

European Fund for the Balkans

Bringing the Western Balkans closer to the European Union

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Application deadline: **January 28, 2011**

The European Fund for the Balkans (EFB) launches a call for applications within its Envisioning Europe programme strand:

“THINK AND LINK” - Regional Policy Programme

The programme seeks to foster inclusive and evidence-based policy making in the Western Balkans by initiating research projects which are relevant from the perspective of the Copenhagen criteria¹, embedded in a regional capacity building and networking programme cycle².

THE PROGRAMME IS ADDRESSED TO:

- emerging think-tanks
- policy oriented NGOs
- independent policy institutes
- policy relevant research groups³

ELIGIBILITY:

- Applications are welcomed from emerging think-tanks, policy oriented NGOs, independent policy institutes and policy relevant research groups from the Western Balkans that have a project portfolio focusing upon political, economical and social issues and interest in the process of EU integration.
- The applicants should be interested in capacity building and networking activities as integral parts of this programme.
- The policy programme includes *project* grants. It will not offer core funding.
- Applications must be submitted by institutions/organisation or by research groups (groups of individual researchers) affiliated with an organisation/institution with legal status.
- Each applicant may submit only one project proposal.

Grantees who have received a grant under an earlier call within this Programme are eligible to apply again.

¹ In 1993, at the Copenhagen European Council, the Union took a decisive step towards the fifth enlargement, agreeing that “the associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe that so desire shall become members of the European Union.” Thus, enlargement was no longer a question of ‘if’, but ‘when’. Concerning the timing, the European Council states: “Accession will take place as soon as an associated country is able to assume the obligations of membership by satisfying the economic and political conditions required.” At the same time, it defined the membership criteria, which are often referred to as the ‘Copenhagen criteria’.

² This programme offers more than a research grant by including a capacity building and networking component. It is especially targeted at emerging organisations or junior researchers/groups who seek such an opportunity.

³ Research groups should consist of at least two researchers and be affiliated with a university, research institution or other type of legal entity based in the region of Western Balkans. Applicants should supply the details on legal status of the supporting legal entity with the application package to the European Fund for the Balkans Secretariat.

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BENEFITS

The benefits of being selected to participate in this programme include funding for a research project and a support through a capacity building and networking programme cycle. This programme goes beyond providing only project grants by involving the successful applicants in a series of seminars and regional networking opportunities as well as by inviting these to the newly established EFB “Research Fellowship Programme” for creating links and learning opportunities at EU based organisations and institutions with relevant expertise.

EXPECTED PROGRAMME OUTPUTS:

- policy papers based on sound research;
- public debate triggered by innovative, effective and efficient outreach activities;
- capacity building and training component;
- new co-operation and communication channels within the regional think-tank scene.

SUPPORT

The European Fund for the Balkans gives grants up to a maximum of 15,000 Euros to be used for research costs, project related travel and dissemination activities.

Apart from the project grant, the European Fund for the Balkans supports successful applicants by covering participation, travel, accommodation and boarding costs related to the capacity building and networking programme activities.

APPLICATIONS

Applicants must apply for participation in the programme cycle (capacity building and networking seminars, mentoring) and submit a **research project proposal** on a topic relevant from the perspective of the Copenhagen criteria.

Both elements of the application (participation in the programme cycle activities and the research project proposal) are integral parts of the application. It is not possible to be accepted only for one part of the programme. Candidates must fulfil the criteria for both elements.

The research project proposals, dealing with a topic relevant from the perspective of the Copenhagen criteria should be focused on analysis and case studies of the in-country policies against the needs and requirements derived from the EU *acquis*, necessary to ensure effective and complete compliance and, based on their research, to develop concrete policy proposals, policy advice or policy options.

The project has to be implemented in the period between **February 2011 and December 2011**. The research period within the project should not exceed 6 months and it should be conducted in the period of **March 2011 and September 2011**.

Optional fields of research:

- **specific institutions** responsible for designing, monitoring or implementing the respective policies;
- **specific decisions**, analysing the role of the administration, civil society, the media in making these decisions;
- public policy making in **specific sectors**;
- **profile** of the countries, providing clear information on the key challenges and actors.

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The EU membership criteria require that the candidate country must have achieved:

- stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;
- the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union;
- the ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic & monetary union.

This process of transformation can take place in the areas which are identified as research topics of the Programme and correspond to the *acquis communautaire* (Annex 1).

The applicant can choose more than one research topic in the case these topics are thematically related and fall under the same area of research. (i.e. social policy, finance, agriculture)

The research should be undertaken from the outset with the goal of producing an impact on the public debate. The applicants are selected not only on the basis of a research plan but also on the basis of a dissemination strategy. This strategy should outline concrete steps to ensure that findings reach policy makers and the interested public (presentations, special briefings, cooperation with specific media). For that reason, the participating organisations/institutions/research groups are encouraged to prepare their final papers in English and their local language as well.

HOW TO APPLY

Applicants must complete the following application form in **English** only:

[Application form](#)

- i. description of the applicant organisation
- ii. description of the research project
- iii. dissemination strategy
- iv. motivation for participation in the capacity building and networking programme cycle
- v. project budget

To apply, please send your completed application to policy@balkanfund.org. Subject line should include: the word „APPLICATION11“. Applications will be accepted via email **only**. Applications which are **not** sent to policy@balkanfund.org will not be considered.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

- relevance of the research to national policy in relation to the *Copenhagen criteria* and its potential to inform and improve policy making;
- likelihood that the findings will be useful to policy makers and other stakeholders;
- soundness of the project's conceptual framework (the ideas, concepts, theories and bodies of knowledge informing the proposed approach) and methodology;
- feasibility of the research;
- capability of the applicant organisation/institution to undertake and complete the project on schedule and its' research record;
- soundness of the dissemination strategy;
- relevant needs and level of motivation of the applicant organisation/institution to actively participate in the whole programme cycle (including seminars, networking and outreach activities);
- appropriate project budget.

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The number of grants will depend on the nature, quality and estimated budgets of applications received, with approximately 12 grants awarded per Call.

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY DATES

Application deadline: **January 28, 2011.**

Final decisions communicated to applicants: **by February 15, 2011.**

Think and Link Programme duration: **February 2011 – December 2011**

- Capacity building seminar (Seminar I): **March, 2011.**
- Research period: **March 1, 2009 - September 31, 2011.**
- Final papers to be submitted by: **October 30, 2011.**
- Final seminar (Seminar II): **November 2011.**

For more information, please consult our [programme description](#) document.

Questions related to preparation of the application and further inquiries on the programme details may be sent by e-mail to Igor Bandovic, Programme Manager, European Fund for the Balkans at igor.bandovic@balkanfund.org.

PROGRAMME BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

In their democratisation and reform efforts the countries of Western Balkans are today oriented towards the goal of eventual EU accession, even if they are at different stages in their respective relations with the EU. They face many similar problems. They can all learn from countries that have recently joined the EU.

This transfer of experiences – both in the region and from previous accession candidates – needs to be organised, however. What member-state building means in practice remains unclear to most of the political elite in the countries of the Western Balkans. It is also often little understood by the wider group – journalists, civil society representatives, academics, interest groups – who shape policy debates.

This lack of a broad and shared understanding of the Europeanisation process adds to the difficulties of building and sustaining reform coalitions. It is often made worse by a large number of competing and conflicting agendas. Therefore, countries in the region should develop strategies, plans and priorities accompanied with fostering real domestic debate and exercise ownership for achieving sustainable institution building and real transformation.

With the aim of addressing these challenges and needs, the European Fund for the Balkans provides support through programmes focused on research and policy development projects as well as media outreach initiatives, with a view to: supporting inclusive and evidence-based research and policy-making; strengthening the think tank capacity in the Balkans and in the EU regarding Balkan issues; bringing EU integration into public perception; linking emerging policy institutes from the Balkans with EU-based think tanks and stimulating regional exchanges and transfer of know-how within the wider region

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Annex 1

Research topics of the Programme:

During the process of the enlargement of the European Union, the *acquis*⁴ was divided into 31 chapters for the purpose of negotiation between the EU and the candidate member states for the fifth enlargement (the ten countries that joined in 2004 plus Romania and Bulgaria which joined in 2007).

For the negotiations with Croatia and Turkey, the *acquis* was split up into 34 chapters instead, with the purpose of better balancing between the chapters: dividing the most difficult ones into separate chapters for easier negotiation, uniting some easier chapters, moving some policies between chapters, as well as renaming a few of them in the process. These chapters are identified as research topics for the Think and Link Regional Policy Programme 2011:

1. Free movement of goods
2. Freedom of movement for workers
3. Right of establishment and freedom to provide services
4. Free movement of capital
5. Public procurement
6. Company law
7. Intellectual property law
8. Competition policy
9. Financial services
10. Information society and media
11. Agriculture and rural development
12. Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy
13. Fisheries
14. Transport policy
15. Energy
16. Taxation
17. Economic and monetary policy
18. Statistics
19. Social policy and employment (including anti-discrimination and equal opportunities for women and men)
20. Enterprise and industrial policy
21. Trans-European networks
22. Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments
23. Judiciary and fundamental rights
24. Justice, freedom and security
25. Science and research
26. Education and culture
27. Environment
28. Consumer and health protection
29. Customs union
30. External relations
31. Foreign, security and defence policy
32. Financial control
33. Financial and budgetary provisions
34. Institutions

⁴ The term **acquis communautaire**, or **(EU) acquis** is used in European Union law to refer to the entire body of legislation of the European Communities and Union. Applicant countries must accept, adopt, implement and enforce the *acquis* before they can join the EU.