

Frequently Asked Questions

Please read this document carefully, as it may help you to prepare a better application. If you need any additional information, please don't hesitate to contact the Balkan Trust office.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GERMAN MARSHALL FUND OF THE US AND THE BALKAN TRUST FOR DEMOCRACY?

Founded in 1972 as a non-partisan, non-profit organization through a gift from Germany as a permanent memorial to Marshall Plan assistance, The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) strengthens transatlantic cooperation on regional, national, and global challenges and opportunities in the spirit of the Marshall Plan. GMF contributes research and analysis and convenes leaders on transatlantic issues relevant to policymakers. GMF offers rising leaders opportunities to develop their skills and networks through transatlantic exchange, and supports civil society in the Balkans and Black Sea regions by fostering democratic initiatives, rule of law, and regional cooperation.

The Balkan Trust for Democracy (BTD) is an initiative that supports democracy, good governance, and Euro-Atlantic integration in Southeastern Europe. This award-winning public-private partnership was created in 2003 by the German Marshall Fund of the United States, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. BTD's original ten-year mandate came to an end in May 2013. BTD then entered into its second mandate (2013-2020) with structural changes to geographic coverage and grantmaking scope.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GMF'S OFFICES?

GMF maintains a strong presence on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to its headquarters in Washington, DC, GMF has seven offices in Europe: Ankara, Belgrade, Berlin, Brussels, Bucharest, Paris, and Warsaw. GMF also has smaller representations in Bratislava, Turin, and Stockholm.

Operating from GMF's Belgrade Office, BTD utilizes grantmaking, policy dialogue, and leadership development as tools to advance democracy, good governance, and Euro-Atlantic integration in Southeastern Europe. Within grantmaking, BTD awards grants to indigenous civic groups, NGOs, media, think tanks, governments, and educational institutions in order to strengthen democratic structures primarily in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia. BTD also supports relevant regional initiatives that promote benefits of pan-Balkan network, including civil society stakeholders from Western and Eastern Europe, and in particular those based in Bulgaria, Croatia, and Romania.

In addition to grantmaking, the Balkan Trust for Democracy continually works to raise the profile of the Balkans and to accelerate the region's integration into Euroatlantic structures. Together with GMF's Washington headquarters and its other European offices, BTD connects local actors with European Union, American, and international individuals and institutions in order to build networks and consensus on Balkan issues from a broader, multi-stakeholder perspective.

BTD is also committed to developing the next generation of Balkan leaders by providing a range of opportunities to train, network, and travel with their peers across Europe and the United States. Programs that BTD implements throughout the Balkan region include: the Young Transatlantic

Network, the Marshall Memorial Fellowship Program, and the Transatlantic Inclusion Leaders Network. With these programs, there are opportunities for established, mid-career, and next generation leaders to hone their own leadership and professional skills, as well as to forge partnerships that develop sustainable solutions to global problems.

WHAT ARE THE PROGRAM AREAS THAT BTD SUPPORTS?

As of 2013, BTD has six thematic areas within which it focuses its grantmaking efforts. These priority areas are:

- **Civic Engagement** - strengthening citizens' participation in decision-making processes to increase public understanding of the rights and responsibilities associated with democratic processes, as well as to create and sustain effective mechanisms to provide a range of opportunities for public participation
- **Youth Leadership and Empowerment** - to empower a new generation of leaders to act as agents of change in the Balkans through engaging young members of the political elite, civil society activists, and community leaders engaged in constructive dialogue and debate with their communities; and to increase the knowledge and skills of young people to lead their societies towards consolidated democracies with good neighbourly relations
- **Government Accountability and Transparency** - to increase government accountability and transparency in the Western Balkans through improved oversight of government performance, disseminating findings to the public, and implementing reform-oriented laws and initiatives
- **Culture of Giving** - to develop local philanthropy in the societies of the Western Balkans by helping to devise and utilize mechanisms and tools for individual and corporate philanthropy; and to increase inter-sector and inter-country collaboration and knowledge sharing
- **Euro-Atlantic Integration** - to support the continued integration of countries in the region into Euroatlantic structures; to improve cooperation and dialogue between governments and civil society actors concerning key priorities and challenges of integration processes; and to enable citizens to be better informed and provide relevant public support to reform processes
- **Dialogue and Reconciliation** - to provide sustained support to dialogue and reconciliation efforts in this post-conflict environment through improved regional and bilateral cooperation in political, economic, and social spheres among governments and civil society actors, and to address current misconceptions that prevent the redevelopment of a culture of trust.

Supported projects typically achieve their goals through: public debate; leadership development; policy work; civic education; new mechanisms; advocacy; monitoring; implementation and enforcement; shared objectives; best practices; networks; re-granting; and reconciliation. Preferences will be given to those proposals designed to increase citizen engagement with government; measurably impact public policy; strengthen leadership skills of individuals and organizations; facilitate cross-border and/or cross-sector cooperation; and encourage the transfer of experiences and innovative ideas through clear communication and dissemination plans.

WHO ARE THE BTD'S GRANTEEES?

Applicants must be civic groups, NGOs, media organizations, think tanks, governments, and education institutions indigenous to BTD program countries.

Individuals and political parties may **not** apply.

Non-indigenous organizations may not apply for *direct* funding; however, cooperative projects between indigenous and non-indigenous organizations will be considered.

WHAT ARE THE TYPICAL GRANT AMOUNTS?

BTD grants generally range from \$5,000 to \$50,000, with most grants falling between \$10,000 and \$25,000. BTD can support multi-year projects, renewable on an annual basis contingent upon satisfactory interim reports and performance.

WHAT DOESN'T BTD FUND?

- **Individuals** (for travel, study, participation in conferences, fellowships, scholarships, travel or related activities)
- **For-profit initiatives** and income generation projects
- Pure **research projects** where the direct benefit for a specific community is unclear
- **Political, sectarian or partisan** organizations/groups or activities
- Organisations or groups which advocate **intolerance or violence**
- While we can support religious organizations/groups, we cannot support activities that include the **teaching or advocacy of a particular religion.**
- The purchase of **medical equipment or services**
- **Humanitarian aid** and/or the purchase of other goods for distribution
- Refugee or IDP return
- Organisations and groups from **outside the countries listed above**
- **Computer and/or language classes**, as they are often of benefit to only a limited group of people.
- **Self-help activities for special needs groups**, unless the project clearly involves interaction with people in the community outside the special needs group.
- Buildings and other **capital investment projects** – unless it is work that will help involve communities in particular initiatives.
- Equipment such as **computers, faxes, LCD projectors and photocopiers** alone with no community activity or initiative.
- Projects that only involve **expert lectures**
- Microfinance schemes, business development initiatives.

HOW AND WHEN CAN I APPLY?

Organizations that are interested in receiving BTD funding are welcome to send a brief concept note in English (no more than 1 page), outlining the project idea and approximate budget amount to balkantrust@gmfus.org. BTD does not recommend that organizations develop full project proposals unless invited to do so by BTD program staff.

Proposals will be accepted and determinations of funding made on a rolling basis (**there are no application deadlines**). Final approval will be made by BTD's Grant Review Committee and, if over \$25,000, final approval will also be determined by GMF's Board of Trustees. The review process generally takes 2 – 4 months after the receipt of the proposal. Applicants are requested to submit only one proposal at a time.

WHO DO I CONTACT AT BTD?

All inquiries will be acknowledged either by e-mail within or post within one month of receipt. Questions related to proposal preparation may be sent by e-mail to balkantrust@gmfus.org (if a grant is awarded, questions should be emailed directly to the responsible program officer at his/her email address).

When contacting us via email, please include the applicant's name and country in the subject line of the email. **BTB will discard emails that include only an attachment.**

All applications must be submitted to: balkantrust@gmfus.org.

DOES BTB HAVE APPLICATION AND REPORTING FORMS?

All application and reporting forms will be provided by BTB program staff as necessary. **All forms must be completed in English only.**

Forms submitted in a language other than English or in a format different from BTB's official forms will be ineligible for review.

All grantees are required to submit a final report following the completion of their BTB-supported project. Depending on specific contractual requirements, some grantees may also be obliged to submit an interim report. Report deadlines are to be found within the Grant Letter. While **reports** must be submitted in English only, further annexes of supplementary information (i.e. publications, press clippings, etc.) in local languages will be accepted. Photographs of project activities are also welcome.

HOW ARE DECISIONS MADE?

BTB operates with a small, skilled staff with extensive experience in the region. BTB further engages experts on its grant review committee, which is composed of GMF staff members engaged in civil society work across the globe, as well as BTB donors and partners. An extensive network of local and regional experts and practitioners also helps to guide and inform the work of BTB.

HOW MUCH TIME SHOULD I PLAN FOR DECISIONS?

Applicants should submit their application 2 – 4 months before they plan to implement the project.

HOW MANY TIMES CAN YOU APPLY TO BTB OR RECEIVE A GRANT?

There is no limit on the number of times an organization may apply to BTB with different projects. However, BTB policy does not allow for concurrent support to the same organization, and therefore, grantees that wish to submit a second application may do so **only** if they have submitted a complete final report to BTB for the first grant. Furthermore, if the second application is for activities similar to those funded in the first grant, the applicant must clearly explain how the project has developed.

Applicants who have been rejected multiple times are encouraged to contact the BTB office to ensure that their organization and project(s) meet BTB criteria.

HOW IS BTD FUNDED?

Founded in 2003 through contributions from GMF, the United States Agency for International Development, and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, BTD has received additional funding since its inception from:

- Compagnia di San Paolo
- Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- British Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Belgrade, Serbia
- Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Robert Bosch Stiftung
- Rockefeller Brothers Fund
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
- Tipping Point Foundation.