

1. SMALL GRANTS FOR MEDIA OUTLETS

Umbrella will provide sub-grants to non-state investigative media outlets to maintain their workforce, sustain investigative journalism, and strengthen democratic discourse, due to the increasingly narrowing of the space for the work of independent media, as well as the withdrawal of donor funds. Small grant will be provided to any form of media outlet (web portal, radio station, TV station, newspaper) that are not owned, nor financed, not managed, not influenced, nor editorially controlled by government(s).

Successful sub-grants will be based on evidence-based good practices and experience, will have been independently developed by the applicant, consistent with the objectives of program and will meet a specific program need. Selection will prioritize media outlets with proven track record of investigative reporting, adhering to professional standards and quality criteria of investigative journalism, production of long-tail features, and demonstrating a commitment to editorial independence and fight against corruption. Small grants program for media outlets will be managed by Association Umbrella.

1.1. Types of Sub-grants

During the life of the activity, Umbrella will award sub-grants in the total amount of 170.000 BAM. Sub-grants will take the form of Fixed Amount Sub-grant. Fixed Amount Sub-grants to selected media outlets will be awarded for operational costs. The planned duration of the request is maximum five (5) months, starting in May 2025 and lasting until September 2025.

1.2. Sub-grant Opportunities

The Call for proposal will be published on Umbrella website www.umbrella.ba from 3rd April until 13th April 2025. Announcement of grant opportunities does not constitute commitment on the part of Umbrella for any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of grant applications. Applications submitted **after April 13 will not be considered.**

1.3. Eligibility Requirements for Sub-Grant Applicants

Eligible Applicants per Award is non-state investigative media outlets of any form that are not owned, not financed, not managed, not influenced, nor editorially controlled by government(s). Media outlet implies various kind of official registration i.e. media outlets registered as Civil Society Organization, Entrepreneur, Company, etc.

The additional eligibility criteria include:

- The media outlet is registered as a legal entity (proven by copies of registration documents – registration certificate, ID number, statute)
- There are no court proceedings against the legal entity and its legal representative and it has not been criminally punished for a serious business offense (proven by a certified statement)
- Proven track record of investigative reporting (proven by Statute and with a list of investigative media contents)
- That its statutory and program goals are aimed at providing an active, professional, responsible and quality contribution to freedom of speech and enabling access to truthful information for citizens, promoting independent, objective and analytical and investigative journalism based on the highest professional standards in Bosnia and Herzegovina (proven by Statute)
- That the media outlet has a clearly stated imprint, and that it complies with the Journalist Code (proven with a print screen of the imprint or proof that the media outlet is a member of the Press and Online Media Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- Demonstrating a commitment to editorial independence, and exposing corruption and public institutions, officials and governments malfeasance
- That the media outlet has been active for at least three (3) years
- That media outlets it is part of one of the investigative journalism networks in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Demonstration clear mapping/explanation of an emergency situation

1.4. Eligible and Ineligible Costs

Eligible cost is:

- staff costs
- office rent
- office expenses
- utility charges
- communication expenses

Ineligible costs under this Call are:

- Procurement of equipment
- Procurement of vehicles;
- International travel;
- Travel for conferences and study tours

- Costs incurred before conclusion of the Contract;
- Debts and debt service costs
- A reserve for losses, debts;
- Purchase of land or properties
- Loans to third parties
- New project ideas
- Charity events or sponsorships
- Consulting, planning, and evaluation services as standalone activities

2. APPLYING FOR SUB-GRANTS (Fixed Amount Sub-grant)

2.1. Applying and selection

Potential recipients (media outlets) will be able to apply based on Call for request for emergency financial support for independent media prepared by Umbrella. Call will be published publicly on the Umbrella website www.uba.ba. Media outlets that meet eligible requirements will compete for **Fixed Amount Sub-grant**.

The Applications will be reviewed by Umbrella Evaluation Committee to check for eligibility and completeness of the applications.

The applications will be rated on the following criteria:

- Number of jobs at risk
- Assessment of emergency situation
- Active projects, existing funding sources
- Financial Vulnerability
 - Percentage of lost revenue compared to the previous year due to the withdrawal of donations
 - Number of employees on minimum wage due to revenue decline
 - Inability to cover essential operational costs (e.g., rent, electricity, internet, basic equipment).

Proof: Bank statements from March 2025, payroll records.

- Extent of Impact on Operations
 - Reduction in operational scope (e.g., fewer publications, broadcasts, or analyses).
 - Cancellation of key projects due to lack of funds.
 - Reduction in fees or number of engaged journalists/collaborators.

Proof: Work reports, review of published content in previous periods.

- Priority Needs

- The amount of funding necessary to ensure the minimal functioning of the newsroom.
- Threats to key investigative projects of public interest.
- Existence of plans for financial stabilization in the upcoming period.

Proof: Cost plan with a clear explanation of how the funds will be utilized.

Umbrella will send notification to Recipients on grant award. The grant recipients will sign Fixed Grant Agreement.

Fixed Grant Agreements will outline the purpose of the grant, period of agreement, correspondence, amount of agreement and budget summary, reporting requirements, termination and disputes.

2.2. Evaluation Process for Fixed Amount Sub-grants/ Contracts

Request for emergency support will be reviewed to check administrative completeness and compliance with the requirements. The evaluation committee will assess the quality of the request based on the criteria presented in the evaluation form presented below.

All eligible and complete submissions for Fixed Amount Sub-grant will be reviewed for evaluation by Umbrella Evaluation Committee, composed of three (3) members – 2 employees of Umbrella and one external expert.

Submissions that are not selected for funding will not be revised and resubmitted. Submissions recommended for funding must be finalized and all review comments and questions must be addressed to the satisfaction of Umbrella. Applicants may be required to provide additional information.

2.2.1 Criteria for evaluating applications

2.2.1.1 Elimination criteria (yes/no)

These criteria are basic and any media that does not meet them are automatically excluded from the selection process:

Elimination criteria	Yes	No
Legal entity registered (evidence: registration certificate)		

No court proceedings and no criminal penalties (certified statement by authority person)		
Media registered for at least 3 years (registration decision)		
The media has an imprint/impressum and respects the journalistic code		

Only media outlets that meet all elimination criteria enter the points ranking.

2.2.1.2 Point system for qualified applicants

Total points: 100

Urgency and vulnerability (60 points)	
Clearly mapped crisis situation	10
Number of laid-off journalists	15
Donation loss in %	10
Inability to cover basic expenses	10
Number of employees on minimum wage	15
Quality and professionalism (20 points)	
Proven work in investigative journalism (Statute, list of investigative media contents)	5
Programmatic and statutory focus on public interest and freedom of speech (Statute)	5
Belonging to investigative networks in BiH	10
Impact on operations (10 points)	

Reduction in workload	5
Canceled key projects	5
Stabilization and emergency needs plan (10 points)	
Clearly defined need for funds (cost plan)	5
Plans for stabilization	5
Total points	100

Rank	Number of applicants	Score	Funds
Highest rank	Top 2–3 applicants	90–100	20.000–30.000 KM
Middle rank	4–5 applicants	75–89	10.000–20.000 KM
Lower rank	5-7 applicants	60–74	2.000–10.000 KM

NOTE: Applicants below 60 points do not receive funds.

Documentation and Verification

For each item that earns points, there must be documented evidence: Statute, imprint, bank statements, payroll, expense plan, etc.

3. AWARD / TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Fixed Grant Agreement will be issued to the Grantee upon approval of the grant. Grant terms and conditions set forth in the grant document may be enforced by Umbrella.

3.1. Termination and Disputes

The Agreement/Contracts may only be modified by issuance of a formal written Agreement/Contracts Modification Notice approved by the Umbrella. In case the Grantee fails, refuses to, or is unable to carry out activities and due to non-compliance with provisions of this Agreement, the Grantor reserves the right to terminate the Agreement.

In case of Grantee being prevented from or seriously hampered in the implementation, due to actions undertaken by government or due to force majeure, the Grantor reserves the right to terminate this Agreement.

The Grantor may terminate the implementation, fully or partially, as a result of termination of the Agreement by Swiss Embassy, in case of evidence of misconduct or fraud with project budget/activities, or reduction of the budget amount of the Grant Agreement between Swiss Embassy and Grantor.

Grantor may terminate agreement if sub-grantee fails to comply with the terms and conditions of the Agreement/Service contract.

Early termination can take place for any of the following conditions:

- delay in the report submitting without prior notice.
- failure to implement recommendations on a timely basis, as agreed with Umbrella and Swiss Embassy.
- failure to comply with any other conditions of the Agreement.

Umbrella shall determine whether to suspend or terminate the Agreement should financial irregularities or delays in reporting to Swiss Embassy be discovered.

Upon notice of termination, the Grantee shall within thirty (30) calendar days after the effective date of the termination repay to Umbrella all unexpended funds which are not otherwise obligated by a legally binding transaction applicable to this Agreement.

3.2. Close-out Procedures

The Grantee submits a grant documentation in accordance with agreement. All obligations regarding reporting will be defined in Fixed Grant Agreement. The Umbrella staff may undertake a final monitoring and compliance review visit, as necessary. Swiss Embassy can also close out the grant and evaluate the results.

Before closing out any grant, the Umbrella must:

- Review all delivered grant documentation

The Grantee must:

- Refund any balances of unobligated cash that Umbrella has advanced or paid to it, and any unexpended program income.

Upon satisfactory completion of these steps, and verification by Umbrella of the final reports, Umbrella closes out the grant and sends a notification Letter that project is closed (by e-mail) to the Grantee.

Following the close out, the Grantee shall: a) Retain records for three years after expiration of contract, b) Permit authorized officials of the Swiss Embassy and Umbrella to have access to records for purposes of possible review or audit.

4. SUB-GRANT ADMINISTRATION

Grants management is a process that will be managed by Umbrella.

Grant Administration Team and Responsibilities

Grant administration is coordinated by the Grant Manager (Umbrella). Grants Administration is responsible for a full enforcement of rules and procedures prescribed in this Manual regarding selection, approval, and realization of grants.

Grants Administration Team includes:

- Financial manager
- Program manager

Grant administration is responsible for:

- Determination and provision of the grant documents, the completeness of applications, activity selection, and reporting
- Preparing and submitting complete documentation to the members of Evaluation Committee for evaluation and review
- Conducting the past performance review and submitting the findings
- Preparing Recommendation Memo for Swiss Embassy Agreement Officer
- Conducting coordination meetings and preparing supporting documentation for Umbrella
- Responding to possible complaints and appeals after the selection process
- Preparing contractual documentation and sending agreements to organizations
- Payment for all activity costs
- Regular updating of grant documentation records
- Provides consultations, and assists in disseminating information about grants