

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Directorate General for Europe and International Trade Policy
The Director General

ANNOUNCEMENT – CALL FOR PROPOSALS “BANDO BALCANI 2024”

Applications for the request of contributions pursuant to Article 23ter paragraph 2 of the Presidential Decree 18/67 for initiatives aimed at promoting Italian participation to international peace and humanitarian initiatives and for the protection of human rights.

Article 1 - Subject of this Announcement

1. In relation to the provisions of the Decrees of the Director General for Europe and International Trade Policy (hereafter DGUE) No. 3110/31 of May 28th 2024 and No. 3110/45 of July 31st 2024, through this Announcement, the DGUE intends to acquire, through a public procedure, proposals aimed at obtaining the concession of grants for the implementation of initiatives aimed at allowing Italian participation in peace and security initiatives in international headquarters and the implementation of humanitarian initiatives and the protection of human rights, relating to the geographical and thematic areas referred to in Article 3 below.

2. The total resources for financing of the abovementioned proposals for year 2024 amount to € 240,000, allocated through the Decision adopted by the Italian Council of Ministers on February 24th, 2024, pursuant to law No. 145 of 21 July 2016 whose *iter* is still ongoing.

3. The DGUE reserves the right not to assign all or part of the funds covered by this Announcement in the event that all or part of the project proposals received are inadmissible, manifestly incongruous or the applicants are not eligible for funding, or in the event that the proposals do not reach the minimum sufficiency threshold established by the examining Commission during the evaluation.

4. If the resources referred to in the abovementioned Decisions are not actually assigned for reasons not foreseeable at the date of publication of this Announcement, or if they are assigned for an amount lower than that indicated in paragraph 2 of this Article, the DGUE reserves the right not to disburse contributions or to consequently reduce the overall financial endowment of this Announcement, as well as to proportionally reduce the amount of the contribution for individual projects. The DGUE also reserves the right to allocate the resources referred to in this Announcement to alternative commitments to those outlined here, should needs arise that are deemed a priority at the sole discretion of the Administration. This will be promptly informed via the MFAIC website (www.esteri.it).

Article 2 - Recipients of contributions and requirements for submitting proposals

1. Italian and foreign private entities are eligible to apply for a grant:

- a) if the conditions of exclusion referred to in Article 94, 95, 96, 97, 98 of the Legislative Decree No. 36/2023 are not applicable to them;
- b) if they are in compliance with the tax, social security and insurance obligations provided for by national legislation;
- c) if they are in compliance with the anti-mafia documentation pursuant to Article 85 of Legislative Decree No. 159/2011 and subsequent amendments and additions.

Article 3 - Areas of intervention and financial activity

1. The contributions are granted to proposals of initiatives with the purposes referred to in article 1 and related to the following thematic areas, in the Western Balkans region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia):

a) consolidation of democratic institutions and support to national and regional reconciliation processes; strengthening of the process of adhesion of the Western Balkans to the EU and promotion of EU integration; prevention of terrorism and extremism, reform of justice and electoral systems, transparency, fight against corruption and organized crime;

b) inclusion and enhancement of youth, women, and national minorities within the processes of regional reconciliation;

c) strengthening the protection and promotion of human rights;

d) promotion of spreading and protection of international and humanitarian law.

The proposed initiatives may be bilateral or regional.

2. The available funding amounts to €240,000.

3. Each selected proposal may benefit from a contribution not exceeding a percentage of 90% of the total amount of costs necessary for the implementation of the proposed activities and in any case for a maximum amount of €30,000. General expenses, for which detailed accountancy is not required, including coordination and secretarial expenses, must not exceed 8% of the total expenses.

4. Each initiative subject to a contribution under this Announcement must have a maximum duration of 12 months from the date of confirmation of the acceptance pursuant to Article 9, paragraph 4, without prejudice to the possibility for the beneficiary, in the face of unequivocal and justified reasons, to request an extension for the completion of the project activities.

Article 4 - Presentation of the project proposal - terms and conditions

1. The submission of proposals by private entities who have their registered office in Italy or in another country of the European Union is made exclusively by certified e-mail to the address dgue.adriatico-balcani@cert.esteri.it (cc. bandobalcani@esteri.it). The transmission e-mail must indicate in the subject the words "REF. Bando Balcani 2024" and the name of the proposing entity.

2. For entities who have their registered office in a non-EU country, the application is submitted exclusively through the Italian Diplomatic Representation with territorial jurisdiction.

3. The submission of the proposal must be sent using only the specific application form "**Request for contribution**" attached to this Announcement (**Annex A**), in Italian or in English, attaching the required documentation referred to in the following Article 5.

4. The grant application must be signed by the legal representative (or his/her attorney) of the applicant. As an alternative to the authentication of the signature, a photocopy of an identity document of the subscriber may be attached to the Application.

5. For private entities having their registered office in Italy or in another country of the European Union, the substitutive declaration is made pursuant to Articles 46 and 47 of the Presidential Decree No. 445 of 28 December 2000, and subsequent amendments and additions. Private entities who have

their registered office in a non-EU country must produce equivalent suitable documentation according to the legislation of the country of origin, legalized by the Italian Diplomatic Representation with territorial jurisdiction.

6. Under penalty of exclusion, the **final deadline** for submitting the application is set at **h 12.00 on 30 September 2024**, Rome local time. The date and time of receipt certified by e-mail or by the stamp of the Diplomatic Representation will be considered as certification.

7. Any question relating to this procedure may be addressed, exclusively in writing, to the address dgue.adriatico-balcani@cert.esteri.it (cc. bandobalcani@esteri.it), indicating in the subject the words "REF. Bando Balcani 2024- QUESTIONS ", by 13 September 2024, at h12.00.

Article 5 - Accompanying documentation

1. The documentation accompanying this call consists of the following annexes, whose full completion, signature and transmission is mandatory in order to participate in the procedure:

- a) **Annex A: Request for contribution**
- b) **Annex A1-Application Form**
- c) **Annex A2: Budget**
- d) **Annex B: Declaration relating to the attachments in true copy of the original**

2. In addition to the Attachments A, A1 and A2 referred to in paragraph 1, the following documents must also be attached, including a translation in Italian or English:

- a) instrument of incorporation and the statutes of the Entity (in a certified copy of the original);
- b) final balance sheet for the financial year 2023, approved by the competent statutory bodies (in a certified copy of the original);
- c) budget for the financial year 2024 and any note of variation thereof, approved by the competent statutory bodies (in a certified copy of the original);
- d) reports of the auditors on the abovementioned financial statements, where an auditing body is required by the statute of the applicant entity (in a certified copy of the original);
- e) list of the names of the members of the governing bodies, on the entity's headed paper;
- f) list of public and private funding/contributions received in 2023 and expected or received in 2024, on the entity's headed paper;
- g) organic plant with indication of staff with permanent contracts and managers, on the entity's headed paper;
- h) summary list of the facilities and equipment available to the entity for carrying out its activities, on the entity's headed paper;

3. The documentation referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 above must be electronically signed by the competent administrative bodies; alternatively, where the electronic signature is not available, a photocopy of an identity document of the subscriber may be attached to the aforementioned documentation. The declaration of a certified copy of the original can be made using the model referred to in **Annex B - Declaration relating to the annexes in true copy of the original**. In case of a certified copy in a foreign language, the relative translations in Italian or English must be attached.

4. The application and all accompanying documentation must be sent in pdf format files attached to the certified e-mail (PEC) of transmission. Attachments A1 and A2 must also be sent in *word* and *excel* format respectively.

5. In the event of incompleteness and any other irregularity found in the documentation received, the DGUE may assign the proposing entity a term, not exceeding ten days, for the necessary declarations/documentation to be integrated or regularized. If the term expires without providing the requested documentation, the applicant will be automatically excluded from the procedure. Lack of documentation impeding the identification of the content of the proposal or the identification of the applicant represent non-remediable irregularities.

6. The DGUE reserves the right to carry out investigations, also on a sample basis, concerning the truthfulness of the declarations made, in relation to the project, in accordance with the regulations in force.

Article 6 - Eligibility criteria

1. To be eligible for admission, the proposal must:

- a) be consistent with the institutional mission that the DGUE, Unit for the Adriatic and the Balkans, is called upon to carry out within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, as referred to in Article 3.1 of this Call;
- b) contain a request for a grant not exceeding €30,000 in total;
- c) contain a request for a grant not exceeding 90% of the total cost of the initiative;
- d) provide for a duration not exceeding 12 months, with the obligation to effectively start project activities by 31 December 2024. Failure to start by that date will result in the forfeiture of the contribution and the return of any sums received for the implementation of the approved initiative;
- e) be complete with the documentation referred to in Article 5.

Article 7 - Evaluation process of the proposals

1. The process of approval of the initiatives will be implemented through the stages described below.

2. The Director General for Europe and International Trade Policy appoints a Commission in charge of evaluating the proposals. The Commission will be chaired by a diplomatic official of rank not lower than *Counsellor of Legation* and is made up of at least three members. The Secretariat of the Commission is provided by the Secretariat of the DGUE and by the Unit for the Adriatic and the Balkans of the same Directorate.

3. The Commission carries out checks on the existence of the requirements referred to in Article 2, on compliance with the terms and conditions set out in Article 4, on the completeness of the accompanying documentation referred to in Article 5, as well as on the eligibility criteria pursuant to Article 6. By checking the eligibility requirements, the Commission will carry out random checks on the veracity of the declarations made in the Request for contribution (Annex A) according to the procedures set out in art. 4.5 of this Call, in compliance with the provisions of art.71 of Presidential Decree 445/2000 and subsequent amendments, and reserves the right to exclude from the evaluation initiatives related to statements and/or documentation found to be wholly or partly untrue, without prejudice to further actions pursuant to art. 75 and 76 of the same Presidential Decree.

4. The Commission assigns a score to each initiative deemed admissible based on the provisions referred to in article 8 below and draws up the single ranking.

Article 8 - Evaluation and scores

1. The Commission referred to in Article 7 assigns a score to each initiative, according to the following evaluation criteria:

a) Quality of the proposals presented in terms of compliance with the purposes outlined in this call, with reference to:

- i. consolidation of democratic institutions and strengthening of the process of adhesion of the Western Balkans to the EU;
- ii. support to the reconciliation process, at national and regional level, and to the processes on intra-regional integration;
- iii. prevention of terrorism and extremism, reform of justice and electoral systems, transparency, fight against corruption and organized crime;
- iv. inclusion and enhancement of youth, women and national minorities within the processes of regional reconciliation;
- v. strengthening the protection and promotion of human rights;
- vi. promotion of dissemination and protection of international and humanitarian law.

Maximum 30 points

b) Quality of the proposals presented in terms of effectiveness and technical validity, as inferred from the presence of:

- i. clearly delineated activities and results;
- ii. in-depth analysis of the operating context and adequate consideration of any precedents, similar initiatives, also in terms of “lessons learned”;
- iii. integration of the proposed activities with other initiatives in the same area/sector of intervention, also with a view to avoiding duplication;
- iv. correct risk analysis and adequate assessment of external and/or local conditions, where also relevant in terms of safety.
- v. sustainability of the intervention.

Maximum 30 points

c) Quality of the overall structure of the proposer with respect to the initiative to be implemented, with regard to:

- i. adequacy of the organization chart;
- ii. proportionality of staff costs to the overall project budget
- iii. adequacy of the structures and equipment available to the proposer;
- iv. positive balance of the previous year, or with low debt exposure

Maximum 20 points

d) Adequacy of the initiative in promoting the creation of ad hoc partnerships and consortium between two or more entities, or which are part of international networks that also involve foreign entities and in providing, where relevant, an adequate involvement of local authorities, beneficiaries and local communities.

Maximum 10 points

e) Previous experience in the area or with reference to the activity covered by the proposed initiative, as demonstrable through the implementation and positive conclusion of projects in the geographical or thematic area on which the proposed initiative relates or related to it in the previous five years.

Maximum 10 points

Article 9 - Identification of the eligible proposals

1. Based on the scores assigned to the proposals, the Commission draws up the ranking and proposes it to the DGUE for approval. The initiatives are declared eligible if they have received an evaluation equal to or greater than 60 points, and until the foreseen financial allocation is exhausted.
2. If additional resources become available other than those indicated in Article 1, paragraph 2, the DGUE reserves the right to finance further proposals deemed suitable by the ranking.
3. The eligible proposals identified by the Commission are sent to the Unit for the Adriatic and the Western Balkans for the initiation of the granting process.
4. The entities who have proposed the initiatives usefully placed in the ranking for funding are informed by the DGUE by means of communication via PEC, or by communication from the Italian Diplomatic Representation with territorial competence, to which the subject replies via PEC within 10 days, for acceptance, under penalty of forfeiture of the financing.

Article 10 - Method of reporting the expenses incurred for the project

1. The grant will be disbursed upon accountancy in one lump sum. Timing of disbursing will depend on the actual availability of the funds referred to in Article 1, paragraph 2.
2. The related documentation must be presented by the applicant in Italian or English, at the end of the project, and anyway by 3 months after the closure of project activities, which must be promptly communicated to the Directorate.
3. The disbursement of the grant is conditional to the submission of a detailed report on the activities carried out and on the results of the initiative implemented, in line with Annex A1, and a statement of the expenses incurred consisting of the following documents:
 - a) summary report of the expenses incurred, drawn up on headed paper and electronically signed by the competent administrative bodies, divided by type of expense (for example: travel expenses, hotels, translations, premises rent, general expenses, etc.), in line with Annex A2, from which it is also inferred that general expenses, including coordination and secretarial expenses, do not exceed 8% of total expenses;
 - b) detailed list of the same expenses (for example: air tickets, indicating the price for each guest, hotel receipts, catering invoices, etc.), with attachments the originals of all invoices/receipts, addressed to the applicant subject, with related receipt or proof of payment. All attached supporting documents must be translated into Italian or English and the expenses incurred in local currency must be converted into Euros, specifying the exchange rate at the time of the expenditure. In place of the originals, it is also possible to attach copies of the abovementioned documentation, provided that they are accompanied by a declaration certifying, according to the model referred to in **Annex C - Declaration of original supporting**

documents, their conformity with the originals in the possession of the private entity and that the latter are kept at the institution for any future checks;

- c) declaration in which it is specified, according to the model set out in **Annex D - Declaration of relevance of the costs of the project**, that the costs incurred refer to services actually performed and relating to the initiative and that the entity has not received other contributions or indemnities for the same expense items;

4. If the applicant intends to request an advance payment of part of the contribution, the related request must be received by 15 November 2024, h. 12.00, and will be in any case be subject to the actual availability of the funds referred to in Article 1 paragraph 2. In the event of requests received after that date, the disbursement will be subject to the availability of financial resources in 2024.

5. The above documentation must be electronically signed and sent to the certified e-mail address dgue.adriatico-balcani@cert.esteri.it (cc. bandobalcani@esteri.it), bearing in the subject the words "REF. Bando Balcani 2024" and the name of the beneficiary of the grant.

6. In the event of incomplete documentation, i.e. documentation that is not translated into Italian or English, or if, upon examination of the documentation, elements of doubt are found with respect to the actuality and congruity of the expenses, or to their adherence to the approved project, the DGUE reserves the right, after carrying out the appropriate checks, to not disburse the contribution, or to disburse it only in part, or to request the reimbursement of the advance granted already disbursed in whole or in part.

7. The DGUE reserves the right to carry out investigations, also on a sample basis, on the regularity and congruity of the expenses incurred, in relation to the project, in accordance with the regulations in force.

Article 11 - Variations during the implementation phase

1. The use of the grant is bound to the project as submitted and approved (Annexes A1 and A2). Any variation must therefore be expressly authorised in advance by the DGUE.

2. In the event of unequivocal and justified reasons, it is possible to request a derogation from the provisions of article 3 paragraph 4 by requesting a no-cost extension of the project duration. The request must be promptly transmitted via PEC (dgue.adriatico-balcani@cert.esteri.it) or through the competent Italian Diplomatic Representation, together with a detailed report of the activities carried out and the reasons for the extension requested, as well as an updated time schedule and the consequent changes made to the original project. In the event of force majeure or serious reasons requiring a reshuffling of the budget, or variations in the planned activities, the proposing party must promptly transmit the request via PEC (dgue.adriatico-balcani@cert.esteri.it) or through the competent Italian diplomatic Representation, together with a detailed report of the activities carried out and the reasons for the request of budget variation or activities variation, together with attachments A1 and A2 updated with respect to the original draft.

3. The DGUE contribution is bound to the project as described in Annexes A1 and A2. In the event of variations, as referred to in paragraphs 2 and 3 of this article, that lead to reductions in project activities and expenditure, the DGUE reserves the right to recalculate the amount of the contribution granted accordingly.

Article 12 - Transparency

The list of proposals eligible for the grant, as well as the results of the projects that will receive a grant, will be published in a special section of the institutional website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (www.esteri.it).

Article 13- Protection of privacy

1. The processing of personal data required for participating to the Call for Proposals, referred to in this Announcement, will conform to the principles of lawfulness, correctness and transparency in order to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of natural persons. To this end, the following information is provided, pursuant to Article 13 of the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679:

- a) The Data Controller is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFAIC) of the Italian Republic which, in this specific case, operates via the Secretariat of the DGUE: dgue.segreteria@esteri.it , tel. 06 36918775.
- b) For inquiries or complaints on privacy, the data subject may contact the MFAIC data protection officer / DPO [data protection responsible / RPD] (Piazzale della Farnesina 1, 00135 ROME, tel. 0039 06 36911 -switchboard, peo: rpd@esteri.it; pec: rpd@cert.esteri.it).
- c) The requested personal data is needed exclusively to select the beneficiaries of contributions of this Call.
- d) The legal bases of the processing are this Announcement notice, the rules on administrative transparency and the consent of the interested party. Failure to provide the aforementioned data or withdrawal of consent will render the project proposal inadmissible.
- e) Data processing will be carried out in a mixed mode (manual and automated) by the members of the Evaluation Commission, as well as by the staff specifically appointed by the Office of the DGUE;
- f) The aforementioned data may be communicated to the control bodies of MFAIC.
- g) The data will be kept for 10 years, except for reasons of suspension or interruption of the civil prescription, starting from the date of conclusion of the project as regards the selected entities and from the date of conclusion of the public procedure for the other proposing entities, pursuant to Articles 2220 and 2946 of the Civil Code.
- h) For the selected subjects, some personal data may be published on the MFAIC website, within the limits provided for in Articles 4bis and 26 of Legislative Decree 33/2013 and subsequent amendments and additions.
- i) The natural persons concerned may request access to their personal data and their rectification. Under the conditions provided for by the legislation in force, they may also revoke their consent; request the deletion of their data, as well as the restriction or opposition to their processing, without prejudice to the possible consequences of such requests on their participation in this public procedure. In the aforementioned cases, interested parties must submit a specific request to the Office indicated in point 1, informing the MFAIC RPD for information.

2. If one believes that their privacy rights have been violated, they can file a complaint with the MFAIC RDP. If they are not satisfied with the answer, they can contact the Guarantor for the Protection of Personal Data (Piazza Venezia 11, 00187 ROME, tel. 0039 06696771 (switchboard), peo: garante@gpdp.it , pec: protocol@pec.gpdp.it).

Article 14 - Person in charge of the procedure

Pursuant to Article 5 of the Law No. 241 of 7 August 1990 and subsequent amendments and additions, the person in charge of the procedure is Mr. Luigi Paoli Puccetti, serving at the Unit for the Adriatic and the Balkans of the Directorate General for the European Union of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

Rome, 31 July 2024

**The Director General
Min. Plen. Nicola Verola**

DRAFT