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## Call for Expressions of Interest Mapping of available sources of emergency support in the Western Balkans

### About PeaceNexus

PeaceNexus is a Swiss private foundation that aims to strengthen the capacity of organisations working to build peaceful and inclusive societies. By strengthening the skills of and collaboration between partners engaged in peacebuilding activities, PeaceNexus aims to increase their effectiveness in peacebuilding.

Based across [West Africa](#), [Central Asia](#), [South East Asia](#) and the [Western Balkans](#), our team of 20 works with local partners who are well positioned to address specific conflict risks. We also support [international organisations](#) that are active in fragile states and are well positioned to contribute to social cohesion and peacebuilding.

### About our Western Balkans programme

In the Western Balkans (WB), we provide support on organisational development and conflict sensitivity to partners from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. PeaceNexus has been operating in the WB since 2014 and currently supports eight organisations across the region (more information on the WB programme can be found [here](#)). We select our partners in view of (a) their peacebuilding potential (capacity to contribute to greater inter-ethnic collaboration within and across states and/or ability to mobilise citizens in support of transitional justice and democratic reforms) and (b) their interest to engage in a process of internal change.

### Background of the assignment

We are aware that the civic space is shrinking in the Western Balkans (WB), especially for progressive organizations and activists and around dealing with the past. Their environment is made even more unfavourable due to the escalation of tensions in parts of the region and due to funding flows not necessarily being conducive to adaptation. Overall, we assess that Western Balkans civil society actors active in PN's thematic areas of work are exposed to different pressures and risks that include:

- Security risks due to increased tensions in their environment
- Risks of facing fines and/or SLAPP suits as a result of their watchdog actions and human rights work
- Risks of burnout

As a programme dedicated to the internal strengthening of relevant civil society actors, we therefore see a need in mapping how the funding ecosystem is responding to the shrinking civic space. More concretely, we want to better understand what sources of funding/support dedicated to responding to such risks are available. The purpose of this mapping is twofold. On one hand, we wish to make the findings available to our partners so that they are better informed about available support. On the other hand, we will use the findings to reflect about the possible adaptation of our grant-making.

### Objectives of this assignment

The specific questions we would like to address through this research include:

- 1. What are current sources of emergency support for civil society organisations and activists in the WB?**



Beyond mapping available sources, we would also like to better understand the application process and selection criteria of available options. We would also want to know how long the application process typically takes and what is the duration of such support. We will also expect the consultant to verify whether organisations based in the Western Balkans are eligible to apply for emergency support from international organisations supporting threatened human rights organisations globally (e.g. Frontline defenders; Lifeline etc)

## **2. What are current sources of psychological support for civil society organisations and activists in the WB?**

We would like to know which funders cover such support and which organisations specialize in offering psychological support /counselling to human rights defenders facing burnout and mental health challenges as a result of their activism. We are also interested to know of any existing support networks helping organisations/individuals with achieving a better work-life balance.

## **3. What are current sources of legal support for civil society organizations and activists in the WB?**

We would like to know which funders, if any, provide support to cover the legal fees of CSOs and activists targeted by SLAPP suits or fines deriving from their advocacy/ activism. We would also like to know of any existing organization providing such actors with pro-bono legal advice.

## **4. What are current sources of support dedicated to helping CSOs develop adequate security and crisis management systems in the WB?**

We would like to know who are the leading providers of such expertise/support in the WB (both in terms of physical security but also digital security) and what are funders, if any, who support organizations in putting in place such systems.

### Envisaged methodology

Our preliminary thinking is that the research should rely on a combination of the following methods:

- Desk research around the questions listed above
- Interviews/survey with potential WB providers of such support (both funders and providers of expertise)
- Interviews with organisations /individuals that are either specialists of the WB funding landscape or that are themselves at the forefront of defending the civic space in the region

Note: our definition of the WB includes Croatia and both the research design and the report should cover that country. In addition, while the predominant focus of the report should be on support available to organisations, it should also seek to outline modalities available to individual activists.

### Role and deliverables of the consultant

- 1) Further develop the research/mapping methodology

The first deliverable of the consultant will be to produce an inception report outlining 1) the initial



mapping around the 4 research questions deriving from a) initial conversations with PN b) the consultant's own knowledge c) desk research; 2) the proposed workplan for the rest of the research, including proposed interlocutors and proposed interview/survey questions.

## 2) Develop a draft report

Following interviews/surveying of relevant stakeholders, a first full draft of the report should be shared. The report should be inclusive of raw data as annex and should always specify any geographic eligibility constraint (i.e it should be clear to the reader what sources of support are potentially available regionally and what is only an option in some countries). A Q&A session with PN should also be organised around the draft report.

## 3) Develop a final report and present it to PN and its WB partners

A final version of the report informed by PN's feedback will be expected and should then be presented in an online session open to PN's WB partners. The final version should also include any recommendations which the consultant may have regarding the adaptation/diversification of PN's grant-making in view of the findings from the research and PN's own strategic parameters and constraints.

### Timeframe and coordination

This assignment is expected to require approximately 15 consultancy days and is anticipated to be carried out over several months, starting no later than February 2024. The assignment should ideally be completed by April 2024.

The consultant will be expected to work closely with PN's WB team which will provide feedback and inputs along the way and which should be kept in the loop of communication with external parties.

### Application process

We are looking for applicants with the following profile:

- Excellent (qualitative) analytical and drafting skills
- Strong research and interviewing skills
- In-depth familiarity with the socio-political context of the Western Balkans
- Experience working and familiarity with donors/foundations landscape in the Western Balkans
- In-depth knowledge of the existing flexible & emergency support mechanisms of support to civil society
- Experience working with civil society organisations, preferably in the Western Balkans

Application package:

- CV (not exceeding 4 pages) (relevant to this assignment)
- Expression of Interest letter, highlighting relevant experience
- Proposed methodology and timeframe (in case of application in teams, please spell out how you will divide roles and consultancy days)
- Financial proposal for the assignment, showing working days and expected fee and availability.



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- Contact details of two references (relevant to this assignment)

Please send applications to [deborah.reymond@peacenexus.org](mailto:deborah.reymond@peacenexus.org) with 'Western Balkans Mapping' as the subject. The deadline for application is 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024. Shortlisted candidates will be contacted around the end of January and the selected candidate will be contracted by mid-February.