



ROYAL NORWEGIAN EMBASSY

Media Grant Programme for promoting Rule of Law

Call for Individual Grants for Journalists working
in Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia

BACKGROUND

In 2014 Norway will be marking the bicentenary of its Constitution, signed at Eidsvoll, on 17th of May 1814. The 112 men in the Constituent Assembly (in Norway these are known as *Eidsvollmenn*), during the five weeks of the spring of 1814, produced one of the most liberal constitutions in the world at the time, laying the foundations for the country's independence, but also for its democratic development.

One of the 112 *Eidsvollmenn*, Christian Adolph Diriks, proposed the inclusion of Article 100 in the Norwegian Constitution of 1814, which specifically guaranteed freedom of speech and the freedom of the press. In 2004 the Article 100 was amended, to include, amongst other matters, the obligation of the state to look after the national freedom of expression 'infrastructure' ("*It is the responsibility of the authorities of the State to create conditions that facilitate open and enlightened public discourse*"). Prohibition of prior censorship was extended to relate to any form of expression, regardless of chosen media – as opposed to the earlier formulation, which only applied to printed material.

During the past two centuries, transnationally, freedom of expression became a fundamental right safeguarded by international law, as stipulated in the Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights.

Yet, freedom of the speech and the freedom of the press can only succeed if media and the journalists working within them have the capacity and resources (the 'infrastructure'), to gather and process information and make them available to the public for they are the bearers of these freedoms on behalf of all.

In regards to this, it is important to highlight that the economic crisis in Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia has led to the reduction of the resources for established journalists and media. This further increased the pressure on professional journalism in all 3 countries, and has led to likely bypassing of important stories, in particular those that relate to the rule of law. Thus, the findings of the World Press Freedom Index for 2014, while revealing diverse country to country picture¹, lists a number of issues

¹ Serbia is the highest ranked country in the Western Balkans in place 54, Montenegro in place 114 and Macedonia in place 124. Source: Reporters without borders, <http://rsf.org/index2014/en-eu.php>

pertaining full exercise of the media freedoms and the obstacles journalists face in the conduct of their everyday work.

Rule of law remains the biggest challenge for Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia in their EU-integration process. Contributing to national improvements in this area will also help these countries in their quest to become EU-members.

In view of these facts, on the occasion of the Constitution bicentenary, the Royal Norwegian Embassy has decided to launch a fund to support professional journalism in Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia, that should lead to the production of the quality media material in the area of the rule of law reporting.

The purpose of the Media Grant Programme

The Media Grant Programme will primarily offer individual grants, but is also open for teams of journalists working together on a project. Grants, amounting from **3,000 EUR to 10,000 EUR**, are offered to **active and well established journalists that work in Serbia, Montenegro and/or Macedonia**.

The grants are meant to support reporting on the rule of law by journalists who have ideas, sources and have arranged credible dissemination (publishing) plans, but are in need of financial resources to conduct interviews, gather records and data and finalize their reporting projects for publishing and for the presentation to the general public.

The Call is open to all journalists of any nationality with at least 3 years of relevant media related experience, who work, publish and address the general public through mainstream media in Serbia, Montenegro and/or Macedonia.

Priority areas

Applicants responding to this Call shall propose reporting projects that cover the area of the **rule of law**.

For the purpose of this Call, the definition of the rule by the World Justice Project is used, which defines the rule of law as² “a system in which the following four universal principles are upheld:

- a) The government and its officials and agents as well as individuals and private entities are accountable under the law,
- b) The laws are clear, publicized, stable and just, are applied evenly, and protect fundamental rights, including the security of persons and property,
- c) The process by which the laws are enacted, administered and enforced is accessible, fair and efficient and
- d) Justice is delivered timely by competent, ethical, and independent representatives and neutrals who are of sufficient number, have adequate resources, and reflect the makeup of the communities they serve.”

² The World Justice Project, <http://worldjusticeproject.org>

In view of this, rule of law reporting projects may include, but are not limited to the following dimensions of the rule of law, as identified by the World Justice Project Rule of Law index³:

- Reporting on issues concerning government's **accountability** (i.e. exploring issues related to sanctions for misconduct of government officials or issues related to judiciary limitations to executive government's powers)
- Reporting on issues that concern **corruption** (i.e. exploring the use of executive or legislative government officials' public offices and mandates for their private gains)
- Reporting on issues that concern maintenance of **order and security** (i.e. exploring resort to violence by people or social groups to redress their personal or social grievances, and the reasons behind these)
- Reporting on issues that concern protection of **fundamental rights** (i.e. exploring how effectively are fundamental labor rights guaranteed and/or is arbitrary interference with privacy effectively guaranteed, within the current situation)
- Reporting on issues that concern the **openness of the government** (i.e. exploring the stability of the laws, effectiveness of the right to petition the government and the extent of public participation, as well as the availability of official information or statistics)
- Reporting on issues that concern the **regulatory enforcement** (i.e. exploring effectiveness of the enforcement of adopted regulations or improper influences in the enforcement)
- Reporting on issues that concern **civil justice** (i.e. exploring if people can access and afford civil justice, is civil justice free of corruption, or of improper influence)
- Reporting on issues that concern **criminal justice** (i.e. exploring effectiveness of the criminal investigation system, how effective in reducing criminal behavior is correctional system, etc.)

Reporting projects that break **new ground, expose misconduct or wrongdoing, are likely to be bypassed, remain unreported or underreported**, given the current media production, and those that have potentials for **strong social impact and are of utmost public interest** are all encouraged by this Call.

Disclaimer of Liability: Please note that the role of the Media Grant Programme in assisting journalists is limited to making grants. The Fund assumes no liability for the legal and/or safety risks undertaken by journalists in the course of their reporting.

³ <http://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index>

GUIDELINES FOR the APPLICANTS

These guidelines present the rules for preparation, submission and selection of grants that will be supported in the framework of this Call for Proposals.

Who is eligible to apply?

The eligible applicants are journalists working in Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia, with at least 3 years of media related working experience, as evidenced in submitted CVs. This includes freelance journalists as well as those working within media outlets on permanent or part time basis.

The journalists requesting grants are supposed to already have ideas and developed methodology for reporting stories that tackle rule of law, as depicted in the project proposals submitted to this Call. They are also supposed to develop and ensure the dissemination (publishing) plan. All traditional news media, that focus on delivering news to the general public, including print media (newspapers, newsmagazines), and broadcast media (radio and television) may be included in the dissemination (publishing) plans. The letter of commitments to publish stories resulting from the reporting projects proposed, from news outlet executives, should ascertain these plans.

Team applications, made by groups of associates are also allowed, in which case a lead applicant should be nominated. Associates may include, for example photographers, cameraman, production assistants, or other persons involved in the finalization of the reporting project.

The applicants are responsible for the implementation of the grants, which includes adherence to the approved work plan, sound financial management and adherence to the standards of practice.

Any attempt to obtain confidential information and/or influence the Embassy and/or consultants assessing the received proposals by the applicants will immediately lead to exclusion.

Published or broadcasted works should address the general public in Serbia, Montenegro and/or Macedonia, reaching widely to all structures of society.

Financial parameters, eligible costs and other details

Financial parameters

The amount of money requested per grant shall **not be higher than 10,000 EUR, and not lower than 3,000 EUR**. Please note that a maximum size grant will be awarded only in exceptional circumstances and for projects that naturally entail higher production costs (such as TV production).

In total, Media Grant Programme intends to award approximately 30 grants, in total.

The expenses may include, but are not limited to:

- Fees, including those of the lead applicant and associates (if any), and also expertise costs
- Travel costs
- Equipment
- Communication costs
- Legal screening costs. As the Media Grant Programme fund is not to be held liable for the legal and/or safety risks undertaken by journalists in the course of their reporting, applicants are encouraged to utilize legal screening prior to publishing, and are allowed to request costs associated to these purposes.
- Other production and/or reporting associated costs

Limitations on fees:

Total fees may **not be higher than 500 EUR per person/month**, and this relates to the fees of the lead applicant, associates (in any) and/or experts involved.

Duration:

Reporting projects are expected to **start in May 2014** and be finalized (including also the final publishing and/or broadcast) **by December 2014**.

Monitoring and support:

Costs associated with editorial support may be requested only in special circumstances, as normally, editors of the outlets committing to publish stories are expected to conduct editorial work prior to publishing and/or broadcast of the material made due the course of the awarded projects, ensuring that final presentation meets the editorial and journalistic standards of the subject media outlet.

Embassy will not offer any mentoring or specialized support to the awarded grant beneficiaries. Awarded individuals are expected to be well established journalists, able to undertake research and production work independently and without external support, from start to the end.

Embassy will monitor the progress of the projects, against the set work plans and approved budgets.

What is the application and selection process?

How to apply

Applications must be received in English.

Applications should include the following documents. All these are mandatory and need to be submitted when applying for the grant:

- **A description of the proposed reporting project.** Here you are expected to present the topic you wish to explore, the methodology that you propose and the structure of the final products, as well as the media outlets where the stories will be published and/or broadcasted. Sources may be depicted, but need not be named. *Please see Annex 1 for details.*
- **A preliminary budget estimate**, including basic breakdown of costs. *Please see Annex 1 for details.*
- **Three samples** of your previously published or broadcasted work, which you consider your best journalism work so far.

- **One to three professional references.** These can be either contact information, or letters of recommendation, depicting your competence and adherence to general standards of practice.
- **Letters of commitment.** This is a letter signed by a news executive (editor in chief in majority of cases) committing to publish the story, as long as it is completed as promised and meets the news outlet’s editorial and journalistic standards. A letter of commitment is a non-negotiable requirement under this Call and Embassy is not able to provide any support in the obtainment of it.
- **A copy of your curriculum vitae,** depicting your education and work experience and professional achievements so far, listing in minimum the details of the work done in the last 3 years.

Applications may also include a more detailed description of the project, supplementary documentation, studies or analysis, but these will be taken in the consideration as long as they do not undermine fair treatment of all the potential applicants.

Where to send applications:

Applications should be sent by mail to the address indicated below:

Grants.Belgrade@mfa.no, with a subject of the mail clearly titled **Media application**.

All documents listed above should be sent in one email. Please note that the maximum size of email is 9 MB. If you need to send large attachments, email us in advance to make other arrangements.

Additional information

The interested parties may contact the Embassy at Grants.Belgrade@mfa.no if they need any information related to the application procedure.

Selection Procedure

Decision not to grant an application will be made if:

- the application was sent after the deadline of the Call;
- the application was not complete;
- the application was evaluated as technically and financially inferior to other proposals received.

Decisions not to award grants are final.

Applications will be scored according to the grid bellow:

Area	Max points
Relevance of the project to the rule of law subject areas	30
Public outreach potential and the strength of the expected social impact	30
Working journalistic competence of the applicant	30
Willingness of the applicant to explore issues currently unreported	10
TOTAL	100

The Embassy will put emphasis on geographic, thematic and media outlet type - related diversity amongst the awarded recipients.

After the deadline for submitting the project proposals expires, but before the final decision on financing is made, the Embassy may make some suggestions to the applicant regarding certain modifications of the proposals concerning the budget and the planned activities. Applicants have the right to accept or refuse these suggestions, but they shall not be the subject of further negotiations.

Timing

Please consult the following calendar for information of the selection, awarding and implementation process:

Sequence	Deadline (tentative only)
Launch of the Call for Proposals	24 th February 2014
Deadline for potential applicants to submit questions regarding the application process	24 th March 2014
Deadline for potential applicants to submit applications to the Embassy	31 st March 2014
Deadline for the Embassy to request clarifications from shortlisted candidates	21 th April 2014
Awarding and contracting	The week before 17 th May 2014
Start of the reporting projects	19 th May 2014
Finalizations of reporting projects (including publishing and broadcast)	31 st December 2014

Please note that not all the amount of the approved grant will be paid to successful applicants immediately upon the conduct of the assessment and the contracting, but only a set proportion. The second installment will be paid upon submission of the evidence of publication, as in accordance with the proposal approved. Should the project fail to adhere to proposed deadlines, Embassy reserves the right to withhold payment of the second installment, and/or request fund recoveries of the first installment paid. Cost other than fees will need to be recorded, evidenced and reported.

ANNEX 1 / PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Summary of story idea (125 words or less):

Dissemination (publishing) plan:

News outlet where the story is to be published or broadcasted:

Size of audience or readership (circulation and web traffic):

Other details on the dissemination (publishing) plan:

Anticipated start and completion date:

Detailed Reporting Proposal:

Outline the story, including what the reporter expects to prove, how this will be done, and the types of sources to be used.

Mention locations your story will cover, and the structure and quantity of the expected final product (i.e. number of articles, size of articles, or timing of end TV or radio programs).

If the subject of the investigation has been covered previously, acknowledge that coverage and explain how the proposed action will advance the story.

Finally, explain how the story relates to rule of law, in whose interest is to publish the reporting and why?

Budget:

Provide an itemized, detailed budget, presented in EUR. Refer to this sample budget when formatting the request.

Item	Description	Requested total amount (EUR)
Fees (specify by adding additional lines bellow, if needed)		
Travel costs (specify by adding additional lines bellow, if needed)		
Production costs (specify by adding additional lines bellow, if needed)		
Equipment purchase or rental costs (specify		

by adding additional lines bellow, if needed)		
Legal screening costs		
Other costs (specify by adding additional lines bellow, if needed)		

Please note that the entire proposal should run no more than 3 pages!

Attached to this Proposal, please submit:

- **Three samples** of your previously published or broadcasted work – in the language in which it was published and/or produced
- **Professional references (1 to max 3)** – preferably written in English
- **Letters of commitment** signed by a news executive (scanned) – preferably written in English
- **A copy of your curriculum vitae** –in English