Project partners:

Call for Proposals to CSOs to Implement Public Awareness and Advocacy Campaigns on Media Integrity in South East Europe

Application deadline: 25 July 2015

Introduction

The partnership **South East European Media Observatory** seeks applications from **civil society organizations (CSOs)** to implement **public awareness and advocacy campaigns and organize actions** aiming to support free, independent, pluralistic and viable media in **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia**.

This call for proposals is part of the second phase of the project **"South East European Media Observatory – Building Capacities and Coalitions for Monitoring Media Integrity and Advancing Media Reforms"** which aims at supporting integrity both in public service and commercial media in South East Europe. The project is co-financed by the European Union Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), Civil Society Facility Partnership Programme.

The South East European Media Observatory is a regional instrument established as a long term activity of the South East European Network for Professionalization of the Media (SEENPM) to

monitor media integrity based on common methodology, and provide information on media reform processes at national and regional levels.

The South East European Media Observatory project examines a whole set of indicators of the media sector which are crucial to serve the public interest and democratic processes in society. It puts an emphasis on the political economy of media, including ownership and its impact on press freedom, but also addresses the problems of structural weaknesses and improper performance of the industry.

During the first phase of the project (2012-2015), which focused on Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia, the partners implemented the following main activities: national research on media integrity published in the book Media Integrity Matters with a regional overview and country reports; national and regional debates on media integrity research findings regional web site mediaobservatory.net; via open calls provided small grants for investigative journalists to produce stories and also for CSOs to support advocacy actions for media integrity.

The second phase of the project covers all seven EU-enlargement countries. It is to be implemented in 2015-2016 by partnering media development civil society organisations in the South East European region: Peace Institute (project leader - Ljubljana); Albanian Media Institute (AMI - Tirana); Media and Civil Society Development Foundation "Mediacentar" (Media Center Sarajevo); Investigative Journalism Centre (IJC/CIN - Zagreb); Center for Independent Journalism, CIJ - Budapest); Macedonian Institute for Media (MIM - Skopje); Montenegro Media Institute – Podgorica, Novi Sad School of Journalism (NSSJ), Press Council of Kosovo - Pristina and Platform for Independent Journalism (P24) - Istanbul.

On behalf of the project consortium, the Center for Independent Journalism, Budapest administers the granting scheme for civil society organizations. The present call for proposals geographically covers **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia**.

What we support with this grant?

Actions under this call for proposals should focus on the main topic of the project South East European Media Observatory – **media integrity**. Media integrity encompasses qualities of the media system which enable the media to serve public interest and democracy.

Under this granting scheme, the proposed activities should aim to initiate, promote and/or support actions and mechanisms which strengthen media integrity. They should also take into account the related research activities by project partners and the investigative stories published as part of the project in 2014 and 2015. The future grantee in each of the six countries is expected to closely cooperate with the SEE Media Observatory's local partner organization.

Applicant organizations may choose any type of the actions listed below. Other actions not listed here can be also proposed. Applicants are encouraged to apply creative ways when designing their public awareness and advocacy campaigns and they may combine different actions locally. If relevant and justified, regional actions in two or more of the six countries can be proposed.

Actions to be funded:
- Debates, lectures, presentations at local public events (conferences, workshops, seminars, roundtable discussions) related to media integrity;

- Meetings with stakeholders and decision makers (for example professional organizations, unions, regulators, members of the parliament, government, judiciary) to discuss legal measures and other mechanisms necessary to protect media integrity;
- Invitation to foreign experts and media practitioners to speak at such events;
- Launch of media policy initiatives aimed at strengthening media integrity
- Translation and adaptation of publications and documents related to the topics covered by the Phase II of the SEE Media Observatory project, and to its research, in order to disseminate them in local languages;
- Development and/or adaptation of the research content within advocacy campaigns for media integrity to be published in local languages on existing information sharing platforms, and to be linked to the information about similar actions on the project website and the individual websites of the project partners;
- Print and online publications (leaflets, brochures, posters, web content, etc.) to raise public awareness of media integrity;
- Development and use of social media distribution tools to raise public awareness, strengthen public support for advocacy campaigns on media integrity;
- Establishment of an online resource library on media integrity in local languages;
- Capacity building and empowerment of defenders of journalists' rights and citizens' communication rights to form ad hoc coalitions and/or long-term alliances locally and regionally for protection and promotion of media integrity;

Applicants can propose actions of local, national or regional relevance. They are especially encouraged to consider one or more priority topics of the project's advocacy actions in the target countries in 2015 and 2016 listed below:
- Strengthening media integrity and professionalism
- Transparency of public and commercial media financing
- Criteria for allocation of state advertising and public funds for media
- Transparency and access to information on state advertising and public funds allocation to media
- Situation of journalists and its impact on media integrity
- (Dis)respect for public service values in media and journalistic practices
- Transparency, self-regulation and respect for professional standards in online news media
- Privatisation of minority and local media and its impact on media pluralism and integrity

Who can apply?

This call invites civil society organizations - professional associations, advocacy groups, think tanks, research institutes, human rights organizations, anti-corruption organizations and other CSOs - specializing in media and with relevant experience in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia to submit proposals.

CSOs can apply, if they are registered in any of these countries and meet the following definition: they are established as a legal entity having a non-commercial purpose; they are independent of any local, regional and national governments, any public entities, political parties, religious institutions and commercial organizations. CSOs are eligible for this call if they have been actively operating according to their founding document for **at least 1 year prior to submitting the proposal**.

One applicant is entitled to submit one proposal under this call.

The total amount of the grant for six countries is EUR 30,000.

A maximum grant amount of EUR 5000 per country will be awarded. The evaluation team may decide to award only one applicant organization, but may also split this amount between two proposals from a country.

Duration of the actions and the grant period

The duration of the public awareness and advocacy campaigns can be from 3 to 6 months.

Activities can start on the day of the grant contract (expected early September 2015) and should end on **29 February, 2016** at the latest. The Center for Independent Journalism will sign the contracts with the grantees.

What is the application procedure?

Applications should be submitted in English language via e-mail to the Center for Independent Journalism at: seeapplications@cij.hu.The deadline for submitting the applications is **24:00 on 25 July 2015.**

Applicants can ask further information about the Call for Proposals from the Center for Independent Journalism in writing **until 15 July 2015 by sending inquiries** to seeapplications@cij.hu.

The Center for Independent Journalism Budapest will confirm the receipt of the submitted proposals by sending an email message. Additional documentation and information may be requested from the applicant during the evaluation process.

The decision by the evaluation team is expected in August 2015.

How to apply?
The application consists of three parts: the Application Form, the Budget Plan and the Supporting Documents. The application must be submitted in English.

1) The Application Form
Applicants are to submit a fully completed Application Form with their contact data and a brief description of the proposed action. The Application Form can be downloaded from the SEE Media Observatory project website (http://mediaobservatory.net/)and the web sites of the partner organisations:

Peace Institute: http://www.mirovni-institut.si/;
Albanian Media Institute: http://www.institutemedia.org/;
Media Center Sarajevo: http://www.media.ba/;
Center for Independent Journalism: http://www.cij.hu/en/;
Press Council of Kosovo: http://www.presscouncil-ks.org/?cid=2,1,
Macedonian Institute for Media: http://www.mim.org.mk/,
Montenegro Media Institute: http://www.mminstitute.org/,
Novi Sad School of Journalism: http://www.novinarska-skola.org.rs/sr/.

Description of the proposed action

In this part of the Application Form civil society organizations are requested to

- describe the core problem they want to focus on;
- list the activities to be implemented and the methods to achieve their goals;
- outline the expected measurable/tangible results;
- describe the visibility tools to inform the public about the actions and their impact.

Timeline projection

Applicants should demonstrate their plans for timing the activities.

Experience and capacity references

Applicants must prove their professional experience and organizational capacities to implement the proposed actions and therefore are required to provide a short description of the organization and list maximum three projects/actions carried out over the past years.

2/ Budget plan

Applicants are requested to submit their budget plan of direct expenses related to the action.

Eligible costs are the expenses directly related to the proposed activities. All project expenses must be calculated in EUR. The budget narrative should describe the justification of the costs presented in the budget.

The total budget should not exceed the maximum amount EUR 5000.

Eligible direct costs can be:
- costs of staff assigned to the project (salaries);
- travel/accommodation costs related to events;
- rental costs for equipment and supplies for the project activities;
- costs of services - organization of events, costs of communication, IT services, printing, publication, translation, rent of event venues, meetings and other services directly related to the proposed actions;
- visibility and distribution items related to the activities (DVD, print paper, pens, etc.).

The purchase of any equipment is a **non-eligible cost**.

Justifiable **indirect costs** are also eligible (for example office rent, utilities, banking and book-keeping fees, etc.), but the ratio of such administrative costs **should not exceed 7 percent of the total direct costs**. Although these indirect costs do not have to be itemized, they will have to be accounted in the books of the organization according to the general rules of book-keeping.

Important note:
VAT might not be an eligible cost in this project. VAT cost is eligible only if
 (i) the VAT is not recoverable by any means;
 (ii) it is established that they are borne by the final beneficiary; and
 (iii) they are clearly identified in the project proposal.
Budgets plan shall reflect these costs accordingly.

Sub-grantees will take responsibility to pay all taxes and dues of the grant amount according to their national laws.

3) Supporting documents of eligibility

Applicants should enclose copies of the following documents to demonstrate their eligibility under this call:

- copies of the founding document (deed of foundation or statutes) and the registration of the organization;
- copy of the latest annual report with the financial statement;
- statement by the legal representative on the financial and legal situation of the applicant organization (the template of the statement can be downloaded).

These copies should be signed by the legal representative of the organization and their scanned versions should be enclosed as a part of the application.

What is the evaluation procedure?

After the submission of proposals, applications **are pre-screened for formal eligibility.** After this pre-screening, an evaluation committee including experts from the South East European region will assess the applications. The evaluation committee may request additional information about the applicant or the proposed action.

The evaluation criteria are divided into headings and sub-headings (a,b,c). Each sub-heading will be given a score between 1 and 5 in accordance with the following assessment categories: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

A proposal can receive a maximum score of 95 from each of the evaluators. The final score of a proposal will be the average of the total scores reached.

Evaluation criteria	Scores	Subtotal
1. Relevance of the action for the core subject of the project		
a) how relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the Call for Proposals	5	
b) how relevant is the proposed action locally	5	
c) how clearly defined and strategically chosen are the stakeholders (type of stakeholders, their constituencies, reach-out)	5	15
2. Capacity of the applicant organization		
a) reference projects/campaigns reflecting the knowledge of issues	5	
b) relevant record of project management capacities (staff, equipment, ability to handle the budget for action)	5	10
3. Design of the action		
a) how coherent is the overall design of the action?	5	
b) does it build on the research findings on media integrity of the project;	5	
c) does it take into account external factors and potential risks?	5	15
4. Effectiveness and feasibility of the action		

a) are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected results?	5	
b) is the action plan clear and feasible?	5	
c) does it contain creative use of various advocacy tools?	5	
d) does the proposal contain monitoring and evaluation of the outcome?	5	20
5. Reasonable budget and timeline		
a) are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	5	
b) is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory?	5	10
6. Sustainability of the action		
a) is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups?	5	
b) is the proposal likely to have multiplier effects? (Including scope for replication and extension of the outcome of the action and dissemination of information)	5	
c) are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable:	5	
- institutionally *(Will structures allowing the activities to continue be in place at the end of the action? Will there be local "ownership" of the results of the action?)*		
- at policy level (where applicable) *(what will be the structural impact of the action —e.g. will it lead to improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods, etc?)*		15
7. Co-operation with other NGOs (ad hoc coalitions) locally and/or in the region	10	10
Total	**95**	**95**

Visibility and copyrights

The South East European Media Observatory project partners reserve the right to publish the products resulting from this project in part, in whole or as a reference on their website or in their publications with due respect to copyright rules.

Contracts with grantees will contain specific conditions of copyrights and crediting the sponsors of the project.

Contracts, reporting and final payments

Granted organizations will receive their contracts via e-mail. They have to print and sign 2 copies and send it back to the signatory, the Center for Independent Journalism. After this CIJ will transfer the first instalment of the grant - 70% of the total grant amount - to the grantees within 10 days.

The grantees are to submit a narrative and financial report according to the terms set forth in the grant contract.

The final payment (30%) will be transferred after the final report is approved by the Center for Independent Journalism.

Checklist of documents to be submitted as part of the application till 25 July, 2015:

A/ Application Form (Word file)
B/ Budget plan (Excel file)
C/ Supporting documents (scanned):
- copies of the founding document (deed of foundation or statutes) and the registration of the organization;
- copy of the latest annual report with the financial statement;
- statement by the legal representative on the financial and legal situation of the applicant organization (the template of the statement can be downloaded)..

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South East European Media Observatory is a regional partnership of civil society organisations aimed at enhancing media freedom and pluralism, and influencing media reforms in the countries of South East Europe.

It addresses obstacles to democratic development of media systems by providing a regional instrument for media research and monitoring, support to investigative journalism and civil society engagement. It also offers a regional framework for debates, consultations and coalitions among key stakeholders.

SEE Media Observatory stands for media integrity and journalism that serves public interest. These values are obstructed by corrupt relations and practices that integrated in the media systems. Corrupt media are deeply undemocratic institutions. Fight against corruption in the media, including the exposure of non-transparent ownership relations and funding methods and a critique of the fall of journalism as a practice of public control over the operation of governmental institutions, is simultaneously a fight for democracy.

Aiming to initiate and support public debate and policy actions in reclaiming public service values in media and journalism, SEE Media Observatory connects ten CSOs from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey**.** It is envisaged as a as a long term, continuous activity of the network of CSOs South East European Network for Professionalization of the Media (SEENPM).

In 2015 and 2016 its core activities are focused on media systems in the EU-enlargement countries.

Coordinator of the Call for proposals for CSOs in SEE Europe:
Center for Independent Journalism, Budapest, e-mail: seeapplications@cij.hu.