

1st 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 **31 August 2018 the first Open Call** for submission of grant applications for bilateral initiatives under the **Fund for Bilateral Relations** (hereinafter referred to as „Fund”) within the framework of EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021.

Applications may be submitted continuously from the date of the announcement of the Open Call until 30 August 2019 or until its total allocation is used.

The total amount available for the 1st Open Call is 250 000 EUR (6 406 000 CZK).

I. Scope of 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) are considered eligible applicants as well as eligible partners.

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

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

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 the Donor states, **provided that both the final beneficiary 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 the Donor States and/or to the Czech Republic;
- capacity building and short term training;
- data collection, reports, studies and publications;
- campaigns, exhibitions 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 the Donor states 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 50 000 EUR (1 281 200 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.

In the 1st Open Call from the **Fund**, **both Czech and Donor state applicants shall fill in the budget in CZK. The monthly exchange rate of the European Central Bank (ECB)¹ valid in the month of announcement of this open call – 25.624 CZK/EUR – shall be used for calculation of planned expenditures.** For conversions from other currencies (i.e. NOK, ISK, CHF) to EUR/CZK, it is also recommended to use the monthly exchange rate of the ECB valid in the month of preparation of the application.

Funding will be provided to Final beneficiaries **ex-ante**² (up to 100 %) or, in case an advance payment is not provided/provided in lower amount, **ex-post** (in CZK to Czech Final beneficiaries; in EUR to Donor state Final beneficiaries) depending on the amount of provided advance payment.

The possibility of an 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.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/infoeuro/index_en.cfm

² Applicants are entitled to submit a justified request for an advance payment as a part of the grant application covering up to the 100% of planned expenditures of the initiative. The amount of the advance payment requested in the application can be reduced by the Joint Committee for Bilateral Funds.

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, prolongation of the eligibility after the implementation of the initiative can be requested.

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

- travel and accommodation costs associated with study tours and organization and/or co-organization of workshops, conferences, meetings, visits, seminars, secondments and internships;
- per-diem expenses/subsistence allowance;
- expert fees;
- costs of feasibility studies, costs of preparation of analyses and documents;
- interpretation and translation of working materials;
- costs associated with promotional and informational activities for strengthening bilateral relations;
- external consultancy fees;
- travel health insurance, cancellation insurance for flight/railway/bus ticket/s;
- cost of the audit report proving the eligibility of expenditures within the monitoring report (relevant for donor state applicants only);
- other necessary expenses directly related to bilateral initiative (must be described in the application and approved).

Eligible expenditures, including their limits/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 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 an application. For applicants from the Donor states, a qualified certificate is not required for the registration/ submission of an 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 **1 month before** the planned start date of the initiative. In case an advance payment is requested, the applicant is advised to submit their grant application at least 6 weeks before the first expenditures are to be paid.

The submitted applications are assessed **in order of the date of submission** of a grant application (*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 notice 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 completion of the administrative and eligibility review by the NFP, the application is forwarded for evaluation to the JCBF.

Relevance of 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 the donor states and 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 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 and www.norwaygrants.cz.

VI. Further information

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

Questions may be sent by e-mail: czp@mfcz.cz. Replies will be sent by e-mail within 10 days.
Technical queries related to the use of CEDR may be sent to hot-line_ehp@asd-software.cz.

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.eegrants.cz and www.norwaygrants.cz, at the same time when the revision enters into force.