

**The Balkan Forum**

**Call for Proposals for Small Size Grants**

to

Support regional youth initiatives in the Western Balkans with the aim of accelerating progress in the areas of education, energy, tourism, human capital and labor market

**Guidelines for Applications**

Deadline for submission of applications:  
**31 January 2020**

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FORUM

## I. Introduction

The Youth Education Cooperation Fund is a grant scheme established by The Balkan Forum, with support of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, which **aims to foster regional cooperation and dialogue between young people in the Western Balkan countries**, namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia.

Within this grant scheme, we invite youth groups and organizations from the countries of Western Balkan region to join efforts and generate new innovative and unique ideas for collaborative action in the areas of education, energy, tourism, human capital and labor market.

**The objective** of this call is to support regional youth initiatives in the Western Balkans with the aim of accelerating progress in the areas of education, energy, tourism, human capital and labor market.

**Education** is a cornerstone of the region's economic development and its integration into the European and global communities. Close cooperation on practical education initiatives can produce benefits that improve the lives and prospects of all citizens. While there are a number of ongoing efforts to address education-related needs in the region, specific challenges remain such as difficulties in cross-country degree recognition, low levels of cooperation among universities in the region, and a lack of curricula that prepare students for today's most competitive jobs. The resulting educational migration to Western Europe is depriving the region of valuable human resources.

**Energy:** thanks to its geographic location, rich natural resources, mixed Mediterranean and continental climates, and the strength of its human capital, WB region is in a very favorable position with significant environmental comparative advantages. With sufficient political will, intellectual capacity, civil society leadership, and determination, the countries of the region can build a renewable energy economy, improve energy efficiency and consumption, and become a model for the continent. Benefits of the renewable energy for the communities, businesses and economies, include: clean/green sources have a positive impact in environment and global warming; helps to improve public health as it improves the quality of air and lowers the risk from diseases; helps to reduce future energy prices; helps households become independent from the fossil-fuel energy, where households or businesses can take advantage by generating own electricity; increase employment opportunities and helps economies grow.

**Tourism:** the economic power of tourism could be expanded through regional tourism initiatives that celebrate the regions natural/cultural heritage and diversity. Such initiatives would provide financial returns to rural and urban communities throughout the region and reinforce connections among people. To take advantage of such opportunities, the region needs better public education about the potential benefits of shared tourism and about initiatives that are ecologically, economically, and culturally sustainable.

**Human Capital & Labor Market:** while there are ongoing efforts to foster regional trade and promote private sector development, a large segment of the population remains jobless, constraining economic development, increasing inequality, and weakening communities. Key challenges include discrepancies between educational and labor market policies; imbalances between labor demand and supply, linked to skill mismatches; inadequate systems for forecasting labor market trends and skills requirements; political, bureaucratic and institutional impediments to entrepreneurship, innovation, and new company formation; insufficient research and development; and obstacles to free movement of labor, among other issues. Facilitating the emergence of a regional labor market will require special attention to harmonizing education and training systems across the region and upgrading the region's research capacities.

## II. Eligibility

Through small grants we aim to support 3 - 4 cross-border projects with funding of up to **2,500** Euros each.

Proposed projects should fall within **at least one of the four areas** (education, energy, tourism, human capital & labor market), and **be joint projects by youth groups and organizations from at least two WB countries** (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia).

Activities may include: exchanges; joint-research, advocacy, awareness-raising; hands-on community initiatives; educational activities; monitoring local/national institutions. **Small grants will not support existing or continuation of previous project(s).**

Project duration should be between 3 to 6 months.

The following categories of applicants are considered eligible:

1. Youth groups.
2. Youth organizations (non-governmental organizations).

Applicants must be directly responsible for the implementation of the project, not act as an intermediary.

### Not Eligible entities:

1. For profit organizations/private companies.
2. Public institutions.

### Non-Eligible Actions

1. Actions affiliated with or supportive of political parties.
2. Actions intended to promote the visibility of the applicant/partners.
3. Events of purely religious or political character.
4. Events that consist primarily in capital expenditure (infrastructure, land, equipment).

## III. Submission Requirements

Please read the Application Guidelines, and after making sure that you understand and fulfill the criteria, submit the following completed documents to [info@thebalkanforum.org](mailto:info@thebalkanforum.org)

1. [Application Form](#) (word doc downloadable - find the link to Annex 1 on our website)
2. [Budget Form](#) (excel doc downloadable – find the link to Annex 2 on our website)

## IV. Submission Deadline

Applications must be submitted by 31 January 2020. We aim to notify successful applicants by the end of February 2020.

Implementation of projects is expected to start in April 2020.

**Any questions related to application may be sent to The Balkan Forum at [info@thebalkanforum.org](mailto:info@thebalkanforum.org) no later than 15 January 2020.**