

Contracting Authority:



Regional Youth Cooperation Office

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

“A BETTER REGION STARTS WITH YOUTH”

Guidelines for Grant Applicants

Deadline for submission of project proposals: November 15, 2017

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1. “A BETTER REGION STARTS WITH YOUTH”

1.1. BACKGROUND

The Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) is an independently functioning institutional mechanism, for youth cooperation between contracting parties in the Western Balkan (WB6): Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Serbia. RYCO aims to promote the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation between youth in the region, through youth exchange programs and other relevant initiatives.

The establishment of RYCO stemmed the need of young people to know more about each other, and to bring together their potentials, for building a better WB community. RYCO’s vision is the Western Balkans as intercultural region, where young people see their future, and in which they can achieve their full potential. RYCO sees young people as drivers of progress and integration of the WB, and is prepared to support them in this task.

RYCO's principles and values, as well as its vision and mission, determine what RYCO is expected to achieve, the outcomes that it should deliver, as an institution and as a key factor in the youth sector in the Western Balkans. Broadly speaking, RYCO’s fields of operation are the youth, education, culture and sports sectors, with special emphasis on youth and education. RYCO's work should contribute to improving the availability, accessibility, quality and impact of exchange, mobility and reconciliation work conducted in these fields, especially with young people and the people who work directly with them. RYCO's emphasis is based on the quality of the outcomes of participation for beneficiaries.

RYCO's main objectives are:

Exchange and mobility: Increased mobility and exchange of young people and their key workers¹ in the Western Balkans, which is fully representative of the diversity of the Western Balkan region.

Sectoral development: Greater competence among voluntary and/or professionals/youth workers accompanying young people in youth, education, sport, culture activities, dealing with reconciliation, intercultural learning and other regional topics through exchange and mobility.

Reconciliation and intercultural learning:

- Good neighbourly relations and intercultural understanding between the young people of the region (in all their diversity);
- Consensual and constructive approaches to dealing with the common past of the Western Balkans region, through activities with young people;
- Greater youth understanding of regional integration and of its relevance to them and for European integration processes;
- Greater capacity of young people to play an active role in building their own and their societies’ futures.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

¹KEY ACTORS from both the youth and the education sectors active in the region: associations of key workers that will promote youth and school exchanges in the contracting parties and the region - youth workers, school principals/directors, other potential promoters of youth and school exchange – youth/community/cultural centres (municipal/NGO), governmental departments/agencies responsible for “international” work in education, governmental departments/ministries responsible for youth, etc.

Contracting parties from WB6 have been cooperating closely in past years, enabling mobility and intercultural learning in the region. Governments and CSOs cooperated on numerous initiatives related to human rights, peace building, conflict resolution, sustainable development, youth exchanges, etc. The previous initiatives in the region, though commendable, were not sufficient to respond to the growing need for a regional approach; they lacked sustainable support for regional mobility, and often did not reach out to local organisations and schools.

All this led to the establishment of the RYCO, under which all regional initiatives relating to young people can gain a new dimension, bringing support, funding and oversight to youth projects.

Therefore, enhancing sustainable regional cooperation between youth, and establishing new relations between young people in the Western Balkans are the two key qualities that RYCO is bringing to the region.

Through this pilot Open Call for projects, RYCO is establishing itself as a leading regional initiative for supporting young people in the Western Balkan contracting parties, their cooperation, and their joint growth and development, as the driving force in the WB6. RYCO wants to empower young people for setting the course to a better society in the Western Balkans. As drivers of change, young people should ensure further progress and European integration of the region.

Exchange of experiences between young people from regional contracting parties will help form new ideas for the future of the region, better understand human rights, initiate intraregional exchange and cooperation, and help foster trust building across ethnic groups of youth. In piloting this regional Open Call, RYCO will provide necessary regional perspective and support a regional approach to continuous sector development in WB6. RYCO believes that only this is possible path to sustainable and peaceful development of the region.

1.2. GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL

The **general objective** of this Call for Proposals is to contribute to the process of reconciliation in the region of the Western Balkans, through increasing youth mobility, cooperation and activism.

To contribute to the global and specific objectives (SO) of this Call for Proposals, projects should fall into the one of the following priority areas (PA):

Priority Area 1: INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

- SO1: Ensuring a safe environment for young people for constructively dealing with the past
- SO2: Providing opportunities for intercultural learning and enhancing intercultural competences
- SO3: Enabling intercultural dialogue and tolerance through decreasing the level of hate speech, negative stereotypes and prejudice among young people in the region

Priority Area 2: ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

- SO4: Fostering active citizenship and participation in decision-making processes by young people
- SO5: Strengthening capacities of key actors working for and with young people for civic participation and social inclusion
- SO6: Promoting social inclusion of young people through mobility, cooperation and shared projects

Applicants should check in the Application Form under which priority and which objective their project proposal falls (only one priority area and a maximum of 2 objectives).

1.3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY RYCO

The overall indicative amount made available under this Call for Proposals is **EUR 900.000**.

The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

LOT 1: 500 000 EUR

- a) 400 000 EUR for CSOs
- b) 100 000 EUR for secondary schools

LOT 2: 400 000 EUR

- a) 300 000 EUR for CSOs
- b) 100 000 EUR for secondary schools

The Call is divided into 2 lots as follows:

LOT 1 targeting priority area 1

LOT 2 targeting priority area 2

Size of grant

Any grant requested under this Call for Proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

Project proposals by CSOs:

- minimum amount: EUR 10.000
- maximum amount: EUR 35.000

Project proposals by secondary schools:

- minimum amount: EUR 10.000
- maximum amount: EUR 20.000.

The balance (i.e. the difference between the total cost of the project and the amount requested from the Contracting Authority) must be financed from sources other than RYCO (please refer to 2.9 Eligibility costs of the Guidelines).

2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

These Guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of the projects financed under this call (available on the Internet at www.rycowb.org).

2.1. Eligibility criteria

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

1. the actors:

- The **Applicant**, the entity submitting the application (2.2.1),
- **Partner(s)** (2.2.1),

2. the activities:

- activities for which a grant may be awarded (2.3.);

3. the costs:

- types of cost that may be considered in setting the amount of the grant (2.9).

2.2. Eligibility of applicants (i.e. applicant and partner(s))

2.2.1. Applicant

1. To be eligible for a grant, the applicant must:

- a) be a legal entity, **and**
- b) be non-profit-making,² **and**
- c) be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the projects with the partners, not acting as an intermediary
 - be specific a type of organisation such as: a non-governmental organisation (CSO) established in one of the WB6 (youth CSOs, other CSOs dealing with young people), a minimum of one year prior to the launch of this Call for Proposal.
 - be a secondary school (private and public), established in the WB6, a minimum of one year prior to the launch of this Call for Proposal.³

2. Potential applicants may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded grants if they are in any of the situations indicating that they are bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures; where their assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court; where it is in an arrangement with creditors; where their activities are suspended; or where they are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under national laws or regulations; they are in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions, in accordance with the law of the contracting party in which they are established.

3. Grants to individuals will not be considered.

The Applicant **must act with partner(s)** as specified hereafter:

If awarded the grant contract, the Applicant will become the beneficiary identified as the Coordinator. It represents and acts on behalf of any other partners and coordinates the design and overall implementation of the projects.

Number of applications and grants per applicants:

The applicant may not submit more than one (1) application under this Call for Proposals.

The applicant may not be awarded more than one (1) grant under this Call for Proposals.

The applicant may be a partner in only one (1) other application under this Call for Proposals.

² Private schools are also eligible to apply, but only if the application is made through their NGOs/student organizations (e.g. partners or student organisation within the school). Otherwise, they cannot apply, simply because of being for-profit institution.

³ In cases where public schools are not allowed to have separate bank accounts for grant funds they should form a partnership with CSO eligible under above mentioned criteria. CSOs will serve as a partner and financial manager of the project and the grant funds will be directed to the partner CSO. The school is still responsible for the overall management of the project.

In the case that the applicant appears more than once, either as a lead applicant or as a partner, it will be automatically disqualified.

2.2.2. Partner(s)

If the Applicant is a CSO from one of the WB6 contracting parties, it must act with at least one other CSO, secondary school, cultural institution or sport association from a different WB6 contracting party (ies), as a partner. Under this Call for Proposals (Lot 1 and 2), one legal entity can apply only once as a partner.

Partners participate in designing and implementing in all phases of the project, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the Applicant. Also, partners should ensure that project activities and follow up are planned and implemented with young people and/or by young people.

Partners must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable to the Applicant himself. There should be no more than 5 partners, with at least one from a different WB6 contracting party. Having more than 1 partner from another WB6 contracting party will be considered an advantage.

In addition to the categories referred to in section 2.1.1, the following are also eligible:

- secondary schools (private⁴ and public) from the WB6, registered as legal entities and established at least one year prior the launch of this Call.
- cultural institutions (private and public) from the WB6, registered as legal entities established at least one year prior to the launch of this Call.
- sports associations and organizations in the field of sports from the WB6, registered as legal entities, established at least one year prior to the launch of this Call.

Partners must sign the mandate in Part B of the Grant Application Form.

2.3. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Definition:

A project is composed of a set of activities. Activities must fall under the set 1.2. General and Specific Objectives of the Call and 2.4. Priority Areas. Activities should also be implemented in the locations as defined in these Guidelines (section 2.5), and respond to the objectives of the Call and types of activities (section 2.7.)

Duration:

The duration of the project must be a minimum of 3 months and no longer than 9 months. All project activities must take place between February 1, 2018 and October 31, 2018.

2.4. Priority areas

The priorities have been identified based on the main RYCO documents (Agreement on the Establishment of Regional Youth Cooperation Office, Statute of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office, and the recommendations adopted in the last Youth Forums in Paris and Trieste within the Berlin process).

⁴ Private schools are also eligible to apply, but only if the application is made through their NGOs/student organizations (e.g. partners or student organisation within the school). Otherwise, they cannot apply, simply because of being for-profit institution.

RYCO is genuinely dedicated and motivated to contribute to the process of reconciliation, establishment of trust and mutual understanding between the peoples of the Western Balkans. To achieve this, RYCO is set to provide funding, through grants scheme, for CSOs and schools in the WB6. This pilot Call for proposals offers an opportunity for projects from the WB6 to be financed and to thus contribute to fostering reconciliation and intercultural dialog in the region, supporting youth mobility, civic participation and social inclusion of the most marginalised youth. With this Call, RYCO is targeting both small and large CSOs and schools, using partnership as a tool to reach the set goals based on the principle that respects and caters to diversity among youth, especially focusing on those who are at a higher risk of marginalisation and exclusion. Through this grant scheme, RYCO also contributes to the development of the youth sector in the long run.

The projects must relate to the priority areas as defined above, which includes following topics related to young people group:

Priority Area 1: Intercultural Dialogue

Priority Area 2: Active participation and Social Inclusion

2.5. Location(s)

Projects must take place in the Western Balkans 6 contracting parties (WB6): Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Serbia.

2.6. Target groups

This section refers to the target group that will benefit directly from the project implementation.

Please note that eligible target group under this Call are young people, from 15 to 30 years old, from the WB6. This section should also indicate the exact number of targeted participants in the project, and classified by gender, if possible.

Participants from outside of WB6 can be included in project activities only if the purpose of that activity falls directly under the goals and objectives of this Call for Proposals. No direct budget allocations should be transferred to partners or participants from outside of WB6.

Here you should also describe how you plan to include and in what way, youth from the most excluded groups such as: NEETs (youth “not in education, employment or training”), young people with disabilities, marginalised groups based on ethnicity, youth with fewer opportunities (youth from rural/remote areas, with an unprivileged educational and economic background, of alternative sexual orientation, etc.).

Please ensure gender balance in the selection of your target group (15-30 years old from WB6).

Participation of teachers, youth workers, artists and decision makers, etc. above 30 years of age is also possible within planned activities, only if the purpose of that activity falls directly under the goals and objectives of this Call for Proposals.

Visible and significant involvement of the most vulnerable youth groups, particularly supporting their social inclusion and participation in decision-making, will be considered an advantage, especially the involvement of youth who did not have any opportunity to travel and participate in any projects.

2.7. Types of activities

The activities in the project proposal can be planned and implemented in partnership, as described in 2.2.2. of the Guidelines.

The types of activities that may be financed under this Call for proposals are the following but not limited to:

- trainings, workshops, study visits, peer support groups, etc. for strengthening capacities of key youth actors working towards civic participation and social inclusion,
- activities aimed at inclusion of the most vulnerable or excluded groups (as described in section 2.6. Target Groups of the Guidelines, 15-30 years old) through art, culture, sports, use and development of ICT and media tools,
- joint regional capacity building activities and exchange of good practice between policy makers and youth from the WB6 (conferences, etc.),
- local and regional events for promotion of equal access and rights,
- twinning between schools, learning activities and developing materials, resource-exchange platforms,
- advocacy campaigns to increase *civic participation*,
- camps, workshops, conferences, debate clubs, round tables in formal and non-formal education, addressed to prevent intolerance among youth and support constructive dealing with the past, etc.,
- campaigns and trainings of policy makers and educators for enhancing intercultural competences,
- joint art and cultural performances, such as festivals, concerts, street performances, exhibitions, etc.,
- online platforms for exhibition of joint artistic productions and circulation of artistic productions,
- supporting volunteering and volunteer services between the WB6,
- other activities in line with the Call's priorities and objectives.

This Call will also support new and innovative approaches in regional cooperation. RYCO welcomes new ideas and new types of activities, different from the ones typically funded by other donors in the region.

2.8. Visibility

The applicants must take all necessary steps to publicise the fact that the RYCO has financed the project. Visibility guidelines will be provided to the grantees upon signing the contracts. Projects that are fully or partially funded by the RYCO must incorporate information and communication activities designed to raise the awareness of specific or general audiences of the reasons for the project and the RYCO support for the project, in the contracting parties or region concerned, as well as the results and the impact of this support.

2.9. Eligibility costs

Only “eligible costs” can be covered by a grant. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and an overall ceiling for “eligible costs”.

For applicants that are CSOs with an annual budget of less than 50,000 EUR, RYCO will cover up to 95% of the total project costs (not applicable to schools).

For applicants that are CSOs with an annual budget between 50,000 EUR and 300,000 EUR, RYCO will cover up to 85% of the total project costs (not applicable to schools).

For applicants that are CSOs with an annual budget of more than 300,000 EUR, RYCO will cover up to 75% of the total costs (not applicable to schools).

Contribution in-kind is not considered as co-funding.

2.10. Eligible direct costs

Eligible costs under this Call for Proposals include, but are not limited to:

Human Resources: Salaries (gross amounts) e.g. Project Coordinator and Project Assistant, project activities and related costs such as venue rental, equipment rental, food & beverages, translation/interpretation, fees of experts, trainers, etc., domestic and international travel, office supplies, communication and visibility costs, publications, design, printing, conferences, administrative costs (max. 5% of Total Direct Costs of the Project).

Please make sure that the costs are directly connected to project activities.

Costs related to bank charges, costs of guarantees and similar charges are also eligible, including taxes and value added taxes.

2.11. Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- a) customs and import duties, or any other charges;
- b) purchases of land or buildings;
- c) fines, financial penalties and expenses of litigation;
- d) contribution in kind;
- e) second hand equipment;
- f) debts and debt service charges (interest);
- g) provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- h) costs declared by the beneficiary(ies) and financed by another project or work programme;
- i) currency exchange losses;
- j) any leasing costs;
- k) depreciation costs;
- l) credit to third parties.

3. HOW TO APPLY AND PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

3.1. Application process

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions in the Grant Application Form and budget annexed to these Guidelines (Annex I and II). Applicants should keep strictly to the format of the Grant Application Form and budget, and fill out the paragraphs and pages in order.

Applicants must apply in English.

Any error related to the points listed in the checklist of the Grant Application Form or any major inconsistency in the full application (e.g. if the amounts in the budget worksheets are inconsistent) may lead to the rejection of the application.

Clarifications will only be requested when information provided is unclear, thus preventing the RYCO from conducting an objective assessment.

Please note that only the published annexes that must be filled out will be transmitted to the evaluators (and assessors, if used). It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL the relevant information concerning the project. **No additional annexes should be sent.**

Own contributions by the applicants can be replaced by other donors' contributions at any time.

Hand-written project documentation will not be accepted.

Applicants shall fill out the project proposal form electronically in English, using Arial font 11.

3.2. Where and how to send applications

The Application (Annex I: Grant Application Form (Word format), Annex II: Budget (Excel format), all in electronic form, scanned and signed copies, must be submitted in electronic version on the following email: grants@rycowb.org

The subject of the email should be: RYCO Cfp/PROJECT TITLE/CONTRACTING PARTY⁵

All project documentation should be sent in a single e-mail. Documents should not be submitted as external links using document sharing web sites; e-mail attachments should not be more than 10mb in size.

Applications sent by any other means (e.g. by fax or by mail), or delivered to other addresses, will be rejected.

Applicants must verify that their application is complete by using the checklist (section XX of Part B of the Grant Application Form). Incomplete applications may be rejected.

3.3. Deadline for submission of applications

The deadline for the submission of applications is **November 15, 2017, 23.59 pm**. All documents must be submitted in electronic versions and via email: grants@rycowb.org.

⁵ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, or Serbia

3.4. Further information about application

At the completion of the application process, RYCO will notify all applicants in writing of the final results, as well as of the next steps to be undertaken, including the signing of the contractual document and specificities of the money transfer to the indicated bank account.

An information session on this Call for Proposals will be held at least at each contracting party before the deadline for submissions of proposals. The date, venue and the schedule of the information sessions on this Call for Proposals will be posted at the website www.rycowb.org

Questions may be sent ONLY via e-mail, no later than 5 days before the deadline for the submission of applications, to the following email address:

E-mail address: office@rycowb.org

The subject of the email should be: RYCO CfP/Question for Clarification

RYCO will not be able to provide clarifications to questions received after this date. Questions should be specifically related to the clarifications of the Guidelines for the Applicants and not individual project proposals.

RYCO will not be able to respond on any phone or mail queries.

During the evaluation procedure all-important notices for applicants will be posted on the RYCO website: www.rycowb.org. It is therefore recommended to visit the abovementioned website regularly, to be informed about the grant evaluation process.

4. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the Contracting Authority with the assistance of external assessors. All applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed project does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in section 2.1, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

4.1. Evaluation of the application

Evaluation of the project proposals will be conducted in three steps:

1. Administrative check of the application:

Assessment of whether the submission deadline has been met and whether the application satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist in the Annex I Application Form.

The proposals that do not pass the administrative check will not be further assessed.

2. Eligibility check of the application:

Assessment of whether the applicant and partners satisfy the eligibility criteria in sections 2.1. through 2.6. of the Guidelines for Applicant.

3. Assessment of the proposal according to 5 criteria listed in the EVALUATION GRID:

CRITERIA	Maximum Score
1. Relevance (whether the proposal is in line with the general objective and specific objectives)	20
2. Effectiveness and feasibility of the proposed activities (clarity of the proposal, quality of the designed program and methodology, the extent to which the foreseen activities are appropriate, practical and consistent with the objectives and expected results, involvement of young people and partners in the preparation, implementation and follow-up activities, follow up and sustainability)	20
3. Impact (tangible effects on target groups, multiplier effects, sustainability)	20
4. Budget and cost effectiveness of the proposal	20
5. Financial and operational capacities of the applicant and partners	20
	100

4.2. NOTIFICATION OF RYCO'S DECISION

Content of the decision

The list of approved and rejected proposals will be published on RYCO's website on December 22, 2017.

5. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

ACTIVITY	DEADLINE	TIME
Opening of the Call	October 16, 2017	13.00
Deadline for requesting any clarifications from RYCO	November 10, 2017	23.59
The deadline for submission of applications	November 15, 2017	23.59
Information to the applicants on the evaluation of the applications	December 22, 2017	17.00
Contract signature	By 26 January, 2018	

All times are in the Central European Time zone. This indicative timetable may be updated by RYCO during the procedure, in which case the updated timetable will be posted on the RYCO website: www.rycowb.org.

6. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Following the decision to award a grant, the grantee(s) will be offered a contract. By signing the Application Form (Annex I and II of the Guidelines), the applicant agrees, if awarded a grant, to accept the contractual conditions of the grant contract. When signing the contract, the applicant must submit as necessary

administrative requirement, a document from the tax administration stating that the organization/school is not in obligation or any dispute with the state authorities in their contracting party.

After the signing of the contract, the grant will be disbursed through 2 payment instalments – 80% of the total budget approved, at the start of the project implementing period, and 20% upon approval of the final report.

6.1. REPORTING

During the project implementation, the grantee is expected to regularly report the project progress to RYCO and as laid down in the contract.

The grantee will be required to submit a final narrative and financial report, no later than 30 days after the official project completion, using RYCO templates annexed to the grant contract.

6.2. PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES

In compliance with the PRAG Rules, the procedures that the grantees must follow are:

- Tenders of 2,500 € and less can be awarded on the basis of an invoice, without prior acceptance of a tender
- For tenders higher than 2,500 € and up-to 20,000 € a single tender procedure must apply

If further guidance on this procedure is needed, RYCO will provide training sessions to the grantees.

6.3. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Regular reporting will be mandatory and a crucial part of the project monitoring and evaluation. Grantees should perform their internal monitoring and evaluation process as described in the section 12 of the Application Form. The grantee will also take part in RYCO's monitoring and evaluation processes as defined in the contract. The grantee will provide all available documentation, regarding the project implementation, to RYCO upon request. RYCO will also assess the follow up, sustainability plans, and dissemination of the project results.

The grantee will also document all visibility activities (e.g. newspaper articles, TV appearances, campaigns, etc.) and be obliged to send information about visibility activities implemented throughout the project to RYCO on a monthly basis, including any communication products produced in the project: photos, testimonials, etc.

6.4. FOLLOW UP AND SUSTAINABILITY

The proposal should clearly state, in a long-term perspective, how it plans to achieve a multiplier effect of the project achievements, extending to other organisations/schools and participants, therefore contributing to the project's sustainable impact.

The description should also include the follow-up, envisaged as part of the project, including definition of the staff that will co-ordinate it. Where possible, please state if you expect the participants to be involved in the follow-up project (or organise follow-up activities) and how do you intend to support them. One of the deciding factors for approval of the project will be the sustainability of the project results. The sustainability plan will be assessed during the project monitoring and evaluation by RYCO.

7. LIST OF ANNEXES

7.1 DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

Annex I: Grant Application Form (Word format)

Annex II: Budget (Excel format)

7.2. DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION⁶

Annex III: Notification General on Call for Proposals

Annex IV: Guidelines for Grant Applicants

Annex V: Narrative Report Template

Annex VI: Financial Report Template

⁶ These documents will also be published by RYCO.