

## Request for Applications for Expert for Capacity Building for Media Outlets

The Thomson Foundation (TF) is seeking to hire an expert for **Capacity Building for Media Outlets** within the project ‘Supporting Greater Media Independence in the Western Balkans’.

### BACKGROUND

The aim of the “Media for All” (Supporting Greater Media Independence in the Western Balkans) project - is to develop and strengthen the editorial independence and business operation of the media outlets, enabling them to provide a more diverse range of media content to their audiences, and thus to encourage an opened, informed and active discussion amongst the citizens in the six Western Balkans countries.

The main beneficiaries of the project are media outlets and those working within the media sphere (e.g. editors), but the programme will contribute to an impact focused on increasing citizens’ engagement with a wider range of media, and potentially (over the longer term) increasing levels of trust in media which demonstrate more balanced editorial policies.

Supporting Greater Media Independence in the Western Balkans project is funded by the **Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) of the UK Government** and implemented by the consortium consisted of the **British Council** (lead partner), **Thomson Foundation**, **Balkan Investigative and Reporting Network (BIRN)** and the **International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC)**.

The duration of the project is two years, until March 2022, and it will be implemented across six Western Balkans countries: **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania, and North Macedonia**.

Our inception report demonstrates that challenges that the media sector is facing with, are shared among the 6 WB countries. Those are: overwhelmingly neglected local media compared to the national ones, limited business capacity/financial viability of local media, low IT and organisational capacity of local media, low quality of content produced by local media, weak relationship between local media and their audiences and limited experience or opportunities for journalists to engage with citizens in the region.

As a part of a consortia, the Thomson Foundation is participating in the implementation of the following four sets of activities, to contribute mitigation of the abovementioned challenges:

1. **Technical assistance support** to media outlets to develop their business ideas into Business plans (Media Accelerator and mentoring)
2. **Grants** for Business plans implementation
3. **E-learning** through online courses and mentoring, and
4. **Capacity building** tailored to individual needs of media outlets (digital tools and media outlets’ capacity improvement).

The binding outcome of these activities is to equip the media outlets with knowledge, skills and tools to improve their internal structure, content production/distribution, audience engagement, and overall business performance.

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The support and the engagement of the Expert for Capacity Building for Media Outlets is envisioned **for group of activities under the number 3. and 4: E-learning and capacity building.**

## **ABOUT THE ACTIVITY**

After being selected for granting and support, a group of up to 55 media outlets from the WB region will have the opportunity to embark on a 3-month acceleration period, followed by a financial support to implement their business ideas over the course of 12 months.

A pool of selected mentors will support these outlets during the acceleration phase, guiding them on how to develop their business plans with correlating budgets.

At the beginning of the acceleration period, selected media outlets will go through the extensive **self-capacity assessment questionnaire**, that will help us to map their needs and assess their capacities to improve their business operations and potential for growth in the next two years. Depending on the needs and capacity gaps mapped, selected media outlets will have the opportunity to additionally receive a tailored capacity building support during a 12-month grant implementation process (in year 2021) and eventually in 2022.

The areas where that support is envisioned through direct counselling, capacity building support, e-learning courses and online trainings are:

- **Management in small and medium sized media outlets**
- **Improving overall media management efficiency**
- **Establishing integrated newsrooms and improvement of editorial operations**
- **Remote newsrooms systems and switching to remote operative mode**
- **Familiarising with the tools that media outlets may use to make their work more efficient, in line with their resources**
- **Gender mainstreaming policies and empowerment of women, marginalised and underrepresented groups**
- **Content production (MoJo and other approaches)**

Within the third group of TF activities – E-learning courses, expert support is needed for the development of a scenario and an entire **online course about management in small and medium sized media outlets.**

For this activity, expert will be supported within internal Thomson Foundation capacities for creating E-learning courses on the EdX platform and knowledge base from the previous online courses. Technical support for course production (video shooting and editing, translation etc.) will also be provided.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

The Experts main tasks will be to:

- **Contribute to development of the assessment methodology and the tool**
- **Contribute to the overview and analysis of the assessment results**

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- Develop a plan and the program of providing capacity building support to media outlets based on the assessment results. This plan should cover the period of next two years and propose two potential scenarios, covering both offline and online work with the media outlets - so that the entire program can adjust to the uncertain post-Covid19 global situation
- Develop a scenario and the content for e-learning course about the management in small and medium sized media outlets. Create and deliver this course using an interactive EdX platform
- Deliver trainings and convene tailored capacity building interventions to specific media outlets
- Analyse the potential for introducing gender mainstreaming approaches and policies in media outlets. Provide guidance to TF on how to address these issues and offer support to media outlets in this regard.

## **DELIVERABLES**

- Capacity building plan and program
- Reports on trainings and capacity building interventions provided to specific media outlets
- Scenario, content and e-learning course about the management in small and medium sized media outlets
- Report with recommendations on capacity building interventions in area of gender mainstreaming in media outlets

## **REQUIREMENTS**

- High level of understanding of the media sector in the Western Balkans,
- 5 -10 years of relevant working experience in the field of IT, digital technologies, journalism, marketing, communications or a related field
- 5 years of experience in providing capacity building support in areas of management, strategic and business development
- Knowledge about gender sensitive policies and gender mainstreaming
- Experience in content creation, measurement, developing digital tools
- Working experience in delivering trainings, direct consultancy and mentoring
- Research and analysis working experience is preferred
- Working experience in the field of media development preferred
- Willingness and the ability to work, deliver and communicate online
- Demonstrated innovative ideas and approaches would be an asset

## **TIMELINE AND LOCATION**

It is expected that the assignment will commence no later than 15<sup>th</sup> of August 2020.

The expert will be hired until March 2022. Number of working days for this will be further decided, upon consultations with selected consultant.

The first phase of support will be organized and delivered remotely/online. If the situation with the Covid19 outbreak changes for the positive, for a later phase of the project travel and field work is planned in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania and North Macedonia.

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## **APPLICATION**

Interested experts are kindly asked to send the following documents (in English):

- **CV/portfolio with examples of previous work relevant for this assignment**
- **Concept proposal – a single page document that briefly explains the expert’s vision and approach in capacity building for media outlets**

Both documents should be submitted to Jelena Ožegović, TF Media Development and MEL Coordinator by email: [jelenao@thomsonfoundation.org](mailto:jelenao@thomsonfoundation.org) - not later than **31 July 2020**.

Note: Issuing this Request for Application does not commit Thomson Foundation nor other members of the consortium, to select any expert and/or applicant. Thompson Foundation also reserves the right to extend/change the duration of the assignment, its scope of work, deliverables or expected outcomes.