**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)**

**“Rolling Innovation Fund Grants”**

USAID’s Balkan Media Assistance Program to Foster Organizational Readiness
While Advancing Resilient Development (BMAP Forward)

**Publication Date:** March 21, 2023

**Grant amount for individual grants:** up to $2,950.00

**Grant amount for registered entities:** up to $10,000.00

**Duration:** 3-6 months

**Deadline for Applications:** April 10th, 2023

1. Cycle 1 – closed.
2. **Cycle 2 – Monday, April 10th, 2023, at 17:00 CET**
3. Cycle 3 – Friday, September 15th, 2023, at 17:00 CET
4. Cycle 4 – Friday, December 15th, 2023, at 17:00 CET

The Balkan Media Assistance Program to Foster Organizational Readiness While Advancing Resilient Development (BMAP Forward), funded by USAID and implemented by Internews as a part of the PROGRESS Human Rights Support Mechanism, is reopening a call for its Rolling Innovation Fund.

**What is the Rolling Innovation Fund?**

The Rolling Innovation Fund is an ongoing grant opportunity under USAID’s BMAP Forward, open to individuals, civil society organizations and media based in the five Western Balkan BMAP Forward countries (see eligibility criteria below). BMAP Forward promotes continuous idea generation and supports regional linkages throughout its project implementation.

The Fund will support projects and ideas based on use of recent technological and digital solutions and trends relevant to the media community in the region.

We are looking for ideas that enhance media with technological innovation and localized tools, as well as projects that will help tackle challenges facing digital media across the Western Balkan Region.

The Fund welcomes fresh ideas to support independent media, which could include activities such as:

1. Development:
* Open-source software for journalism
* Open-source social media management tools for media businesses
* Localization of existing software solutions
* Integration of existing IT solutions into their current workflow
1. Engagement:
* Social media applications to engage vulnerable groups and minorities
* Experiments to attract new audiences
	+ Use of new techniques for marketing and monetization of digital media content
* Data-informed content creation
* Graphic journalism.

Results of the projects could include developing a tool or mobile application; creating a webinar or workshop; starting a podcast or advocacy campaign; or any other work that would strengthen the media environment in the Western Balkan Region.

USAID’s BMAP Forward will favorably view projects that provide technological solutions that strengthen digital media and the transition to digital-first and virtual newsrooms.

**Who is Eligible?**

The Rolling Innovation Fund is open to teams and individuals based in the five Western Balkan BMAP Forward countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia), including BMAP Forward Key Media Partners, other independent media organizations, teams of individuals, freelancers, and professionals working with media such as journalists, editors, civil society/NGO representatives, IT developers, designers, and artists eager to come up with innovative ideas.

The Fund is available to **individual applicants (up to $2,950.00 each)** and to **registered entities (up to $10,000.00 each).**

**What Costs Can the Fund Cover?**

These grants will cover costs of labor for the production and design of different software, tools and apps; subscriptions to tools, apps and software required for project implementation; and related small equipment upgrades.

Examples of eligible costs under this grant call:

* Time of staff members/consultants working on the proposed project
* Applicable fringe benefits (income tax, health insurance)
* Materials and supplies needed to complete the project
* Services needed to complete the project
* Local travel associated with project implementation.

Indirect costs (those necessary to for running the organization but which are not directly tied to the activities proposed in the project application) may be eligible for reimbursement. Applicants may dedicate 10% of their budget to covering indirect costs.

USAID’s BMAP Forward staff will work with applicants whose proposals are selected for grants to determine exact eligible costs.

These costs are NOT eligible under this grant call:

* Capital expenditures
* Scholarships and fellowships
* Meal allowances for trainers, trainees, consultants, contactors, experts, etc. They are only available to direct employees of the applicant
* Registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with conferences or training programs
* International travel
* Construction

**Applications evaluation**

Applications will be reviewed and evaluated on a range of selection criteria as follows:

* Quality and innovativeness of the proposed idea (30%)
* Feasibility of the proposed idea (20%)
* Impact and sustainability (30%)
* Budget reasonability (10%)
* Clarity of Budget (10%)

**How to apply**

All applications must meet the following requirements:

* Applications, including supporting documents, should be submitted in English.
* All applications must be submitted by Monday, April 10, 2023, at 17:00 CET time. All applications received after the deadline will be considered in the next Rolling Innovation Fund cycle.
* All applications must be completed and submitted in the designated Application Form.
* A detailed budget must be included, using the provided Budget template. Any applications submitted without using the designated budget template will be disqualified.
* For individual applicants: must be citizens or residents in one of the five (5) Balkan countries eligible for this call. Individuals must submit a short CV, including links to sample work and two reference contacts.
* For legal entities: applicants must be registered in one of the five (5) Balkan countries eligible for this call. Please send scanned registration certificate. Legal entities must submit a portfolio of previous relevant work (links).
* Applications and supporting documents must be submitted through the Balkansmedia.org platform. Please see this link.

Technical difficulties with submission through the platform will not be considered an acceptable reason for late submission of the application. We recommended that you submit application well before the deadline so that you can troubleshoot any issues and ask questions if you are having difficulty submitting through the web platform. Applications submitted via e-mail will not be considered except in exceptional circumstances with the written permission of the Internews grants staff.

**Inquiries**

All questions regarding this grant call should be directed via email to amujanovic@internews.org with the subject “Inquiry on BMAP Forward Rolling Innovation Fund.” Our team will try to help you in shaping the best idea and polishing the administrative side of the application. **We will not accept inquiries via phone.**

**Reporting on Use of the Grant**

Awardees are required to submit periodic and final programmatic and financial reports. Narrative and financial reports will be submitted at least twice over the life of selected projects, but the

frequency and type of reporting will depend on duration of selected projects. All reports will be

submitted in English language.

**Attachments**

1. Subgrant Application Template
2. Subgrant Detailed Budget Template

End of RFA