



OPEN CALL

GOOD STORY FUND

USAID's Media Engagement Activity in Bosnia and Herzegovina (MEA)

Open to: Locally registered media outlets and individual content producers from Bosnia and Herzegovina

Grant amount for individual grants: Up to max. \$2,950

Grant amount for media outlets: \$5,000 - \$15,000

Duration: Up to 6 months. *(Please note that the beginning of the project is scheduled for January 2024)*

Deadline for Applications: Friday, December 1st, 2023, at 17:00 CET

Focus of this Call: Reporting that identifies social problems as well as their possible solutions ("solutions journalism"), in areas such as economy, education, arts and culture, sports, tourism, health and social care, ecology, activism and humanitarian work, protection and promotion of human rights, media freedom, journalism and disinformation or any other sphere of life.

About the project

The goal of Internews' activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina through USAID Media Engagement Activity (MEA) is to strengthen the information space in BiH. The purpose of this activity is to increase the availability of credible and professional information to a large population in BiH, particularly to audiences with traditionally limited access to it. Internews' activities are funded by an award from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) passed through by Family Health International (FHI360).

USAID's MEA aims to stimulate and support production of quality content that will help media in Bosnia and Herzegovina **expand their audiences, inform them, and build trust with the public while reporting on public interest issues in innovative way.** To this end, we are seeking applications for the fourth cycle of the **Good Story Fund (GSF).**

What is Good Story Fund?

Good Story Fund is an open-call funding opportunity open to journalists, media, activists, civil society organizations and individual content producers.

The Fund will stimulate production of content of various formats, with preference given to projects that contain certain innovative elements, seek to bring communities together, increase production quality, encourage collaboration across sectors and different media, and have the potential to inspire others to follow their lead. Special consideration will be given to project ideas that help increase the diversity of the content offering in the market or reach neglected audiences or those whose authentic experiences are insufficiently represented in the media. The call will be issued twice a year for the duration of the project, and it will be informed by the ongoing context and developing priorities.

This fund is available for applications submitted by individuals (up to \$2,950) and media organizations (up to \$15,000 each).

What are "GOOD STORIES"?

"Good stories" are not only stories that are interesting to read, listen to and watch. Whether it is an in-depth story, a documentary, an interactive story package or an investigative podcast series, a *good story* should also:

- Address important social issues and engage marginalized and/or less informed audience groups in the dialogue.



- Encourage audiences to devise potential solutions and get involved in addressing problems in ways that bring communities together.
- Explore the potential for collaboration between media, journalists, civil society organizations and other potential partners.
- Involve an element of innovation and experimentation with formats and/or distribution channels.
- And/or promote diversification of the experiences and voices featured in media content.

The focus of this fourth cycle of the Good Story Fund **is reporting that identifies social problems as well as their possible solutions ("solutions journalism")**. It may include areas such as economy (including entrepreneurship and agriculture), education, arts and culture, sports, tourism, health and social care, ecology, activism and humanitarian work, protection, and promotion of human rights (including women's and minority rights), media freedom, journalism and disinformation or any other sphere of life. We welcome proposals which are the result of production of local, regional, or national media, or collaborations between two or more media.

Journalism based on reporting on social problems and possible solutions focuses on **responses** to social problems and their success, offers informative and analytical **insight** into solutions, looks for **evidence** about solutions through data or results, and points to their **limitations**.

Proposals may include text, audio, or visual content (or combination of all these forms), with elements of data-based graphics, interactive features, multimedia formats, etc.

What kinds of costs can grant cover?

This grant will cover the costs of labor, production, and the purchase of basic small equipment related exclusively to the given production. All proposed budgets will undergo a detailed review process by Internews staff prior to approval.

Examples of eligible costs under this grant call:

- Time of staff members/consultants working the proposed project
- Applicable fringe benefits (income tax; health insurance)
- Materials, supplies and basic equipment needed to implement the project
- Services (exclusively those that contribute to better quality content)
- Travels associated with reporting or audience research for the project (only within BiH)

Indirect costs (those necessary for running the organization but which are not directly tied to the activities proposed in the grant application) may be eligible for reimbursement. Applicants may dedicate 10% of their proposed project budget to covering indirect costs. USAID's MEA staff will work with applicants whose proposals are selected for grants to determine exact eligible costs.

These costs are **NOT** eligible under this RFA:

- Capital expenditures
- Tuition and scholarships
- Meal allowances for contractors, trainees, consultants, experts, etc. They are only allowable for staff.
- Registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with conferences, or training projects.
- Construction work.



Proposed budget must be in dollars (\$) and without VAT.

How will the applications be evaluated?

Media organizations or independent content creators are eligible to apply for support under this fund. Applications can also be submitted as a collaboration between two media outlets, or two content producers, with a clearly identified lead applicant.

Applications for Good Story Fund submitted by both individuals and media outlets will be evaluated by the internal selection committee according to the following criteria:

1. Applicant's capacity (20% of overall score)

- Does your media have an impressum, signed content and clear editorial policy?
- Is your proposal taking into consideration necessary technical skills and experience for the proposed activities?

2. Quality of the proposed idea (40 % of overall score)

- Is the topic of your story clearly and concisely presented?
- What differentiates your story from others and makes it important, innovative, and interesting?
- What is the expected timeline for production and deadline for delivery of the content?
- How do you plan to effectively use multimedia and interactive elements in content production?

3. Impact - reaching audiences (30 % of overall score)

- How will you disseminate and promote the content?
- How can your stories reach marginalized and/or less informed audience groups?
- How can you actively engage general audiences, but in a new and creative way? Give us an example!

4. Budget (10 % of overall score)

- Does the budget include all the resources necessary for the realisation of the story? Give us your estimate of engaged personnel, services, and other direct costs essential to implement project activities?
- Does your proposal of the story and its distribution justify the suggested budget amount?

How to apply?

All applications must meet the following requirements:

- Applications, including supporting documents, should be submitted in either a local language version (B/C/S) or in English.
- All applications must be submitted by **Friday, December 1st, 2023, at 17:00 CET time.**
- All applications must be completed and submitted via online application form, using the designated [Application](#) (Annex 1), or they will not be considered.
- Include a Detailed Budget using the provided [Budget Template](#). (Annex 2), or they will not be considered.



- For legal entities (media outlets), applicants must be registered in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Please send scanned certificate of registration as Annex 2. Portfolio of previous relevant work (links) will also be required.
- For **individual content producers**, applicants must be citizens and residents of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They must also submit a short CV, including links to sample work, and two reference contacts.
- Please note that individual content producers must offer/secure content distribution platforms.

Technical difficulties with submission through the platform will not be considered an acceptable justification for late applications. We recommend that you submit your application well before the deadline so that you can troubleshoot any issues and/or ask questions via email given below if you face difficulty submitting through the web platform. Applications submitted via email will not be considered except in exceptional circumstances with the written permission of Internews grants staff.

Inquiries:

All questions regarding this grant call should be directed via email to BA-MEA-Grants@internews.org with the subject line **"Inquiry on MEA Good Story Fund."** Our Team will try to help you in shaping the best idea and polishing administrative side of the application. We will not take phone inquiries.

For the requirement of this call, MEA team will hold an **online info session regarding conditions and criteria for application**. The info session will take place on **Tuesday, 21st of November 2023, at 14:00 CET time**. We invite all individuals, media outlets and civil society organizations interested in attending this info session to send an email to the e-mail address provided above and a link with the invitation will be sent. Together with the application for the info session, we encourage all to send any questions you might have and Internews staff will answers those questions at the info session.

Reporting on Use of Grant Funds

Grants awarded as a result of this call will include programmatic and financial reporting requirements. Narrative and financial reports will be submitted at least twice during the grant duration (progress report and final report), in English.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Limiting Construction Activities:

- a. Construction will not be eligible for reimbursement under any award resulting from this solicitation.
- b. Construction means — construction, alteration, or repair (including dredging and excavation) of buildings, structures, or other real property and includes, without limitation, improvements, renovation, alteration, and refurbishment. The term includes, without limitation, roads, power plants, buildings, bridges, water treatment facilities, and vertical structures.
- c. Internews will not approve any subawards or procurements by subrecipients for construction activities that are not listed in paragraph d) below. Internews will reimburse allowable costs for only the construction activities listed in this provision not to exceed the amount specified in the construction line item of the award budget. The recipient must receive prior written approval from Internews to transfer funds allotted for construction activities to other cost categories, or vice versa.



- d. Description:
Construction is not eligible for reimbursement under this award.
- e. The awardee will include this provision in all lower-tier subawards and procurements and make vendors providing services under this award and lower-tier subrecipients aware of the restrictions of this provision.

Environmental Considerations

The following actions will not be considered for funding under this solicitation:

- Programs of river basin development;
- Irrigation and water management;
- Agricultural land leveling;
- Drainage projects;
- Large scale agricultural mechanization;
- Resettlement projects;
- New land development;
- Penetration road building and road improvement;
- Power plants;
- Industrial plants;
- Potable water and sewerage projects;
- Projects that:
 - o Support project preparation, project feasibility studies, engineering design for activities listed in §216.2(d)(1);
 - o Affect endangered species;
 - o Provide support to extractive industries (e.g. mining and quarrying);
 - o Promote timber harvesting;
 - o Lead to construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or renovation work;
 - o Support agro-processing or industrial enterprises;
 - o Provide support for regulatory permitting;
 - o Lead to privatization of industrial facilities or infrastructure with heavily polluted property;
 - o Assist the procurement (including payment in kind, donations, guarantees of credit) or use (including handling, transport, fuel for transport, storage, mixing, loading, application, clean-up of spray equipment, and disposal) of pesticides or activities involving procurement, transport, use, storage, or disposal of toxic materials – pesticides cover all insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides, etc. covered under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act; and/or
 - o Procure or use genetically modified organisms.

The USAID's Media Engagement Activity in Bosnia and Herzegovina (MEA) is implemented by Internews in partnership with FHI 360 and local partners.