# Call for Application
# For Consultants with expertise in Business Development, Digital Transformation, and Innovation in Media

## BACKGROUND

Thomson Foundation supports journalists and media organisations worldwide often in challenging and emerging economies. Our work promotes ethical reporting and ensures independent, trusted, and sustainable media businesses developments.

Thomson is currently implementing several media support programmes in the regions of Western Balkans (WB) and Central and Eastern Europe, which covers 13 countries and more than 50 media outlets, with more than 250 individuals/media professionals involved.

We are looking to hire experts in Business Development, Digital Transformation, and Innovation in Media to become part of our wider WB pool of experts that will, amongst others, support the realisation of the CSSF-funded media support project "**Strengthening an Independent Media Environment in Western Balkans"** implemented by a consortium consisting of the British Council (BC), Thomson Foundation (TF), Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), and Intrac.

Focus of Thomson's work is providing media outlets with guidance for sustainable development and operations through business mentorship, testing and implementing new and innovative business modalities, digital products/services and revenue streams, and supporting media to attract and engage new and underrepresented media audience(s) including young, female, minority groups and diaspora.

## ABOUT THE SUPPORT

Under the CSSF-funded media support project "**Strengthening an Independent Media Environment in Western Balkans**" Thomson will deliver substantial support to beneficiaries categorised under this two cohorts:

A. Business support to larger outlets (**Business Innovation Synergizer**), which aims to support established media organisations with capacities for growth, support absorption, and with validated business idea and/or developed strategy or business plan; and

B. Support to smaller outlets, content producers, communication start ups and networks (**Validation Booster**), which aims to test and validate ideas through flexible and interactive support programs.

Under the Business Innovation Synergizer Thomson will provide support to larger media outlets in form of grants, mentoring, and capacity-building in order to have them successfully implement their validated business plan, strategy, or idea.

The beneficiaries of the Validation Booster stream will learn how to validate their mission, business idea or networking potential and how to seek funding for its implementation:

- Obtaining the necessary tools and knowledge to properly understand and implement product validation methodology and by;
- Understanding the process of how to effectively pitch validated ideas to donors.

The following are the **outcomes** that the project aims achieving through these  cohorts:

- Project supported media outlets are **more operative and more resilient**;
- Project supported media outlets **introduce or upscale existing revenue streams** or **validate their mission, business idea or networking potential**;
- Project supported media outlets are encouraged **to be innovative** in organisation of their **workflow, content production, and audience engagement**;
- Project supported media outlets are familiar with new **digital platforms, tools and procedures** that help them efficiently and productively implement their workflow.
- Supported media will know how to **effectively present their business ideas and pitch** for the funds;

## MAIN TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Selected experts will be working closely with Thomson's Program Coordinator and Media Support Coordinator who will be overseeing the project implementation.

They are expected, depending on the beneficiaries needs, to support them in the implementation of the business plans, and overall absorption of the support, on one hand and steer the validation process on the other.

Experts are expected to:

- Regularly communicate with the Program Coordinator and the Media Support Coordinator;
- Participate in creation, development, and implementation of specific capacity-building activities or mentoring activities under the coordination of the Program Coordinator and the Media Support Coordinator;
- Produce mentoring/training materials such as: mentoring/training/workshop plans, key milestones and performance indicators tracker, etc.;
- Support media outlets in the process of implementation or validation of their business plans/ideas;
- Participate in monitoring activities and report about mentoring processes and levels of achievement in accordance with the approved media specific milestones, and outcomes and outputs defined by the project

- Send reports within the defined deadlines;
- Produce educational resource materials (short articles/blog posts) relevant to their topic of expertise that will be published on web platforms for media outlets in WB.

Experts will be mostly working online since the majority of the consultancy activities will be delivered remotely. Also, if necessary, and in close coordination with the Thomson team, onsite activities can be required depending on beneficiary's activities and preferences.

## APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

**Education:**
- At least graduate degree in the field of business, communication, media, international development, social sciences, and other fields relevant to the call;
- Certification as trainer/educator/lecturer will be considered as an asset.

**Professional Experience:**
- At least 5 years' combined experience in:
  - business mentorship;
  - testing and implementing new and innovative business modalities;
  - entrepreneurship, start-ups, and early stages of business development;
  - development of digital products/services;
  - sales and marketing;
  - strategic and business communication;
  - pitching business ideas;
  - audience engagement and data analytics.
- Demonstrated experience in processes of strategic planning and management.

**Language and skills:**
- Speaking, reading, and writing proficiency in English and one of the languages spoken in the Western Balkan or the Central and South East Europe;
- Relevant knowledge of the media sector and industry in the Western Balkans. Knowledge about Central and South East Europe media sector will be considered as an asset;
- Excellent presentation, oral and writing communication skills, with strong interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills;
- Strong organisational skills, problem-solving, proactive, can-do-it attitude and ability to get things done;
- Dedication to delivery of outputs in line with the highest standards;
- Record of innovative ideas and approaches would be an asset.

## APPLICATION

Interested experts are kindly asked to send the following documents (in English):

- CV / portfolio with examples of previous work relevant for this assignment;

- Concept proposal – a single page document that briefly explains the expert's vision and approach - or any work related documentation with examples relevant to the call.

Documents should be submitted to Ilcho Cvetanoski by email: IlchoC@thomsonfoundation.org

**Deadline:** Rolling

Following the submission period Thomson will evaluate all applications. Applicants that fulfil the criteria and which expertise is in line with selected outlets needs and overall project plans will be contacted by email and interviewed.

## DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT

Duration of assignment will be dependent on the project's dynamics and availability.

## LOCATION

Remote work covering all WB countries as a part of the "Strengthening an Independent Media Environment in Western Balkans" project or CEE region as a part of other Thomson activities. Travel per need and planned in advance with the Thomson program team.

*Note: Issuing this Request for Application does not commit Thomson nor other members of the consortium, to select any expert and / or applicant. Thomson also reserves the right to extend / change the duration of the assignment, its scope of work, deliverables or expected outcomes.*