Call for applications

Western Balkans

Overview of the Call
I. OUR CALL AT A GLANCE

We welcome applications from local, national and regional organisations and initiatives that are contributing to social cohesion or reconciliation, and which are interested in investing in their internal development. This call is for actors based in Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.

Why are we launching this call?

Unfortunately, civic space is under threat in the Western Balkans and polarisation is on the rise. Activists and organisations that advocate for social change increasingly find themselves at the receiving end of various forms of hostility and pressure. This particularly affects those who challenge the status quo head-on, whether they do so through a principled stance on dealing with the past issues, by trying to break ethnic and ideological bubbles or by protecting essential liberties such as media freedom.

To stay active and impactful in such a context, organisations need to be strong internally and ready to adapt. Yet this is often hard to achieve as operational pressures pile up and make it difficult to find time and resources to invest in internal development. This is why we have been providing institutional development support in the Western Balkans since 2014. In these uncertain times, PeaceNexus believes that it is critical to continue investing in organisations and initiatives geared towards social cohesion. Under this call, we want to continue providing brave organisations and initiatives with the breathing space and resources to get stronger internally. We believe that our process support can be catalytic in helping organisations adapt to changing circumstances.

Through our Organisational Development support we wish to partner with actors which contribute to the quality and intensity of collaboration across ethnic lines and enable regional mobility and reconciliation. We are also keen to support organisations able to mobilise others, including youth, in support of responsible dealing with the past processes. Through Conflict Sensitivity support, we will also support actors which do not necessarily have a focus on reconciliation but are interested in contributing to social cohesion and countering polarisation through their broader mandate. In both areas of support, we work with partners to help them overcome internal challenges that hinder their effectiveness and ability to reach their own goals.

What are we offering?

Selected applicants will be supported through a tailored process of internal strengthening focusing either on conflict sensitivity (support area 1) or organisational development (support area 2).

PeaceNexus (PN) support will take the form of a small grant of up to 40'000 CHF (average 25'000 CHF) to cover external expertise and process costs (for example for meeting costs, fees of specialised consultants, capacity development investments). In addition, two PN staff members will provide accompaniment to selected organisations throughout the partnership, including by providing advice, feedback or brainstorming about solutions.

Once you are a PN partner, you will also be invited to regional peer-learning events with other PN partners and will be able to request external coaching if you need it. A phase of PN support lasts approximately 1 year and the majority of PN partners are supported for several years. We do not offer project nor core funding.
Who can apply?

The list of eligibility criteria is included below under section IV but in brief we are looking for applicants who are:

- Be based in the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia)
- Change-makers in their community and have the ambition to contribute to social cohesion
- Ready to lead on and invest time in an internal strengthening process

Under this call, applications from Bosnia & Herzegovina are particularly welcome.

Grassroots initiatives and networks which are not registered are also able to apply.

How to apply?

Applicants need to fill in a webform and an application form by June 11th 2023.

We encourage you to read the following overview and the documents related to the support area you are interested in.

For any questions, you may contact vladica.jovanovic@peacenexus.org, preferably by 5th June.
**II. ZOOM ON EACH SUPPORT AREA**

**SUPPORT AREA 1 - CONFLICT SENSITIVITY**

*Helping organisations adapt to their context and contribute to social cohesion*

**RATIONALE**

Conflict sensitivity is typically defined as the ability of an organisation to:

- Understand the context in which it operates
- Understand the interactions between its actions and the context
- Act upon this understanding to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts on lines of tension present in the context

The concept is relevant in environments such as the Western Balkans, where societies have moved away from violent conflict but remain affected by underlying lines of tension and polarisation. Due to the legacy of the past, Western Balkans organisations often face context-sensitivity challenges: for example, they can do harm by unintentionally reinforcing (or simply being perceived as reinforcing) existing prejudices between different groups, excluding those who are different, or endorsing ethno-nationalist divisive narratives. At the same time, organisations often have untapped potential to contribute to social cohesion, regardless of whether they work on reconciliation directly, or have a different mandate focused for example on journalism, democratic engagement, environmental protection, education or culture. We aim to help realise this potential by helping organisations adapt to their context and contribute to social cohesion.

**FOR WHOM?**

We welcome applications from organisations and initiatives that want to maximise the positive impact of their work by better adapting to their context. We’re particularly keen to support:

- Actors that work regionally and/or connect diverse stakeholders within and across divided communities at the local level
- Grant-making organisations and foundations aiming to develop conflict-sensitive funding & partnership practices
- Organizations that are effective at protecting essential liberties and activists under threat.
- Media organisations that want to ensure conflict-sensitive reporting and/or counter polarisation

**TYPE OF SUPPORT**

The support is provided through a facilitated process of organisational change focused on helping you to adapt to your context, including in terms of your organisational functioning.

The list that follows is not exhaustive but conflict sensitivity support can be about:

- developing a conflict-sensitive organisational strategy
- developing tools and capacities for regular context analysis
- developing stronger outreach and engagement with external stakeholders
- updating grant-making tools and approaches so the resulting portfolio of projects/partnerships takes into account the conflicting issues in the region and contribute to social cohesion.
- ensuring diversity and inclusion in your human resources management
- developing new programmes with explicit social cohesion ambitions.
SUPPORT AREA 2 - ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Helping organisations focused on reconciliation become more effective

RATIONALE

We believe that if organisations manage to overcome internal challenges, then their interventions will be delivered more effectively and they will make more relevant, inclusive and sustainable contributions to reconciliation.

Our Organisational Development (OD) support is informed by the idea that dedicated resources can create a space for self-reflection and an opportunity for an organisation to address what impedes its ability to effectively deliver on its mission. While OD processes need to be fully owned internally to be successful, we believe that process accompaniment by a third party such as PeaceNexus can nevertheless facilitate a transformation that is difficult to achieve alone.

FOR WHOM?

We welcome applications from organisations that want to address internal challenges to maximise their impact on reconciliation and dealing with the past. We seek out change-makers with a demonstrated potential to challenge the status quo in their environment. We’re particularly keen to support:

- Actors that work on reconciliation regionally and/or connect diverse stakeholders within and across divided communities at the local level.
- Transitional justice and Dealing with the Past organisations which engage in memory activism, build young people’s knowledge about the 90s and advocate for a responsible and principled approach to the legacy of the past.
- Organisations and initiatives that protect the rights of minorities as well as their socio-political inclusion.

TYPE OF SUPPORT

The support takes the shape of a facilitated process of organisational strengthening, for example to help your organisation clarify its identity and positioning; improve its ability to assess results and strengthen organisational learning; improve its governance mechanisms and practice. Frequent areas of support include:

- Strategy development
- Restructuring
- Board development
- Development of an organisational MEL framework
III. OUR OFFER

What does PeaceNexus support entail?

PeaceNexus works with selected partners based on jointly agreed upon objectives, and as such our contribution entails more than a financial contribution. As an engaged partner our support includes:

Direct process accompaniment from PeaceNexus:

We provide overall process accompaniment on organisational development or conflict sensitivity. This starts from us helping you identify your priority internal challenges and what you want to achieve with our support. Then we help you design a process that matches your needs, your specificities and your constraints. We don’t take a “one size fits all” approach but rather tailor our accompaniment to what is needed by each partner. We are also there to assist you in identifying relevant external expertise that may help you with your challenges. We also provide feedback and advice in relation to key milestones, including to ensure that the deliverables of external experts are clear, match your expectations and are of high quality. By providing the direct accompaniment mentioned above, we play a complementary role to external consultants. External consultants are accountable to you as the partner while we only play a complementary role to external experts by helping you make the best use of the support they can provide and by being available as your sounding board from the beginning to the end of our partnership.

Financial contribution to cover costs directly associated with the process

In addition to the staff time mentioned above, we provide a small grant to cover the costs of the process. The budget and total amount allocated to each partner is determined by the roadmap which we jointly establish after the initial kick-off visit (see more under: If we are selected, how will the partnership start?). The budget for one phase of support typically ranges between 15’000 and 40’000 CHF. It covers the costs of external consultants and possibly additional thematic or technical expertise, as well as expenses directly related to the process (typically logistics costs related to meetings).

What is outside of the scope of PeaceNexus support and cannot be funded?

PN grants are neither operational project funding nor core funding and the following costs are not eligible:

- Operational activities (any kind of project or programme activities)
- Core funding
- Staff costs or recurring board expenses
- Administrative overhead costs
- Equipment, furnishings or office rent
- Financial audits
- Tuition for degree programs
- Accreditation processes
- Campaigns for building capital/endowments
- One-off trainings and other capacity building measures unrelated to the broader objectives
IV. APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Eligibility criteria

In order to be eligible, the applicant needs to fulfil ALL of the following criteria:

☑ Be working in one of the following countries: Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and
☑ Be a civil society organisation, or a grassroots initiative or organisation from one of the following categories
  - A local or regional public entity
  - A foundation
  - A multilateral organisation
  - A media organisation
  - A network
☑ Be directly responsible for the preparation of the application and management of the process if selected
☑ Confirm that their activities will not violate the USA PATRIOT Act (18 U. S. C. §2339B)

Application process step-by-step

If you are interested in applying, please make sure to thoroughly read this overview, and specific documentation related to the support area you are interested in. Applicants may apply to one support area only.

Applications should be written in English. However, if it is not possible for you, you may submit it in BCMS or Albanian. But, please kindly note that the working language of our partnerships tends to be English.

If you have questions that are not covered by these documents and our FAQs, please send an email to vladica.jovanovic@peacenexus.org, preferably by 5th June 2023.

Please make sure to consult internally when developing your application. Once your application is finalised, please:

1. Fill in the webform (requesting basic information about your organisation)
2. Upload your application form (in word or pdf format)

The deadline for applications is 11th June 2023 (23.59pm CET).

Once you submit your application, you will receive an automated confirmation of receipt.

There is no need to follow up with us from your side, we will get in touch if we need clarification about your application. Unsuccessful applicants will hear back from us by the beginning of August.
Selection process

Our calls for proposals are very competitive. We have put systems in place to ensure our review is rigorous and impartial, and all eligible applications will be assessed the following selection criteria:

- **Relevance of the applicant and potential to positively contribute to social cohesion**
  We need to understand through concrete examples what you are working on and how your work positively influences your environment. It is also important for us to understand how you are impacted by underlying lines of tension in your context and where you see opportunities for you to counter polarisation and contribute to social cohesion.

- **Readiness to take up conflict sensitivity at an organisational level**
  We want to understand the challenges that you face in adapting to your context and why you want to invest your time and energy in this internal strengthening process. We’re particularly keen to know what makes you think that greater conflict sensitivity would make a positive difference for inside your organisation and on your impact on the ground.

- **Relevance of the applicant and ability to contribute to reconciliation**
  We need to understand what difference your work makes and to whom. It is important for us to understand where you have already a track record that contributes to conflict prevention, dealing with the past or reconciliation and where you see more potential for even more impact.

- **Readiness to engage in an organisational development process**
  The content of your application is of course confidential and we encourage you to be self-reflective and upfront in the articulation of your internal challenges. We also want to understand what ‘success’ would look like and how you expect the OD process to contribute to your effectiveness and impact.

Our Western Balkans team will conduct the assessment and prepare the shortlist. Shortlisted applicants will be invited for an online conversation with the team. The final selection decision will be taken by the PeaceNexus’s Selection Committee no later than end of July.

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- **Applications deadline**: 11th June 2023
- **End July / Beginning August**
- **Kick off workshops from September**
We are interested in internal development but have very limited time to engage; should we still apply?

Engaging in an OD or CS partnership with us will take you time and sustained efforts. A PN grant will give you the means to hire external experts that can help you in the development of high quality strategies and internal tools and the PN team will be available to facilitate your change management efforts throughout the process. However, this will only facilitate the process: you will still need to regularly invest time in leading on your internal development, consulting with relevant colleagues in your organisation and providing feedback to experts who will more often do things with you rather than for you. In case such time investment is not possible or suitable for you, it is best you don’t apply.

If we are selected, how will the partnership start?

If you are selected for support, the PN team will visit you from September 2023 for a participatory kick-off workshop. The workshop will serve to better understand your starting point, goals and challenges so that the accompaniment provided by PeaceNexus can be tailored to your needs and specificities. The kick-off usually 2 days, involves all staff members directly involved in and affected by the process and is facilitated by PeaceNexus staff.

The purpose of this workshop is to create a shared understanding of:

- the internal challenges that should be addressed
- the desired outcome of the organisational change process
- the roadmap on how to get there

PeaceNexus staff will write a report of this meeting, with observations and recommendations. On the basis of your feedback on this report, we will jointly finalise the roadmap with an estimated timeline, roles/responsibilities, and budget allocations for our support/partnership. These elements will be reflected in a Grant Offer Letter which is the contractual reference document for the process.

If we are selected, what will be the reporting requirements of PeaceNexus?

Since we remain in close touch with our partners throughout their processes, our reporting requirements are light. We only ask for a brief (learning-oriented) narrative report at the end of each phase of support, and a financial report reflecting the actual expenses. To reflect on our practice, we conduct online surveys with our partners every other year, and we may commission external evaluations of long-term partnerships (more than 3 years) once they have ended.
PeaceNexus Foundation

Partner Support Process

1. Assess the Starting Point
   - Take a snapshot of the current situation, where do we encounter challenges/obstacles in our work, what are the strengths to build on?
   - What are the entry points to address your priority challenges? What opportunities can be leveraged?

2. Set a Vision and Roadmap
   - Where do you want to get to?
   - How would success look like if you managed to address your priority challenges?
   - What are specific objectives for the process supported by PeaceNexus?
   - Who needs to be involved and how?
   - What type of external expertise and accompaniment will you require?

3. Implement, Monitor, Adapt
   - Implement the roadmap with internal leads and a cross-section of staff (and possibly partners), supported by external accompaniment
   - Monitor the change process along key milestones, refine and adapt where needed

4. Finalise, Review, Define Follow-up
   - At the end of the support phase, review progress to date, challenges encountered and lessons learnt
   - Agree follow-up actions to sustain your results
   - Pending progress and continued relevance, decision on a possible follow-on support phase with PeaceNexus

Facilitation of the initial self-assessment and objective-setting. We typically conduct a document review, interview selected staff and often facilitate a participatory kick-start workshop.

Support to design the roadmap and recruit suitable external expertise/accompaniment.

Small grant to help cover the costs of external expertise/accompaniment and related process costs (meeting, travel, communication...), up to 40,000 CHF for a 1-year support phase.

Accompaniment on the overall change process, monitoring and adaptation.

Facilitation of a participatory end of phase review.

We help you define follow-on actions.

Pending progress, possible initiation of a follow-on phase.