Invitation to apply for SAFE grants

**The invitation for new SAFE Trust Fund applications is now open until 9 February 2018**

# What is SAFE?

SAFE means **S**trengthening **A**ccountability and the **F**iduciary **E**nvironment. It is a Trust Fund program administered by the World Bank and was established by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the European Commission with the aim of improving public financial management in the Europe and Central Asia region. This Trust Fund program provides support for activities to assess public financial management (PFM) performance, identify and implement actions to achieve improvements and share knowledge and good practices across countries in the region.

**Objectives for the SAFE trust fund**

The SAFE trust fund group seeks to improve PFM in participating beneficiaries in a systematic way through:

* improving understanding of PFM status in target beneficiaries;
* supporting design, implementation and management of the PFM reform agenda by governments, particularly on reform activities that are being undertaken simultaneously across the region; and
* developing shared knowledge and experience on PFM reform to strengthen reform effectiveness and focus development partner support.

# Who can apply?

This round of applications is open for projects to be implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo[[1]](#footnote-1), Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

Project proposals should be presented by Bank task teams and accompanied by a formal request from the beneficiary countries.

However, we remind applicants of the following:

1. The objectives of their application must fit with SAFE’s objectives as described in the 3 Pillars, **and**
2. An application will only be acceptable provided the applicant entity has discussed the proposed project with the government authorities that will benefit from it, have their support for the envisaged activities and attach their letter of support as ANNEX 1 states in the project proposal form.

# Project selection criteria

* Consistency with SAFE objectives and program outcomes;
* Activities are within the scope of the relevant Pillars mentioned below and within available funds. Minimum project size for a SAFE grant (BETF or RETF) is $50,000 with an upper limited of $300,000;
* Demonstrable improvements in understanding, standards or capability in relation to one or more dimensions of the PEFA framework or associated aspects of PFM and accountability;
* Consistency with potential recipient development priorities, policies and strategic development plans and, where appropriate, donor strategies and agreements;
* Do not duplicate, conflict or overlap with projects financed through other programs;
* Have potential benefits for one or more country in terms of knowledge or experience sharing or scope for comparative assessment where possible and ideally have a regional benefit;
* Beneficiaries have to demonstrate the existence of implementation capacities and the project's contribution to mid- to long-term development objectives;
* Beneficiaries have to explain why funds for the proposed project cannot be obtained from other sources **and** that the envisaged activities are not funded or covered by the EU-IMF technical assistance program; and
* Beneficiaries have to demonstrate that there is a high likelihood that results achieved through the project will be sustainable and/or will enhance the effectiveness of other PFM reform initiatives. It should also demonstrate the expected “added value”.

# Eligible activities

There are three Pillars of support for SAFE funded projects. Pillar I: Assessment of PFM status, Pillar II: Support for PFM reform management and Pillar III: Expanding PFM knowledge and capability.

***Pillar III: Expanding PFM knowledge and capability.***

* Analysis of progress and outcomes in specific beneficiaries as well as cross-cutting perspectives;
* Benchmarking and comparative analysis, involving studies of progress against specific indicators or groups of indicators, facilitation of working groups across beneficiaries to explore differences and identify practical actions to address weaknesses in one or more location;
* Wider experience and knowledge sharing, including provision of forums for exchange of information and experience, and joint activities to address common development priorities in PFM across the region.
* The managers of long term PFM reform initiatives need access to ad hoc peer, impartial expert advice. SAFE TF can provide this for countries which do not have alternative access to this level of expertise (e.g. through a twinning arrangement).

***Pillar I: Assessment of PFM status.***

* Support to government-led reviews of PFM arrangements using standard international PEFA measurement framework or related diagnostic and analytical tools;
* Analysis of PFM status by skilled professionals using PEFA or related methodology;
* Preparation and dissemination of reports on financial management performance.

***Pillar II: Support for PFM reform management.***

* Research, analysis and design of PFM reform action plan by government, in consultation with other development partners;
* Developing networks within governments to implement reforms relating to one or more aspects of the PEFA framework;
* Research to obtain deeper understanding of the results of diagnostic assessments, as well as identification and design of actions required to address weaknesses;
* Detailed analysis of specific PFM areas of importance or concern and development of action plans to address concerns or build on achievements.

# Deadline for Applications

Applications will be open until **9 February 2018**.

Decisions on successful proposals will be made by late-March 2018 by the Program Steering Committee after which successful beneficiaries will be notified.

# Project Proposal Form

Please complete this form in its entirety, including ANNEXES.



# Submission of Project Proposals

Project proposals should be submitted to the SAFE Secretariat by email to [Xiomara Morel](mailto:Xmorel@worldbank.org) and copying [Jamie Lazaro](mailto:jlazaro@worldbank.org).

# Further information:

Xiomara Morel or Jamie Lazaro

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1. This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)