

Info Session

Call for Proposals: Media Development for Democracy Resilience

20th of October 2026

Agenda:

- 1. Priority areas of the call**
- 2. Application Process**
- 3. Budget Guidelines**
- 4. Q+A**

1. Mute your microphones when not speaking



2. Questions can be posted in the chat box during the presentation or can be asked at the end of the presentation. Questions can be posted in any of the WB6 local languages.



3. Please present yourself and the media you are representing when asking questions.



About #SustainMedia:

1. #SustainMedia is currently **supporting 23 media partners** to enhance their economic sustainability, and **23 media resource centers** in WBs.
2. A Multi-Donor Action is **jointly co-financed** by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, in cooperation with DW Akademie
3. **Overall Goal** of the Programme: Enhanced economic sustainability and boosted competitiveness of independent media organizations in Western Balkans by **Strengthening Economic Performance, Boosting Quality and Public Interest Journalism** and **Fostering Media Cooperation and Networks**
4. The duration of this Programme is scheduled from **September 2025 to February 2029** (42 months)

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Media Development for Democracy Resilience

Deadline: 8th of November 2026 - 23:59h CEST

Objective: The Call aims to strengthen the sustainability, resilience and innovation of independent media organisations in the Western Balkans, while safeguarding the quality of journalism and enhancing their public interest reporting and overall journalistic impact.

Media Development for Democracy Resilience

Target Group :

Independent private sector media company or non-for-profit media outlet from the Western Balkans. **Public broadcasters and state-controlled media are not eligible.**

- The applicant should be **established and operating in one of the Western Balkans 6 economies.**
- **Proven commitment to professional and ethical standards of journalism** (e.g. through membership in press councils; adherence or compliance with other relevant recognized mechanisms, platforms, etc).
- **Transparent ownership and/or composition**, with no involvement of state or state-affiliated entities; nor of senior political actors or their close relatives.

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Media Development for Democracy Resilience

LOT 1 - Media Business Development

Number of Grants: **approx. 10**

Grant Amounts: up to **€70,000**

Duration of the grant: up to **22 months**

LOT 2 - Thematic Journalism, Content and Audience Development

Number of Grants: **approx. 15**

Grant Amounts: up to **€20,000**

Duration of the grant: up to **12 months**

Applicants may submit only one application under this Call, either under Lot 1 or Lot 2

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Media Development for Democracy Resilience

LOT 1 - Media Business Development

Aims to provide financial and expertise support to independent media outlets to **strengthen their organizational resilience and economic sustainability**, through fostering their media business model, diversifying their revenues and expanding their audiences.

Selected media partners will receive **both financial and expertise support** (tailored mentorship and capacity building opportunities).



Co-funded by
the European Union



german
cooperation
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

Implemented by



Priority areas:

1. Business Innovation & Audience Development

- Concrete business models – testing or consolidating new revenue streams (e.g. subscriptions, crowdfunding, premium content, services in video productions etc).
- Pilot/develop innovative content formats ; Innovative tools for reporting and interacting with the audiences.
- Invest in audience analytics and digital solutions

2. Digital Transformation & Organisational Development

- Digitalisation of organisational and editorial workflows;
- introduction or improvement of digital publishing and content management systems;
- upgrading relevant software, systems and digital infrastructure;
- introduction of appropriate digital solutions to improve internal processes and media production

3. Media Collaboration & Partnership ideas

- Joint initiatives with other media outlets : e.g. joint hubs, networks, cooperations.
- Establish/consolidate networks or coalition of media organizations, working toward a similar target, goal or topic.

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Media Development for Democracy Resilience

LOT 2 - Thematic Journalism, Content and Audience Development

Aims to support independent media outlets in **developing know-how and expertise, produce, publish and disseminate** high-quality and evidence-based journalism, **develop innovative formats and audience engagement** approaches, **while fostering collaboration** with civil society actors and their actions, around one or more of the proposed priority thematic areas.

Thematic Areas:

Theme 1: Democracy Resilience and EU Integration

Electoral integrity

Good governance & Rule of Law

Countering Digital Threats to Democracy

Support to Media Freedom and Pluralism

Theme 2: Climate Action, Environmental Resilience and Green Transition

Support production and dissemination of impactful, independent, and evidence-based journalistic content that increases public awareness and understanding of climate change, opportunities arising from the green transition, as well as environmental challenges, including exposure of violations and advocacy efforts around sustainable exploitation of natural resources.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- ✓ **Relevance and Strategic Alignment**
- ✓ **Proposal Quality and Organisational Capacity**
- ✓ **Innovation and Collaboration**
- ✓ **Impact and Sustainability**
- ✓ **Transparency, Editorial Standards and Governance**
- ✓ **Cost-Effectiveness and Value for Money**

Application forms

Forms to be completed and submitted via email:
wb6media@giz.de

The Application Package for LOT 1 consists of:

- ✓ Application Form in word (Template: [Application Form LOT 1](#))
- ✓ Action Plan - Annex 1 (Template: [Action Plan](#))
- ✓ KPI Form - Annex 2 (Template: [KPI Template](#))
- ✓ Budget Form - Annex 3 in excel (Template: [Budget Template LOT 1](#))
- ✓ Supporting documents

The Application Package for LOT 2 consists of:

- ✓ Application Form in word (Template: [Application Form LOT 2](#))
- ✓ Budget Form - Annex 1 in excel (Template: [Budget Template LOT 2](#))
- ✓ Supporting documents

Budget lines

1. Budget line „Staff“

- Refers to own staff with employment contract from your organization/ and integrated consultants (self-employed or employed by a third party and seconded to you - **only where the law enables this option, for the moment applicable only for Serbia**). Staff can be allocated in full time (100%) or partly allocated- in this case, please indicate % of staff allocation.
- **Note:** Within preparation please only insert the **Job Function** (the budget line refers to job functions not individual persons)

2. Budget line „External services“

- Refers to services provided by third parties contracted under service contracts (companies or external experts).
- If partnership is foreseen this should be indicated as services in this budget line. Partners would be considered as a service providers for the lead applicant (no subgrating allowed)

For expert fees please use your internal organizational rates and afterwards can be crosschecked with the respective colleagues in the region before contracting.

3. Budget line „Transport costs/travel expenses“

This includes travel arrangements for your staff or travel related to implementation of activities. The costs of travelling by car are reimbursed at a unit rate of maximum 0,30 eur/km x google map distance evidence.

Per diems and accommodation cost please use your internal organizational rates and afterwards can be crosschecked with the respective colleagues in the region before contracting.

4. Budget line „CO2-Compensation for flights“

- Not applicable in our case!

5. Budget line „Procurement of materials and equipment“

All procured material and equipment's have to be order and bought according to the GIZ procurement regulations.

>1000 EUR the three offers rule should apply.

6. Budget line „Medicine“

- Not applicable in our case!

7. Budget line „Pesticides and/or mineral fertilizers“

- Not applicable in our case!

8. Budget line „Other costs“

- These costs are also subject to the requirements on procurement of goods and services.

9. Budget line „Construction Measures“

- **Not applicable** in our case!

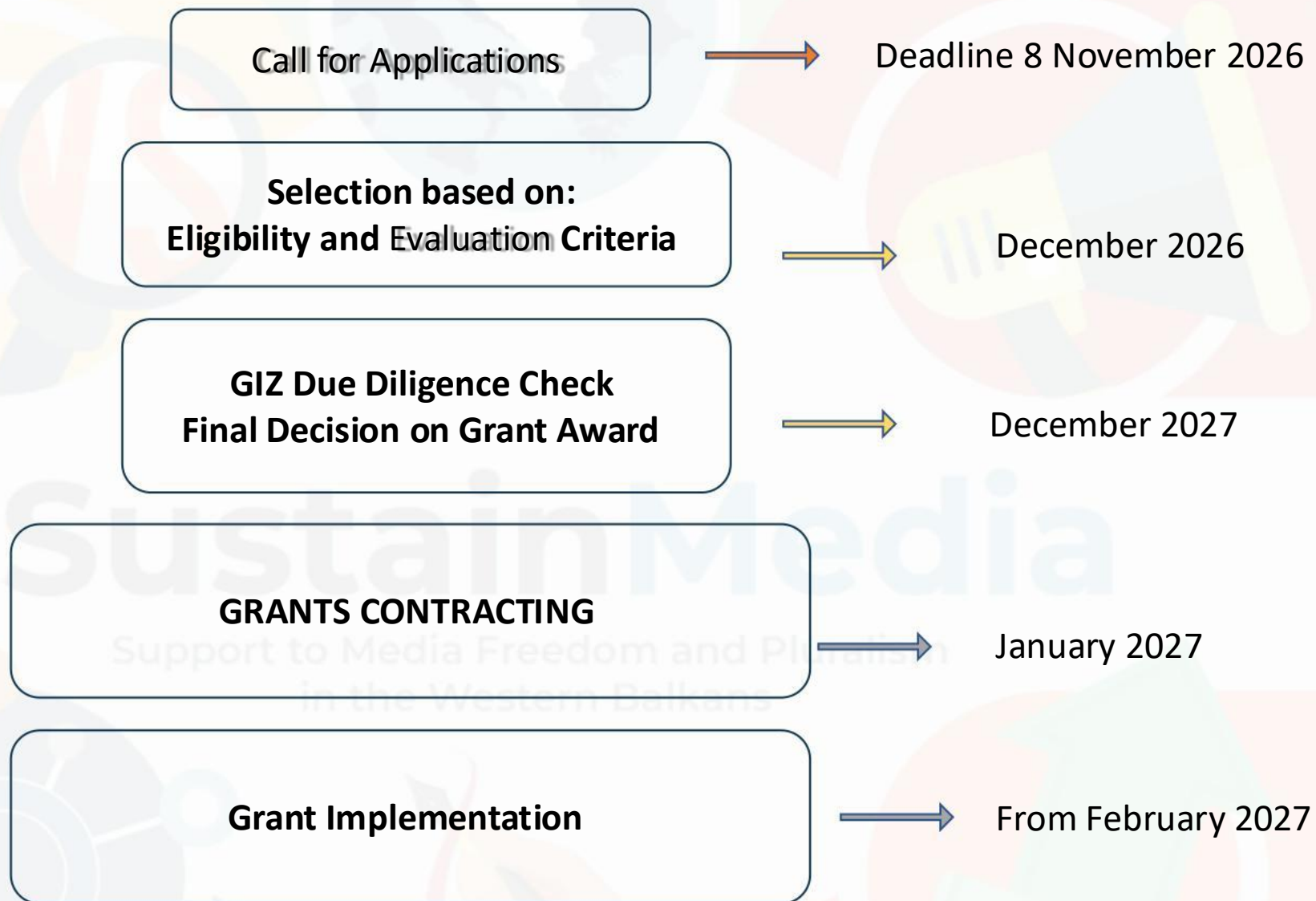
10. Budget line „Own contribution/third-party financing“

- The project can be partially financed by own contributions and/or by third parties. Please reflect this on the budget.

Important note: With selected candidates there might be further adjustments to the budget withing the contract preparation process.



Steps and Timeline for the Application and Selection Process



Q&A

#SustainMedia

Support to Media Freedom and Pluralism
in the Western Balkans



Thank you!

SustanMedia Team

