

2025



# Western Balkans Call

## Support Area 2 - Organisational Development (OD)

Concept note & Frequently  
Asked Questions

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# WHY WE SUPPORT ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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## **What is organisational development....**

Organisational development (OD) is a process through which an organisation undergoes internal change, often towards building up its capacity, adapting or improving its strategy, approaches, internal systems, structures and processes, all in order to become more effective in delivering on its mandate and pursuing its objectives.

PeaceNexus' organisational development support targets organisations that are well positioned to make meaningful contributions to reconciliation and responsible dealing with the past. It is informed by our belief that if we help our partners strengthen core capacities related to strategic direction, management, learning and adaptation, then they will continue to succeed in achieving relevant, inclusive and sustainable contributions to the development of peaceful societies.

## **... and why it is relevant in the Western Balkans?**

Civil society in the Western Balkans is vibrant, diverse and has already made great contributions to the social and political development of the region. However, the turbulent and fast-changing political context of the region creates significant internal challenges for organisations, regardless of their size and the level at which they operate. In the past few years, this operating context has become even more challenging due to a shrinking civic space that undermines progressive voices and due to shifts in the funding landscape that impact new and well-established organisations alike.

It is particularly true for organisations working on reconciliation or peacebuilding, which are the audience for this area of our support. Many of these organisations experience challenges related to their strategies, leadership, internal systems and sustainability, as well as resilience and preparedness for significant changes in their working environment. In a context where many underlying lines of tension remain present and where polarisation is on the rise, it can be hard to sustain impact and inspiration. Organisations need to be adaptable and inventive to continue making contributions to reconciliation. They also need to be able to navigate a changing and often adversarial environment in which they are seldom sufficiently supported by respective governments and the general public. Few donors provide support for the institutional development required for this. While civil society organisations are increasingly expected to demonstrate both impact on the ground and organisational effectiveness, many donors provide short-term, project-based funding that does not necessarily help build solid institutional foundations.

In other words, peacebuilding organisations are increasingly expected to be very strategic at all times and yet often do not receive support that enables them to do so. This is exactly where organisational development comes as an opportunity. OD support is not a magic wand nor a quick fix, but it does offer organisations a space to take a step back, reflect and chart an intentional way forward. While it requires an investment of time from selected organisations, OD support is a pathway for selected organisations to become internally stronger. It is meant as a tool to help you determine what you want to change in your organisation so that you can be impactful and sustainable at a time when many organisations are unfortunately facing great uncertainty.

# WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

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## What you can do with our support

Our support always entails giving organisations the space to think through who they want to be and how they can get there. As explained in the overview, our support starts by helping organisations assess where they have internal challenges, prioritise which challenges they want to work on, and develop a realistic plan for progress that builds on existing strengths and what is already working well.

We have been supporting Western Balkans organisations on OD since 2014 and every process has been different since goals and roadmaps are tailored to the needs of our partners. In general though, our support typically helps organisations:

- Be more strategic, both in terms of strategic direction and planning but also in terms of strategic and critical thinking inside teams.
- Be more cohesive, including by having clear priorities for internal improvements and by having space to discuss those regularly
- Be more adaptive and effective, including by having clearer internal roles and a fit-for-purpose structure

In every process, being able to self-reflect and identify what each organisation can do differently is key. We do not engage in technical processes that only aim to produce certain internal documents or policies. Rather, we only support processes of genuine transformation where an organisation is ready to change some of its own ways of working because they are no longer serving the organisation.

The non-exhaustive table below provides additional examples of the type of processes our partners have embarked on with our support over the years.

Through organisational development, some of our partners have...	PeaceNexus helped by supporting organisations...
Identified clear and realistic strategic goals and determined what they will no longer do or do differently	Through the whole process of strategy development, from its design to its completion. We have also helped identify needed follow-up, for example, changing advocacy, communication or fundraising approaches based on the strategy.
Revised their organigramme and introduced more senior or middle management roles, leading to a better utilisation of internal talent and more coordination.	Clarify organigrammes and ToRs, including by facilitating conversations with different teams and staff.
Agreed on improved internal communication and human resources practices and developed more mutual accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put in place a more effective and regular meeting practice as well as better delegation practices</li> <li>• Review HR policies and put in place a performance appraisal and professional development system</li> </ul>
Developed more engaged and more helpful Boards and Assemblies.	Review the composition and functioning of governance bodies, as well as the Statute and meeting practice.
Put in place organisational Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning systems which genuinely help adapt and do even more quality work.	Facilitate the development and testing and adaptation of the system

*“PeaceNexus has continuously improved KRCT by boosting organisational development, enhancing leadership and accountability, implementing strategies, and optimizing human resources. These efforts likely improved our service delivery, effectiveness, leadership, strategic planning, and workforce management, thereby supporting our mission to promote and advance human rights in Kosovo”.*

*Mehmet Musaj, Head of Operations of the Kosova Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims*

## OUR PRINCIPLES WHEN SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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- **Honesty and confidentiality:** An effective partnership is based on mutual trust and learning. We commit to always acting with strict confidentiality and to maintaining open and transparent communication throughout our partnership. Since we see our role as one of a “critical friend”, we may at times hold you accountable to your own objectives and share frank feedback if we see that OD has been deprioritised to a degree that makes progress impossible. On your side, you should feel free to approach us at any time with your own feedback about our accompaniment.
- **Flexibility and adaptation:** our programme is grounded in the realities of our partners’ operating context(s) and adaptive in view of changes at both general and individual partner levels. We recognise that the plan we establish at the beginning of our partnership may need modifications along the way. We will stay flexible and help you adapt the objective and plans so that you can achieve your goals.
- **Organisational, multi-partial and participatory approach:** Our mandate is centred on the organisation and prioritises its best interest. While we will have more frequent contact with the counterpart(s) identified in the organisation, often the leadership, our approach is organisational. Indeed, we favour participatory approaches to organisational development and believe that change can only be successful if those expected to make it happen are actively involved in shaping it. Assessment of partner’s starting point, key organisational challenges to address through our support and vision for change, in particular, are done in a participatory manner. Partnership objectives and their key milestones are shared and consulted with staff and where relevant, governance bodies.
- **Persistence and empathy:** In our experience, securing sustainable gains in terms of organisational development requires sustained effort and frequently encounters unforeseen situations or difficult moments. If such stumbling blocks come up, you’ll be able to count on our empathy and on our persistence in helping identify adaptations and solutions.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### **What are the eligibility and selection criteria that you use to select organisational development partners?**

Please consult the Call Overview to find this information.

### **What if we have several organisational challenges we need to address?**

Most organisations face several challenges at the same time, and they are often interconnected. Understanding of challenges and priorities may differ depending on where one sits in the organisation, so we suggest you consult internally on what they are. In your expression of interest, you can mention all of those you identify as impeding you while highlighting what the priorities are in your view. We will use the initial organisational retreat to further explore and analyse the current situation. The resulting roadmap will determine what to begin with, and how, and how to structure the further process. As such it is an important element of our process design support. We understand that organisations can only dedicate some of their time and efforts to organisational change processes, and our intention is to make sure that you use that investment wisely and strategically.

If the first cycle leads to results and not all of your challenges have been addressed, we are happy to suggest a follow-on phase of our collaboration to PN's Management Team and continue working with you, to ensure that you achieve comprehensive and sustainable results.

### **We are interested in OD but do not have time for a long process and just need support with following up on action points we have already identified. Can PN adapt its approach to this starting point?**

Our briefest partnerships last about 1 year and some of them only focus on one objective. However, we always start our partnerships by revisiting the initial assessment made internally through additional conversations we facilitate within your organisation. We cannot skip this as without it, we won't understand your situation well enough and there might not be enough internal buy-in for what you aim to achieve. If you are not interested in taking this step back, our approach is not the right fit for you.

### **We understand that OD does not offer immediate fixes but what if our problems are very urgent?**

If you are currently in an organisational crisis that threatens your existence, this call is not the right fit for you. Indeed, OD works best when an organisation is not or has exited the firefighting stage of fighting for its survival. If you are not in such a crisis, you can apply to our support and can count on us adapting to your needs, but please note that this adaptation has some constraints. For example, we cannot speed up the completion of this Call and the first steps of our support will only take place from late April onwards.

### **What happens if we get stuck or if things go wrong during the organisational development process?**

Change processes are complex and challenging. If the solution was easily available and implementable, our partners would not call on external help. Therefore, we understand that some processes face resistance or get stuck along the way. If this happens, we do not abandon the process, and we "hold the space" for renewed attempts. We know from experience that organisations that work through resistance can come out at the other end stronger and more effective than ever. If leveraged wisely, difficulties can be great learning opportunities and accelerators for change.

 **We are the country/regional office of an international organisation or network.  
Can we apply?**

As long as you are working in the Western Balkans, you can apply. If this is your case, we will need to understand the broader organisational set-up that you are a part of, and the voice of your headquarters or central/international office would also need to feature in the selection process. In case you are selected, while the partnership will focus on your needs and will have to be fully driven by your country/regional team, your headquarter or central office would also need to be involved at key points, to ensure sufficient alignment and sustainability of the whole process.

In case you are interested in OD support but are ineligible under this call, please get in touch with our Organisational Development Lead & International Partnerships Manager ([carole.frampton@peacenexus.org](mailto:carole.frampton@peacenexus.org)) but kindly note that the last OD call for international organisations recently closed.