

Western Balkans Media for Change

Request for Proposal (RfP) For: Mentoring media to self-assess their capacities against the Journalism Trust Initiative criteria

Deadline: 31 July 2024

Contractor: Western Balkans Media for Change

The 'Western Balkans Media for Change' project is issuing this Request for Proposal for potential vendors to provide mentoring services in guiding and assisting media outlets, beneficiaries of the project, to self-assess their capacities under the Journalism Trust Initiative (JTI) criteria/standards.

The goal of this support is to promote the credibility of quality journalism – and to turn it into a tangible, competitive advantage.

The JTI mechanism has two steps: self-assessment and external audit. Media outlets that will be **supported will undergo only step one** – self-assessment. They will be provided with mentoring and support to prepare for self-assessment, complete the documents, fill in the questionnaire, and publish the transparency report on the JTI / Reporters without Borders website.

As a result, media outlets will have a seal of professionalism and independence and their transparency reports will be available on the JTI list of media outlets (a good indicator for donors, advertisers, investors who would like to check media profiles, integrity, and operation without having a strict due diligence process).

We are seeking to hire a vendor to provide us with the following services:

- Initial kick-off workshop to explain the importance of JTI, the process and its key outputs/outcomes;
- Initial interviews and assessment of media beneficiaries' capacities (up to 20 media outlets);
- Creating a detailed mentoring and support plan;
- Implementation of approved plan by providing mentorship and facilitation to up to 20 media outlets;
- Coordination with the project team and media as requested;
- Regular monthly reporting;
- Necessary liaison with other stakeholders covering JTI in the region;
- Producing a case study/educative piece on JTI relevance, and importance for media beneficiaries in the WB.

Key deliverables include:

- Report on the orientation workshop;
- JTI self-assessment questionnaire 100% completed by media outlets;
- Publication of self-assessment /transparency reports by media outlets;
- Final report with key insights of the process, takeaways, and recommendations;
- Inputs towards monitoring, reporting, evaluation and learning processes.

Expected deadline for delivery: 6 months from the date of signing the contract.

Elements of the proposal

Interested applicants should send their proposal that include the following:

- A proposal that includes the needs assessment, the implementation approach, risk assessment, mentorship model timeline, resources needed/available to implement the needed services, an overview of cooperation approach with other JTI actors in the region;
- Portfolio of the applicant indicating relevant experience and track record;
- The list of key personnel proposed to be involved in service provision;
- Financial offer for above-listed services (including cost per individual outlet in case more or less than 20 outlets are supported within this programme); and
- Vendor contact details.

Proposal validity

The proposal should remain valid and open for consideration by the project consortium for a minimum of thirty days from the submission date.

Instructions for submissions

You are kindly asked to submit your proposal to Ilcho Cvetanoski via email: IlchoC@thomsonfoundation.org by 31 July 2024 (23:59 CET).

Clarification Requests

Should you need any additional information or clarification, please write to Nermina Sadiković via email: NerminaS@thomsonfoundation.org.

Award Criteria

Proposals submitted within the indicated deadline will be evaluated in line with the following criteria:

1) Comprehensiveness of proposal including:

- Quality: The proposal should demonstrate a high standard of quality in its approach, clearly outlining mentoring approach, risk mitigation, justification of resources needed, cooperation approach with other JTI actors in the region;
- Clarity: The proposal should be clear and well-structured, making it easy to understand the proposed mentoring and reporting methods, and expected outcomes;

- Specificity: The proposal should include specific, measurable indicators, dedicated resources needed, and clear deadlines to ensure the project's objectives are achievable and trackable.

2) Relevance of applicant's experience including:

- at least 3 implemented mentoring schemes/programs with local media and journalists; and
- at least 1 evidenced collaboration with Reporters without Borders on providing JTI-related mentoring.

3) Qualifications and experiences of the key staff including:

- Proof of completion of JTI training by Reporters without Borders by all key staff;
- Proven experience in media development and media freedom track in the region;
- In-depth knowledge of media ecosystems and stakeholders in the region;
- Established partnerships with media stakeholders in the region;
- Previous experience in working with similar donor-funded projects.

4) GESI principles

- gender balance, gender-sensitive approach, and social inclusion demonstrated in the proposed approach.

5) Value for money

- price will not be a determining criterion, but the entire proposal and its quality will be also assessed against the indicated financial offer.

The project consortium may request additional online meetings and/or interviews with shortlisted parties in order to clarify proposals and seek additional information prior to finally selecting the vendor.

By issuing this RfP, the project consortium is not bound in any way to enter into any contractual or other arrangement with any potential vendor.

ABOUT THE 'WESTERN BALKANS MEDIA FOR CHANGE' PROJECT

Funded by the UK Government and implemented by the British Council in partnership with the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), Thomson Foundation (TF) and The International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC), Western Balkans Media for Change project supports media outlets, individual journalists and media initiatives across the Western Balkans in their efforts to improve their operational capacity, business sustainability, innovation potential and produce high-quality, inclusive, gender sensitive content which reaches and engages diverse audiences, including women, young people, people aged 65yrs+, and other underrepresented communities.

ABOUT JOURNALISM TRUST INITIATIVE

The international Journalism Trust Initiative (JTI) mechanism is a market-driven solution to promote the credibility of quality journalism – and to turn it into a tangible, competitive advantage. It is the

most inclusive transparency and compliance tool for newsrooms of all sizes, types, anywhere in the world.

As a one-of-a-kind official ISO-type Standard, the JTI is certifiable by means of optional third-party audits, and it is machine readable to feed into algorithmic indexation and recommender systems (social media feeds, search ranks, programmatic advertising) to enhance visibility, and eventually sustainability, of trustworthy sources of information.

JTI mechanism has two steps:

- completion of **self-assessment** by each media vis a vis the JTI standards and publication of the self-assessment report. This stage shows them where they stand vis a vis standards and areas of improvement;
- **external audit** and JTI certification.

JTI self-assessment reports include sections where media outlets should comply with the Editorial Guidelines that should be protective against any form of discrimination and supportive of equality of opportunity. Also, media outlets shall disclose its editorial mission statement which shall be consistent with the fundamental ethical principles of trustworthy journalism, and should incorporate principles of ethical practice, good governance, self-regulation and engagement with the public.