

3rd Open Call for submission of Grant Applications Fund for Bilateral Relations

within the framework of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021

The Ministry of Finance – the National Focal Point for the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 (hereinafter referred to as „NFP”) announces on **18 June 2020 the third Open Call** for submission of Grant Applications for bilateral initiatives under the **Fund for Bilateral Relations** (hereinafter referred to as „the Fund”) within the framework of EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021.

Grant Applications may be submitted continuously from the date of the announcement of the Open Call until 17 June 2021 or until its total allocation is used.

The total amount available for the 3rd Open Call is **400 000 EUR (10 806 800 CZK)**¹.

I. Scope of the Fund

The **Fund** was established to strengthen bilateral relations between the Donor states (Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein) and the Czech Republic. The **Fund** serves as a flexible source of financial support for a wide range of initiatives of mutual interest both for Czech entities and for entities from the Donor states.

II. Eligible applicants and partners

Any entity, public or private, commercial or non-commercial and non-governmental organisations, established as a legal person (in the Czech Republic or in the Donor states) is considered eligible applicant as well as eligible partner.

In the 3rd Open Call, the eligibility of the Donor states applicants and partners is restricted to **Norway only**. The optional partnership with other Donor states entities (i.e. Icelandic and/or Liechtenstein) is possible only in case there is a **mandatory Norwegian partner** involved.

Each applicant is allowed to submit **only 1 Grant Application** in the 3rd Open Call (max. 2 in the case of universities, while 1 Grant Application can be submitted per faculty).

The Programme Operators of the Programmes within the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 are not eligible applicants.

¹ The allocation may be increased during the Open Call based on the decision of the JCBF. In that case, Grant Applications shall be further assessed according to the submitted order.

In order to achieve the overall objective of strengthened bilateral relations, all initiatives must be implemented in bilateral cooperation between the Czech Republic and Norway.

III. Eligible initiatives and grant amount

The range of activities eligible for support under the **Fund** is broad, including **any** initiatives leading to strengthening bilateral relations, enhancing cooperation and improving mutual knowledge and understanding between the Czech Republic and Donor states, **provided that both the applicant and the partner(s) are actively involved in planning of the initiative and its implementation.**

Examples of activities that can be carried out under the **Fund**:

- workshops, meetings, visits and conferences, seminars on topics of common interest;
- study tours and visits to Norway² and/or to the Czech Republic;
- capacity building and short term training;
- data collection, reports, studies and publications;
- exhibitions, performance or other specific cultural and artistic activities (e.g. concert, theater performance);
- information campaigns and promotional material;
- technical cooperation and exchange of experts;
- secondments and internships.

This list is non-exhaustive and is meant just as an example of possible activities.

Generally, the activities shall have a **clear bilateral profile** and serve the purpose of strengthening bilateral relations between Norway³ and the Czech Republic.

Initiatives may not generate a profit. If an initiative generates income as a part of its operation, the use of this income shall be described in the Grant Application.

The maximum grant amount is 20 000 EUR (540 340 CZK); no minimum grant amount is set. The **Fund** covers **100 % of the eligible costs.** Final beneficiaries are not required to provide co-financing for the initiatives. Management costs related to coordination and implementation of the initiative shall not exceed 10 % of the initiative budget.

In the 3rd Open Call from the **Fund**, **both Czech and Norwegian applicants shall draw up a budget in CZK. The monthly exchange rate of the European Central Bank (ECB)⁴ valid in the month of announcement of this open call – 27.017 CZK/EUR – shall be used for calculation of planned expenditures.** For conversions from other currencies (i.e. NOK etc.) to CZK, it is also recommended to use the monthly exchange rate of the ECB valid in the month of preparation of the application.

² The partnership with other Donor states entities (i.e. Icelandic and/or Liechtenstein) is possible only in case there is a mandatory Norwegian partner involved.

³ The partnership with other Donor states entities (i.e. Icelandic and/or Liechtenstein) is possible only in case there is a mandatory Norwegian partner involved.

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/infoeuro/index_en.cfm

Funding will be provided to FB **ex-post** depending on the amount of approved incurred eligible expenditures, or in a form of **ex-ante** advance payment up to 90 % of planned eligible expenditures and subsequent interim/final payment based on the amount of approved incurred eligible expenditures. The applicant asks for the advance payment in the Grant Application, the actual incurred eligible expenditure are reported in the interim / final monitoring report. Advance payment is not relevant for Organizational Unit of the State/State Contributory Organization, in line with the Act no. 218/2000 coll., on budgetary rules.

IV. Eligible expenditures and their reimbursement

Eligible expenditures are those actually incurred within the initiative between the first and final date of eligibility. **No expenditures incurred before the approval of the Grant Application shall be eligible.** The eligibility of expenditure starts on the day of the issue of the Approval letter by the NFP. The expenditures are eligible up to 3 months after the final date for achievement of the purpose of the initiative (initiative completion). In duly justified cases, extension of the eligibility period upon the completion of the initiative may be requested.

From the content point of view, there are following types of eligible expenditures:

- costs associated with study tours and organization and/or co-organization of workshops, conferences, meetings, visits, seminars, secondments and internships (e.g. international travel costs; daily lump sum including accommodation, local transport, meals and travel insurance; local business trip expenditures; admission fees);
- expert fees;
- expenditures for feasibility studies, costs of preparation of analyses and documents;
- interpretation and translation of working materials;
- expenditures associated with promotional and informational activities for strengthening bilateral relations;
- external consultancy fees;
- expenditures for the report certifying the costs claimed within the initiative proving the eligibility of expenditures within the monitoring report;
- other necessary expenses directly related to bilateral initiative (must be described in the Grant Application).

Eligible expenditures, including their thresholds/restrictions, are described in detail in Annex 1 of the ***Guidelines for Applicants and Final Beneficiaries from the Bilateral Fund*** (hereinafter referred to as „***Guidelines***”).

V. Procedure for submitting Grant Applications

All Grant Applications shall be prepared in English and submitted **exclusively on-line** via IT system **CEDR** (accessible through <https://cedr-fm.mfcr.cz/CEDRNFBFNU>).

For Czech applicants, a **qualified certificate** with an **electronic signature** is needed for the registration of an applicant in the IS CEDR and submission of a Grant Application. For applicants from Norway, a qualified certificate is not required for the registration/ submission of a Grant Application. The details about the IS CEDR registration and other technical prerequisites can be found at the IS CEDR main page and in the **Guidelines**.

Grant Applications, including all mandatory annexes, shall be filled in, signed and submitted at least **2 months before** the planned start date of the initiative. However, it is recommended to submit Grant Applications at least 3 months before the planned start date of the initiative.

The Grant Applications are assessed **in the order given by the date of their submission** (*First In First Served* model). If a Grant Application fails to meet any formal requirement, the applicant may be asked by the NFP, via the electronic message board in the IS CEDR, to clarify, amend or add information/annexes necessary for further evaluation of the Joint Committee for Bilateral Funds (hereinafter referred to as „**JCBF**“).

A Grant Application is considered complete when it fulfils all requirements (see the criteria in the Annex 4 of the **Guidelines**). Following the administrative and eligibility review by the NFP, the Grant Application is forwarded for evaluation to the JCBF.

Relevance to strengthening bilateral relations and fulfilling the principles of **economy, efficiency and effectiveness** are selection criteria which are assessed by the **JCBF**. Initiatives shall contribute to improved mutual knowledge / expertise and understanding between Donor states and the Czech Republic and they shall create new opportunities for establishing of a new partnership and/or enhancing the existing cooperation.

Once the funds available under this Open Call are allocated, no more Grant Applications shall be assessed within this Call.

There is no legal claim to obtain a grant.

Please read carefully the detailed procedures for submission of Grant Applications and reimbursement conditions described in the **Guidelines** which are available at the websites of the NFP www.eegrants.cz/en and www.norwaygrants.cz/en.

VI. Further information

Detailed information, procedures and requirements are described in the **Guidelines** and its Annexes.

- Any general queries concerning the Open Call (e.g. submission of the Grant Application, conditions of the Call, the method of appraisal and awarding of the grant) may be sent by e-mail: czp@mfcz.cz. Replies will be sent by e-mail within 10 days. If urgent, questions may be addressed also to telephone number + 420 257 044 564. Please note that only written answers are binding.
- Technical queries related to the use of CEDR may be sent to hot-line_ehp@asd-software.cz.
- Questions concerning the assistance with search for Norwegian partners may be addressed to emb.prague@mfa.no or telephone number + 420 257 111 500.

Based on the assessment of the implementation of the **Fund** and after mutual agreement with the donors, conditions of the Open Call for proposals may be revised. Information on each revision will be always published at www.eeagrants.cz/en and www.norwaygrants.cz/en, at the same time when the revision enters into force.

Please note that there shall be also other open calls targeted at bilateral cooperation under the individual Programmes within the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021. The applicants are recommended to visit www.eeagrants.cz/en and www.norwaygrants.cz/en for further information on opportunities for bilateral cooperation in specific programme areas.