



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Balkans Forward Foundation

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this Equal Opportunities Policy is to ensure that Balkans Forward Foundation (“the Foundation”) promotes fairness, inclusion, and equal access to opportunities in its work, decision-making, recruitment, partnerships, and public engagement.

The Foundation is committed to creating an environment in which individuals are assessed and supported on the basis of merit, potential, and relevant circumstances, and not excluded because of personal characteristics or structural barriers.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all areas of the Foundation’s work, including recruitment, engagement of consultants and experts, internships, volunteering, internal development, access to activities, partnerships, events, training, communications, and public-facing programmes.

It applies to all individuals acting on behalf of or engaging with the Foundation, including Board members, staff, consultants, volunteers, applicants, participants, and partners.

3. Principles

The Foundation is committed to ensuring that opportunities are open, fair, and accessible.

This includes promoting equal treatment, recognising structural disadvantage, and taking reasonable steps to remove barriers that may prevent full participation.

Equal opportunity does not mean treating everyone identically regardless of context. It means ensuring that people are not unfairly excluded or disadvantaged and that relevant differences in need, access, and lived experience are taken seriously.

4. Areas of Application

The Foundation will seek to apply equal opportunity principles in recruitment and engagement, access to professional development, participation in programmes and events, selection of speakers and experts, partnership-building, communication practices, and organisational decision-making.

Where relevant and proportionate, the Foundation will also consider accessibility, language, format, timing, location, and other practical factors that may affect participation.

5. Inclusion and Diversity

The Foundation values diversity of background, experience, identity, and perspective.

It recognises that individuals and communities do not start from the same position and that meaningful inclusion sometimes requires active effort, outreach, adaptation, or support.

The Foundation will strive to create spaces and processes in which people from different backgrounds can participate meaningfully and with dignity.

6. Responsibility

All persons acting on behalf of the Foundation share responsibility for supporting equal opportunities in practice.

Managers and decision-makers have an additional responsibility to ensure that policies, procedures, and decisions are fair, proportionate, and inclusive.

7. Monitoring and Review

The Foundation may periodically review its practices, participation patterns, and decision-making processes in order to identify barriers, improve inclusion, and strengthen fairness.

Where appropriate, lessons learned may inform future organisational practice.

8. Relationship with Other Policies

This policy should be read together with the Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy, Recruitment and Selection Policy, Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy, and other relevant Foundation policies.

9. Review of the Policy

This policy shall be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to reflect organisational learning, legal standards, and good practice.