

Call for expressions of interest

**Project evaluation: *Regional Incubator for Social Entrepreneurs*
(RISE)**

AFD Convention n°: CZZ 3398 01L

18/10/2023 version - Translated from French by DeeplPro

Contact:

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I - Presentation of the project to be evaluated and its context

1. Project context

The Western Balkans region is faced with very high levels of youth unemployment, a lack of regional cooperation, and numerous environmental and social challenges which have repercussions in each of the 6 territories (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo¹, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Serbia). The RISE project consortium reflects a successful attempt to bring multi-disciplinary expertise to bear on these challenges by promoting: i) youth access to social entrepreneurship; ii) peace, reconciliation and youth participation in building a common future; iii) intercultural dialogue.

The project is implemented by PULSE, in partnership with the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO), the South East European Youth Network (SEEYN), the Office Franco-Allemand pour la Jeunesse (OFAJ) and six local support structures (Yunus Social Business Balkans, Nesto Vise, Balkan Green Foundation, Organization for Social Innovation "ARNO", Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre Tehnopolis and Smart Kolektiv).

It receives financial support from Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the European Union (EU), RYCO and OFAJ.

Founded in 2006, PULSE is an association whose mission is to support entrepreneurship as a lever for inclusive and sustainable development. PULSE was founded on the conviction that anyone can become an agent of change, provided they have the means to do so. Today, active in 18 countries through some twenty support and awareness programs and incubation facilities, PULSE leads a community of almost 2,000 entrepreneurs and provides individualized support to 150 of them every year.

In June 2019, PULSE opened an office in Belgrade for the purposes of its "WB6 LAB" project. In partnership with GROUPE SOS International and Maja KOVACECIC, PULSE has also set up PULSE Balkans, an association incorporated under Serbian law; its integration as a full partner in the project has been validated by the Agence Française de Développement.

2. Description of current project

a) Project history

The project has been developed jointly by RYCO, SEEYN and PULSE since mid-2017, in cooperation with representatives from MEAE, Institut français, MAA and OFAJ. The participation of each partner in the needs identification and collective reflection process is explained by the history of the partnership relations. A first phase (AFD agreement n°: CZZ 2629 01 G) ran from 01/10/2019 to 30/09/2022). The current phase (AFD agreement n° CZZ 3398 01L) began on 01/10/2022 for a 3-year period. It should be noted that all partners were involved in its design, which also sought to capitalize on i) the various assessments produced during the course of the project; ii) the conclusions of the external evaluation carried out on this previous phase; iii) the suggestions for adjustment made by the partners themselves.

¹ Throughout the document, the designation "Kosovo" is to be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, without prejudice to the status of Kosovo. It is under this designation that Kosovo sits on the RYCO.

b) Project objectives

Overall objective: To open up new areas of reconciliation for young people in the Western Balkans through social entrepreneurship.

Specific objectives :

OS1: Contribute to the development of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem in the Western Balkans ;
OS2: Improve access to social entrepreneurship for young people in the Western Balkans region

c) Target groups

Direct beneficiaries: 6 civil society organizations within the ecosystem strengthened; 12 project leaders from these organizations.

OS1 and OS2 will: introduce up to 834 young people to social entrepreneurship; support the development of the ideas of 324 young entrepreneurs. 108 of them will receive support in prototyping their projects; 6 projects led by alumni of the RISE project will also be funded.

In addition to these young people, activities will also target at least 184 ecosystem players (through Demo Days or regional events, for example); at least 6 economic and political decision-makers from the Western Balkans region.

Indirect beneficiaries : The project's communication tools should reach over 30,000 people in the Western Balkans region by the end of 2025.

II - The expected evaluation

1. Assessment procedure and objectives

The external evaluation of the project will be as follows:

- A **first evaluation**, which could take place between March 2024 and July 2024 (i.e. the end of Tranche 1 of the project is scheduled for June 30, 2024) before feeding the work program of Tranche 2;
- A **short update on the results of the external evaluation in the** summer of 2025 (the end of the project being 30/09/2025).

The final evaluation of the project will take into account the initial application as well as any amendment requests submitted and approved since the start of the project. It should also take into account **any potential adjustments made as a result of co-financing** (including Erasmus+).

It will have to take into account the **usual criteria** (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact) and consider gender **mainstreaming** within the project.

The interim exercise (i.e. the first assessment) should include **recommendations** on :

- Improving the Risk and Quality Management Plan, detailing the project's monitoring - evaluation - learning mechanisms;
- The impact of cross-cutting capacity-building activities carried out by project partners;
- The new governance of the project, and the new mechanisms put in place to support local structures within their respective ecosystems;

- Tools and systems put in place to support project leaders and enable them to acquire new skills;
- The relevance and possible evolution of awareness-raising, communication and advocacy activities;
- The relevance and impact of the creation of a regional ecosystem and the mobility of project leaders.

The evaluator will be asked to take into account the changes made between Phase 1 and Phase 2, to assess the learning curve of the project and the partners in general, so as to enable PULSE and its partners to adjust the organization and programming of Phase 2 of the project.

2. Terms and conditions

a) Expertise required

The team should preferably comprise two (2) experts, at least one of whom should be international, covering the following skills between them:

- Bilingual French / English - knowledge of one of the region's languages would be a plus;
- Expertise in valuation techniques ;
- The pair must have worked together several times before;
- Knowledge of the issues and key players in social entrepreneurship in the countries of the Western Balkans.

b) Financial terms and conditions

The total cost of this evaluation is estimated at a maximum of **€25,000 (twenty-five thousand euros)**. This amount covers all costs related to the evaluation, local and international transport, per diems, etc.

c) Evaluation schedule

Object	Period
Call for expressions of intent	23 October to 5 November ^[OBJ OBJ]
Pre-selection of bids and launch of restricted call for tenders	6 November
Deadline for returning bids	19 November
Provider selection	22 November
Contractualization	27 November
Steering committee scoping meeting	Early December
Interim assessment	March - July 2024
Restitution and discussion of the draft report	July 2024
Final assessment	Summer 2025
Restitution and discussion of the provisional final report	September 2025

This call for expressions of interest (AMI) is designed to **identify consultants**. Following this AMI, a pre-selection will be made, then a **restricted call for tenders** will be issued to the pre-selected consultants, on the basis of the finalized terms of reference for the evaluation.

At this stage, only the English-language CV of the proposed consultant or team of consultants is required.

If you wish to express your interest, please send your CV(s) by e-mail **before 5 November at midnight (French time)** to the simultaneous attention of:

Kelly ROBIN, Executive Vice President, kelly.robin@groupe-sos.org

Saša ĆIRIĆ, Project Coordinator, sasa.ciric@pulse-group.org

Please attach an updated CV, highlighting any specific points you feel would be useful in assessing your interest in this study.