contracting authority during the procedure. In such cases, the interested parties will be informed by the Contracting Authority.

6. CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AFTER THE DECISION TO AWARD A GRANT

Regional training

As part of the capacity-building component of the BOOST project, all awarded civil society organizations (CSOs) are required to participate in a comprehensive regional training focused on

the three thematic areas outlined in the call. This training is designed to equip CSOs with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively address these key areas, thereby enhancing their overall impact. Through the regional training and mentoring sessions, participants will gain a deeper understanding of best practices, innovative approaches, and collaborative strategies.

Reporting

The grantees are obliged to continuously update the BOOST team for their activities and expenditures through the Online BOOST Grants Platform. Grantees shall submit Progress narrative and financial report at the middle of the implementation period of the project. The reporting should be accompanied with scanned invoices on the eligible expenditures along with other relevant documentation.

A final narrative report, financial report, and scanned invoices on the eligible expenditures along with other relevant documentation of the project at the end of the period of implementation of the project should be submitted. The draft final narrative report shall be submitted not later than 30 calendar days after the end of the period of implementation of the project activities.

Monitoring and evaluation

The grantees are expected to monitor project progress and evaluate its results, together with target groups as appropriate. Furthermore, project performance will be assessed on a regular basis by the designated Project BOOST team. Some of the key elements and approaches of ALDA monitoring and evaluation processes are technical monitoring, financial monitoring, and performance monitoring. Monitoring visits will be carried out by the designated Project BOOST Team Members and the grantee shall be notified about the monitoring visit accordingly.

7. LIST OF ANNEXES

All listed annexes are expected to be uploaded on the Online BOOST Grants Platform. The applicants will find extensive information related to uploading of documents on the Platform.

Annex A: Grant Application Form
Annex B: Budget form
Annex C: Logical framework Form
Annex D: Partnership statement (Signed and stamped by Lead partner and Co-applicants)
Annex E: Declaration (Signed and stamped by the Lead applicant)

Documents to be submitted during the registration process:

- ➔ Registration certificate
- ➔ Statute of the CSO (English version)
- ➔ Yearly report or portfolio of the CSO for the last two years (English version)
- ➔ Financial statements/reports (last 2 years) of the CSO (English version if available)