



CALL FOR OFFERS

Research: Environmental activism in the Western Balkans

Terms of Reference

October 2021

Deadline for applications: 30 October 2021

Expected start date for this consultancy: 10 November 2021

Number of days for this consultancy: maximum 10 days

Completion date: 10 December 2021

About the Balkan Forum

The Balkan Forum (The BF) is a regional, multisector platform that works to advance cross-border dialogue and create a shared regional vision and agenda for cooperative action in the Balkan region based on economic integration, prosperity, and sustainable peace. We highlight good practices of regional cooperation to policy discussions and promote existing efforts to connect grassroots initiatives, knowledge, and successes to the decision-making levels that are responsible for policymaking and regional and/or EU integration. Together with our partners we focus our efforts on filling gaps and mobilizing action; facilitating consensus building and dialogue; and building political will for policy action on regional cooperation initiatives.

In its Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 the BF commits to working towards building human capital, strengthening a circular economy, and reducing unemployment and out-migration in the Western Balkan region. The BF's long-term goal is: greater social cohesion in the Western Balkans region through economically viable and environmentally sustainable intra-regional initiatives that generate livelihood opportunities, bring different communities together and foster cooperation.

1. Introduction

The Balkan Forum is seeking to recruit a Civil Society Organization, an individual consultant or a team of consultants, to undertake a brief analysis of the **environmental activism in the Western Balkans**.

2. Background

According to the EU, the Western Balkans is one of the regions in Europe most heavily affected by the impact of climate change and this trend is projected to continue. In addition to suffering from both extremely poor waste generation and waste management systems, the six Western Balkan countries encounter the chronic dilemma of primarily generating energy via coal or fossil fuel-based sources. While serious challenges exist, the region is seeing increasing efforts towards improving waste generation/management and decarbonization with the aim of completely eliminating non-renewable sources and coal-based energy, and implementing clean and renewable energy infrastructures. Such efforts will bring the region closer to reaching climate neutrality and sustainability. In turn, will enable the Western Balkans countries to meet their commitments as participants of the Western Balkans Green Agenda.

Over the past decade, the awareness about the harmful impact of air pollution, small hydro power plants, and other environmental threats has grown across the Western Balkans.

Throughout the Western Balkans, environmental activists are becoming a respectable force in a

region where no green political party has yet been registered.¹ Environmental threats have brought together people from different backgrounds, who often tend to organize on a regional level, recognizing the opportunity to act more successfully when united.

Air pollution has been recognized as a long-term serious threat for health of people living in the Western Balkans and neighboring countries. 16 coal power plants in the Western Balkans emit as much Sulphur dioxide and dust pollution as the entire fleet of coal plants in the EU.² Every year, these 16 power plants cause 3.000 premature deaths, 8.000 cases of bronchitis in children, and other chronic illnesses, costing both the health systems and economies a total of 6.1-11.5 billion euros.³ At the same time, the Western Balkan region, with its many mountainous areas, has been envisaged for the construction of more than 3.400 small hydro power plants.⁴ The majority of them are planned to be constructed in protected areas, in mountain forests with rich and fragile flora and fauna, on pristine rivers which serve as reservoirs for drinking water, and even within national parks. This has caused affected citizens to protest the construction of small hydro powerplants. Also, for decades, activists have been advocating for clean air as during the winter, the big cities in the region suffocate in thick smog.

3. Objective of the consultancy

To undertake research, primarily desk research, drawing on existing and available documents and the expertise of the consultant to analyze the **environmental activism in the Western Balkans**. The consultancy may include an estimated 15 Key Informant Interviews (KII), to be conducted online. The consultant will work with the research team of the Balkan Forum.

4. Role of the consultant – Expected results

Conduct desk research (and an estimated 15 online interviews), and analysis with the aim of discovering the reasons shaping the success of environmental activism, including whether knowledge and experience exchange at regional level has played a role in it. And how could lessons learned inform future (community/local, national, regional and international) environmental protection initiatives, and coalition building to maximize the impact of joint efforts.

In view of the above consultant will undertake the following tasks:

- Collate existing sources of information on environmental activism in the six countries of the Western Balkans, and analyze the successes, challenges and lessons learned;
- Outline the key initiatives, actors and their role;
- Based on the analysis, outline conclusions and actionable recommendations for the key stakeholders;
- Additionally, identify existing research gaps to inform areas that require further analysis.

5. Deliverables

Consultant will deliver:

- A brief analysis of a maximum ten pages written in English language.

Consultant will also be available after the delivery of the above for purposes of clarification.

6. Consultancy period

The duration of the consultancy is a maximum of 10 days – between 10 November and 10 December 2021.

¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/balkan-green-activists-join-forces-fight-save-rivers-2021-07-03/>

² <https://www.env-health.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Chronic-Coal-Pollution-report.pdf>

³ The Health and Environment Alliance, “Chronic Coal Pollution”, 2019. <https://balkangreenenergynews.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Chronic-Coal-Pollution-report.pdf>

⁴ https://balkanrivers.net/uploads/files/3/Balkan_HPP_Update_2020.pdf

7. Required experience

Interested CSOs/consultants should have:

- Solid knowledge on environmental issues in the Western Balkan region.
- A university degree on Environmental Science or an approved equivalent degree will be considered an asset.
- Demonstrated research experience on environmental related issues. Interested consultant(s) should share previous research/analysis that they have undertaken.
- Previous research on environmental activism in general and in the Western Balkan region in particular will be considered an asset.
- Excellent knowledge of English language.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills, sensitivity and attention to detail.
- Ability to deliver high quality work, within the agreed time-frame.

8. Interested applicants are requested to submit

An offer which includes a gross cost estimate (number of days for the consultancy and daily fee), and a detailed plan for the required consultancy (i.e. activities and time-frames to deliver this consultancy). This should be a maximum of 3 pages.

- Curriculum Vitae for individual(s). A statement on relevant previous experience.
- At least one example of previous relevant research/analysis undertaken by the consultant(s).

Applications should be sent electronically to info@thebalkanforum.org

We regret that only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

Donor:

