



GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS AND PROJECT PROMOTERS

**Bilateral Fund for Justice, Human Rights,
Good Governance and Health Programmes**

EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021

Third Edition, Applicable as from: 15 May 2024

Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic

www.eeagrants.cz

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List of Abbreviations

BA	Bilateral Fund for Justice, Human Rights, Good Governance and Health Programmes / Fund for Bilateral Ambitions
BF	Bilateral Fund
CC	Cooperation Committee
DPP	Donor Programme Partner
EEA	European Economic Area
IPO	International Partner Organisation
IS CEDR	Information system CEDR
PP	Project promoter
NFP	National Focal Point
PDI	Pre-defined initiative
PrgP	Programme Partner
SSTP	Small Scale Tender Procedure
PO	Programme Operator (Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic)

I. Introduction

Objective and aim of the Bilateral Fund

The overall objective of the **EEA and Norway Grants** is to contribute to reducing economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area (hereinafter referred to as „**EEA**“) and to **strengthening bilateral cooperation between donor and beneficiary states** through financial contributions in identified priority sectors.

The Fund for Bilateral Relations (hereinafter referred to as "**BF**") was established under the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 to **strengthen bilateral relations between Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway** (hereinafter referred to as "**the Donor States**") and the **Czech Republic**.

BF represents a flexible source of funding for a wide range of initiatives of common interest with the aim of establishing or strengthening cooperation between the Czech Republic and the Donor States. The total allocation of the BF is divided into an allocation managed by the Joint Committee for Bilateral Funds and specific allocations managed by the Programme Operator - the Ministry of Finance (hereinafter referred to as the "**PO**") under the Bilateral Fund for Justice, Human Rights, Good Governance and Health Programmes (hereinafter referred to as the "**Fund for Bilateral Ambitions**" or "**BA**").

The Guidelines for Applicants and Project Promoters of the Bilateral Fund for Justice, Human Rights, Good Governance and Health Programmes (hereinafter referred to as the "**Guidelines**") are intended for the administration of bilateral cooperation under the above-mentioned Programmes, for entities active in the respective Programme areas¹, including project promoters of the projects supported by a grant under these Programmes, unless otherwise specified or determined by the PO of the respective BA call.

Legal framework

The procedures set out in this document are laid down in accordance with the Regulation on the implementation of the EEA/Norway Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021 and the Guidelines for Bilateral Cooperation adopted by the Financial Mechanisms Committee. The Guidelines provides applicants and project promoters (hereinafter referred to as "the PP") with essential instructions for the elaboration of grant applications for funding short-term projects in the form of bilateral initiatives and information on the procedures for their administration. The Guidelines sets out general

¹ The individual programme areas under which an initiative can be supported are described in more detail in the call text of the relevant programme. In the case of so-called pre-defined initiatives (hereinafter referred to as "PDIs"), applicants / final beneficiaries for each PDI are nominated by the PO or PrgP (if relevant for the programme) or other relevant stakeholders (e.g. DPP, IPO, embassies of donor countries).

procedures. The specific conditions relevant to a particular programme are always specified in the relevant call.²

The Operator of BA is the PO who is responsible for managing and supervising the use of BA under his programme. The BA allocations for the funding of initiatives under individual programmes are set in Memoranda of Understanding, which lay down general conditions for the implementation of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021. The grants awarded under BA are administered by the PO through the so-called pre-defined initiatives³ (hereinafter referred to as “PDI”) and calls for proposals⁴. Specific amounts allocated to BA for individual programmes are set out in respective calls published at www.eeagrants.cz a www.norwaygrants.cz.

Bilateral initiatives

Bilateral initiatives (hereinafter referred to as '**initiatives**') supported by a BA grants are one of the ways of strengthening bilateral cooperation between the Czech Republic and Donor States. Initiatives are **projects consisting of a set of one-off or short-term activities**, which are primarily aimed at:

- strengthening the bilateral dimension of the programme and promoting future bilateral cooperation;
- seeking partners for bilateral projects and for joint preparation of bilateral project proposals in the period prior to and during open calls for grant applications⁵;
- establishing and deepening cooperation, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practices between Czech entities and entities in Donor States or international organisations⁶.

Other activities leading to mutual enrichment and strengthening of cooperation between entities from the Czech Republic and Donor States are also supported. The basic condition is the **active involvement of both the applicant and each partner from Donor States in the preparation and implementation of the initiative**. Active participation in the implementation of the initiative means active involvement in key joint activities.

² In the case of PDIs, the requirements and procedures will be specified by the PO within the working communication with the applicant / PP.

³ PDIs drafts listed in the Concept Note or PDI drafts submitted to the Cooperation Committee (hereinafter referred to as „**CC**“) are approved by the CC of the relevant programme, if relevant, or approved by the PO, before the actual submission of the grant application. PDIs applicants are also requested to follow these Guidelines unless the procedure is otherwise specified by the PO in its communication with the applicant. In the case of the applicant and PPs of a PDI is the PO or the PrgP, the administrative procedures shall be applied as set out in Chapter XVIII.

⁴ Grant applications for bilateral initiatives under the relevant calls may be submitted by eligible applicants as defined in Chapter III of the Guidelines.

⁵ Donor partner search is supported in the early implementation phases of the Justice, Human Rights, Good Governance and Health Programmes. These activities are no longer supported in calls opened in 2024.

⁶ The involvement of international organisations in bilateral initiatives in the form of initiative partner is reserved for PDIs and is subject to individual approval by the PO. Partnerships with international organisations are not supported under BA calls. However, it is possible to involve international organisations in a bilateral initiative under BA calls in the form of external bodies for ad-hoc cooperation within a specific key activity. The eligibility of cooperation with an international organisation and any associated costs in the detailed budget of the initiative will be assessed by the PO on an individual basis considering also brief description of their role in the implementation of the initiative in Chapter 2 of the grant application.

II. Grant Amounts

The minimum and maximum grant amounts are set in the relevant call⁷. The BA covers **100 % of the eligible expenditures of the initiative** (rounded down to the nearest CZK). PPs are not required to co-finance their initiatives. Any planned expenditures related to the initiative to be covered by sources other than the grant shall not be included in the grant application, i.e. the total planned expenditures of the initiative must be equal to the grant requested.

III. Eligible Applicants

All entities, public or private, commercial or non-commercial and non-governmental organisations established as legal entities in the Czech Republic are considered eligible applicants. Eligible applicants for grant support from BA are entities whose intention is to implement initiatives in cooperation with entities from Donor States and/or international organisations⁸. The eligible applicants are set in the respective call for proposals of the programme or in the PO's invitation to submit a grant application for the PDI (if applicable). The PO may limit the eligible applicants to specific entities (e.g. only promoters of the projects supported by a grant from specific calls of the programme).⁹

IV. Eligible Partners

The applicant is required to submit the grant application **in partnership with at least one entity from Donor State** established as a **legal entity**. Natural persons from Donor States are not eligible partners of a bilateral initiative. The eligible partners of the initiatives will be specified in the call for proposals of the relevant programme or PO's invitation to submit a grant application for the implementation of the PDI. The applicant must follow the territorial eligibility of partners, i.e. whether entities from all three Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) are eligible partners in a

⁷ For PDIs the maximum amount of grant support will be determined by the PO and communicated to the applicant.

⁸ An international organisation is eligible bilateral initiative partner within a PDI and is subject to individual approval by the PO. Partnerships with international organisations are not supported in the framework of BA calls. Partnerships with international organisations are not supported under BA calls. However, it is possible to involve international organisations in a bilateral initiative under BA calls in the form of external bodies for ad-hoc cooperation within a specific key activity. The eligibility of cooperation with an international organisation and any associated costs in the detailed budget of the initiative will be assessed by the PO on an individual basis considering also brief description of their role in the implementation of the initiative in Chapter 2 of the grant application.

⁹ As for PDIs, the applicants / PPs are nominated by the PO or the PrgP (if relevant for the programme) or by other relevant stakeholders (e.g. DPP, IPO, embassies of donor countries).

given call, or whether eligibility is limited to entities from Norway only¹⁰. **Entities from the Czech Republic** may become partners of a bilateral initiative only if the call explicitly allows it.

In addition to the territorial eligibility given by the country of origin, the partner from the Donor State must fulfil the condition of active involvement in the preparation and implementation of the initiative. Active participation in the implementation of the initiative means that the partner must be involved in key joint activities. The applicant shall support the active involvement of the partner in the preparation and implementation of the initiative with **due evidence of the established partnership**, e.g. previous email communication with the partner of the initiative, a letter of intent to implement a bilateral initiative, a partnership agreement or other similar document.

For the purpose of implementing the initiative, the PO recommends concluding a partnership agreement that clearly defines the responsibilities of the partners, sets out the terms of cooperation and ensures administration of the initiative in compliance with the BA rules. The points below summarise the minimum recommended content of a partnership agreement. However, the decision on the conclusion of an agreement and its content is entirely at the discretion of the contracting parties:

- definition of the subject matter and objectives of the agreement;
- the roles and responsibilities of the partners;
- a work plan with a clear allocation of partners' capacities and resources;
- determination of eligible expenditure, definition of the financial contribution of each partner with regard to the individual budget items in the detailed budget of a grant application; financial flows between partners and payment terms including deadlines (taking into account the provisions of the Guidelines and Annex 1);
- the obligation to keep each other informed of circumstances which have/may have an impact on the implementation of the initiative or the achievement of its objective; the obligation to provide access to all relevant documents;
- the relevant provisions of the legal act awarding the grant, which require the collaboration of the partner (publicity requirements, record keeping, provision of information for monitoring and statistical purposes, cooperation in audits or controls);
- entry into force and duration of the partnership contract, conditions for its termination.

¹⁰ The eligibility of partners generally depends on the funding source of the relevant programme under which the call is opened. Unless otherwise specified in the call, for BA of the programmes supported by the EEA Grants 2014-2021 (Good Governance and Health Programmes), eligible partners are entities from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. For BA of programmes supported by the Norway Grants 2014-2021 (Human Rights and Justice Programmes) the eligible partners are entities from Norway. Eligibility of partners from Donor States for PDI will be communicated to applicants by the PO.

V. Supported Initiatives and Eligible Activities

BA represents a flexible source of funding for a wide range of activities of common interest that lead to the establishment of new or strengthening of existing bilateral relations between entities from the Czech Republic and Donor State and to the expansion of bilateral cooperation.

Areas of support generally relate to:

- establishing and strengthening bilateral cooperation;
- finding partners for projects to be implemented in partnership with entities from Donor States during the drafting period of the programmes, i.e. before or during the preparation of the grant application, and joint project preparation in bilateral partnership⁵;
- dissemination, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, know-how, experience and best practices between Czech entities and entities from Donor States and/or international organisations⁸;
- raising awareness of bilateral/multilateral relations between the Czech Republic and Donor States.

Examples of activities that can be implemented within an initiative and supported by the BA:

- study trips and missions, visits to Donor States and/or the Czech Republic with the aim of establishing or deepening cooperation, sharing information, technology, good practice, experience and know-how;
- workshops, meetings, conferences, seminars on topics of common interest;
- capacity building and short-term training;
- secondments, internships and exchanges of experts;
- data collection and sharing, elaboration of studies, documentation and publications;
- promotional and information activities to strengthen bilateral partnerships.

This list is not comprehensive and is only intended as an example of possible activities.

The active involvement of both the applicant and the donor partner in the preparation and implementation of the initiative is a prerequisite for its approval. Active participation in implementation means active involvement in the implementation of key joint activities. The mere presence of participants from Donor States at an event organised by the applicant (e.g. a conference) is not considered sufficient to meet the definition of a bilateral initiative.

A more detailed specification of the supported initiatives in terms of their content (in particular with regard to the aim of the programme under which the call is launched) and any specification of particular ineligible activities is always provided in the call¹¹.

The initiative must not generate profit. If the implementation of the initiative generates income, the use of such income has to be described in the grant application and in the monitoring report afterwards.

VI. Eligible Expenditures and Their Reimbursement

Expenditures incurred during the implementation of an initiative and meeting the following criteria are generally considered eligible:

- they are **incurred in accordance with the aim and objective** of the bilateral initiative as defined in the grant application;
- they are **necessary** for the implementation of the bilateral initiative and have a **direct link** to it;
- they are **proportionate, respecting the 3E principle**;
 - Economy - the use of resources to achieve the specified results (indicators to be fulfilled) with the least possible expenditures while maintaining an appropriate quality.
 - Effectiveness - the use of funds to achieve the maximum scope, quality and benefit of an initiative, given the amount of funds spent.
 - Efficiency - the optimal use of funds to achieve the aim and objective of an initiative.
- are recorded in initiative's detailed budget (see standardized form in Annex 2B);
- are identifiable and verifiable, in particular through their entry in the accounting records of the PP and the initiative partner(s);
- are determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country in which the PP and/or the initiative partner is established and according to generally accepted accounting principles.

The eligibility of expenditure is further determined by (a) the **content** and (b) the **timeframe**:

a) Content perspective:

In terms of content, the following types of expenditures are generally considered eligible:

- travel costs related to the secondment of staff for short-term study trips, visits, internships, workshops, conferences, meetings, seminars and other similar events (e.g. international

¹¹ For a PDI, the PO may determine specific activities to be supported and may also set ineligible activities in addition to the instructions in Guidelines. Furthermore, the draft PDI is subject to assessment and approval by the CC (if relevant for the programme) or approval by the PO.

- travel costs, lump sum for per-diems¹², costs of domestic missions, participation fees, insurance for cancellation fees for flights, train/bus tickets and other related costs);
- remuneration of experts;
 - analyses, studies and other technical documents;
 - interpretation¹³ and translation of materials;
 - costs related to organizing conferences, seminars, workshops or other events specified in a grant application (conference rooms and technical equipment rental, catering and other related costs);
 - costs related to publicity and awareness raising activities to increase the visibility of the initiative;
 - external consultancy and other professional services;
 - costs of audit report proving the eligibility of the expenditure of the Donor State partner;
 - other costs directly linked to the initiative (to be described in the grant application).

Most commonly used per-diems rates in bilateral initiatives:

Iceland: EUR 349 / night

Lichtenstein: EUR 348 / night

Norway: EUR 275 / night

Czech Republic: EUR 230 / night.

Rates for all countries are specified in Annex 10 of the Guidelines.

It is also advisable to include „cancellation insurance” when purchasing tickets for use in case of an unexpected event that prevents the project member from travelling. As costs of air tickets, train/bus tickets and accommodation vary over time, it is not required to follow Small Scale Procurement Procedure Guidelines. Purchases may be made by orders and subsequent invoices or by direct purchase supported by appropriate invoice. However, the principle of economy must always be respected.

Eligible expenditures, including their **financial limits**, are set in **Annex 1**. Eligible expenditures may be further limited in call by the PO. If a specific expenditure is not regulated by these Guidelines or Annex 1, the applicant / PP shall follow the Guidelines of the National Focal Point for Eligible Expenditures under EEA/Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021.

The applicant / PP is also obliged to follow the **PO's Guidelines on Small Scale Procurement Procedures under EEA/Norway Financial Mechanism 2014-2021** (hereinafter referred to as the "PO's Guidelines on Small Scale Procurement Procedures ") when preparing and implementing the

¹² International travel costs and per-diems must be calculated in the detailed budget of the initiative as flat rates. Per-diems represent a flat rate to cover the costs of accommodation, local transport, meals and travel insurance. The per-diem rates are set out in Annex 11 of the Guidelines. The number of per-diems in the detailed budget is determined according to the number of nights spent abroad. For details, see Annex 1 of the Guidelines.

¹³ Interpreting costs are eligible especially when conferences with large number of participants are organised in the Czech Republic in cooperation with a partner from a Donor State. For bilateral meetings, workshops or seminars with direct interaction between the applicant / PP and the partner, interpretation is not supported in principle. The necessity to purchase interpretation services for these cases must be duly justified in the detailed budget of the initiative.

initiative. PO's Guidelines on Small Scale Procurement Procedures are available online at <https://www.eeagrants.cz/cs/zakladni-informace/zakladni-dokumenty/pokyny>.

b) Timeframe perspective

From timeframe perspective, expenditures are eligible if they were **incurred and paid during the period of eligibility**, i.e. between the start and end dates of the eligibility of the initiative's expenditures¹⁴. These dates are set out in the approval letter awarding a grant (hereinafter referred to as the "**approval letter**") issued by the PO if the grant application is approved, and subsequently in the legal act awarding a grant (hereinafter referred to as the "**legal act**"). **Expenditures incurred before the grant application is approved will not be considered eligible.** Neither the performance of the contract nor the related payments may be made before the initial date of eligibility of expenditures. The contract with the selected contractor may be signed before the approval of the grant application, provided that the contract will be performed after the approval of the grant.

Expenditures are eligible up to 1 month after the final date for achieving the objective of the initiative or completion of the initiative, but no later than 15 April 2025. The final date of eligibility of expenditures is always set in the approval letter and the legal act.

PO's note: eligibility of expenditures for a missed trip of the initiative participant

1) Direct individual expenditures of a participant - travel, accommodation, participation fee

Expenditures related to a participant's missed trip to bilateral/multilateral events (e.g. travel, accommodation, participation fee) are considered ineligible due to the unfulfilled purpose of the participant's travel. When purchasing tickets, it is advisable to include cancellation insurance allowing the ticket to be refunded in the event of an unexpected circumstances preventing the person from travelling. Cancellation insurance is an eligible expense, but not the expenditures of the cancelled ticket. It is also recommended that PPs book accommodation allowing cancellation at short notice before arrival. Expenses for accommodation not implemented are also ineligible.

2) Expenditures of the event organiser - refreshments, travel and accommodation of invited participants

For events with large number of participants organised by a PP (e.g. conferences) the PO may, in exceptional cases, consider eligible the organiser's expenditures for the participants who did not attend the event (e.g. travel costs, accommodation and refreshments). In such cases, the PO will assess how the PP dealt with the situation also with respect to the providers of the relevant services (e.g. hotel, travel agent) and whether the PP has complied with the principle of economy. PO's assessment of the situation will be individual on the basis of the PP's explanation and relevant documents.

Reimbursement of expenditures

¹⁴ In exceptional cases, an expenditure incurred in the last month of the period of eligibility of expenditures and paid no later than 30 days after the final date of eligibility of expenditures, but no later than 15 April 2025, is also considered eligible.

Ex-post reimbursement of 100 % of the eligible expenditures incurred and/or eligible flat-rate expenditures in CZK is applied. Expenditures are covered by the PP from its own resources during the implementation of the initiative and reimbursed by the PO in post-completion period. The PP submits to the PO a **final monitoring report including a payment request** for approval and reimbursement of the expenditures incurred. The detailed procedure for submitting the monitoring report including the payment request is described in Chapter XII.

If an **advance payment** may be requested within the grant application, this possibility is indicated in the relevant **call** or in the PO's invitation to submit a grant application for the implementation of a PDI. If advance payment is allowed, the applicant shall follow procedure for its payment and use described in Chapter XI.

VII. Preparation of a Grant Application

During elaboration of a grant application the applicant shall follow **instructions in Annex 1 of a call for proposal**. In the case of a PDI development, the applicant shall follow instructions provided by the PO in his invitation to submit a grant application.

VIII. Submission of a Grant Application

A grant application may be submitted under BA open call or following an invitation of the PO to submit a grant application for the implementation of a PDI.

A. Grant applications under the BA open call

Eligible applicants shall submit grant applications to PO's databox (ID: **xzeaauv**), unless otherwise specified.¹⁵ The applicant shall submit a grant application within the time period specified in the call so that the assessment and eventual approval of the application can take place before the planned start of its implementation (see point 2 below). The maximum number of applications that an applicant may submit is set in the call.

The procedure for submitting a grant application:

The grant application in PDF format, **signed by a qualified electronic signature** of the applicant's statutory body or an authorised person, must be submitted together with the required annexes in accordance with the procedure set out in the call and in these Guidelines.

¹⁵ Instructions for submission of a grant application are specified in a call.

The grant application must be submitted to the PO at least **2 months before the planned start of the initiative**, unless otherwise specified by the PO. In exceptional and duly justified cases, a grant application may be submitted within a shorter period than the above deadline. The PO cannot guarantee that in the event of a late submission of a grant application the assessment procedure and eventual grant application approval will be completed before the planned start of the initiative implementation as indicated in the application.

B. Grant applications for PDIs

A draft PDI, including any conditions, shall be approved by the CC of the relevant programme¹⁶, prior to the submission of the grant application. If CC's non-objection statement to draft PDI is available, the applicant is invited by the PO to elaborate and submit a grant application.

Unless otherwise specified, the applicant shall submit the complete grant application to PO's databox (ID: **xzeaauv**).¹⁷ The procedure for submitting a grant application for a PDI is the same as for a grant application under the BA open call (see above).

IX. Evaluation of a Grant Application

Grant applications are **assessed by the PO** solely on the basis of the information provided in the grant application and its annexes.

A. Evaluation of grant applications submitted under BA call

The PO assesses grant applications against the evaluation criteria set out in the relevant call.

1. Assessment of formal requirements and eligibility:

The PO verifies that the grant application meets the **formal and eligibility criteria for the applicant and partner** set in the call. Failure to comply with the formal and/or eligibility criteria, which cannot be remedied, will lead to automatic rejection of the grant application. If deficiencies are found in the criteria, which can be remedied, the applicant will be informed and invited to make the necessary adjustments.

During the evaluation of the grant application, the PO may approach the Donor Country Programme Partner (hereinafter referred to as „**DPP**“) / International Partner Organisation (hereinafter referred to as „**IPO**“) / Programme Partner (hereinafter referred to as „**PrgP**“) or the relevant Embassy of the Donor State for an confirmation that partner stated in the grant application exists and meets the expected professional qualifications (eligibility of the initiative partner).

2. Content evaluation

¹⁶ If the non-objection statement of the CC is not relevant for the programme, the grant application for PDI is subject to the approval by the PO.

¹⁷ Instructions for the submission of the grant application are communicated to the applicant in PO's invitation to submit a grant application.

If the grant application meets the formal and eligibility criteria, the PO proceed with quality evaluation in accordance with the substantive criteria set in the relevant call. This evaluation is focused on:

- the quality of the description of the initiative: the description of the initiative in the grant application is complete, comprehensible and complies with the requirements set out in Annex 1 of the Call and the instructions in the grant application form.
- the relevance of the bilateral cooperation between the Czech and Donor State entities: each Donor State partner and possible Czech partner is actively involved in the preparation and implementation of the initiative and ensures the achievement of the aim and objective of the initiative through joint activities with the applicant;
- the feasibility of the initiative: the timeframe of the activities is realistic, reflecting the interconnection and content of the individual activities;
- the cost-effectiveness of the initiative: the planned expenditures under the initiative are formally eligible, properly justified and necessary to achieve the objective and purpose. The amount allocated to the individual budget items is reasonable, respecting the 3E principle, and corresponds to the standard costs in given place and time.

The length of the evaluation process may be affected by the capacity of the PO with respect to the total number of grant applications received. Incomplete or poorly elaborated grant applications requiring completion of documentation, additional information, clarification or necessary modifications will prolong the evaluation process. This may lead to a delay in the planned start of the implementation of the approved initiative.

3. Rejection of a grant application for failing to meet the formal and/or eligibility criteria that cannot be remedied

Grant applications, which **failed to meet any of the formal and/or eligibility criteria that cannot be remedied**, will be **rejected** by the PO. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by a grant rejection letter (hereinafter referred to as „rejection letter“) containing the reasons for the rejection. Unsuccessful applicants may appeal within 15 days from the date of receipt of the rejection letter. Within 20 working days after delivering the appeal, the applicant will be informed of the final decision of the PO.

4. Completion of the grant application

If the PO identifies deficiencies that can be remedied during the formal and/or qualitative content assessment, the applicant will be invited to complete the documentation, provide additional information and clarify, amend or supplement existing information in the grant application. The PO specifies the **requirements** for completion of information or documentation, clarification or explanation of the information provided and any other requirements in an **e-mail** sent to the e-mail addresses of the contact persons responsible for the initiative stated in the grant application. The PO set a **reasonable deadline**¹⁸ for the applicant **to comply with the requirements** and provide instructions on how to remedy the deficiencies identified.

¹⁸ The deadline will be set individually according to the number and seriousness of the deficiencies identified and the impact on the evaluation process.

The PO may indicate in the invitation to complete the grant application the possibility of requesting an extension of the deadline for meeting the requirements and remedying the identified shortcomings. At the same time, the PO informs the applicant of the possible impact of the extension of the deadline on the evaluation process of the grant application. If the request for an extension of the deadline is granted, the grant application will be placed at the end of the list of evaluated grant applications. This measure serves to ensure an efficient evaluation and to minimise delays in the assessment of the other grant applications submitted under the call.

If the applicant **fails** to comply with the requirements within the specified deadline, i.e. fails to provide the required documentation, additional information, clarifications, amendments or other requirements necessary to complete the evaluation, the grant application will be **rejected**. Providing **incomplete** additional information, **insufficient** clarification, **failure** to amend the application or comply fully the requirements may result in a **reduction** of the requested grant or **rejection** of the grant application. Failure to comply with the 3E principle (principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness) will lead to a reduction of the requested grant, at the rate set by the PO.

5. Communication on the results of the evaluation - approval/rejection of the grant application

The successful applicant will be notified of the approval of the grant application by means of a grant approval letter (hereinafter referred to as the „**approval letter**“). The approval letter will be delivered to the applicant's databox and will contain also information on the amount of the approved grant and the period of eligibility of the expenditures. Once the successful applicant has been notified by the approval letter, the PO will issue the legal act awarding a grant to the project promoter (see Chapter X below).

In the event of a rejection of the grant application, a legal act rejecting the grant application will be delivered to the unsuccessful applicant, including the reasons for the rejection. This legal act cannot be appealed.

Complaints about the evaluation process can be submitted via the PO's databox (ID: **xzeaauv**). The Po shall examine the complaint and deliver a statement to the complainant within 30 days from the date of receipt of the complaint. The applicant is not legally entitled to the award of the grant.

B. Evaluation of grant applications for a PDI

The PO evaluates an application for a grant for a PDI as follows.

1. Assessment of formal requirements and eligibility:

The PO verifies that the grant application meets the formal and eligibility requirements communicated in PO's invitation for applicant to submit a grant application for the PDI.

2. Content evaluation

The PO undertakes quality evaluation of the content of a grant application for the PDI, assessing the relevance of the submitted initiative to strengthening bilateral relations, including the impact of the initiative towards BA objectives, the quality of the description of the initiative, the feasibility of the initiative and the cost-effectiveness of the initiative.

3. Rejection of a grant application for failing to meet the requirements communicated in PO's invitation to submit grant application

The procedure for the rejection of a grant application for a PDI by the PO corresponds with the procedure for the evaluation of grant applications submitted under the BA call described above under point 3.

4. Completion of a grant application

The procedure for completing an application for a grant for a PDI and eventual rejection of the application for failure to comply with the requirements for completion of information or documentation, clarification or explanation of the information provided and any other requirements is identical to the procedure for the evaluation of grant applications submitted under BA call described above under point 4.

5. Communication on the results of the evaluation - approval/rejection of the grant application

Informing the applicant for a grant for a PDI of the result of the evaluation follows the procedure for the evaluation of grant applications submitted under BA call described above under point 5.

X. Legal Act Awarding the Grant

Approval letter delivered to the grant applicant is followed by a legal act awarding the grant in accordance with Act No 218/2000 Coll., on budgetary rules issued by the PO. The legal act is delivered to the PP's databox. The legal act awarding the grant sets the conditions and rules for the implementation of the initiative.

XI. Advance Payment

Information on the possibility of requesting an advance payment in a grant application is stated in the relevant **call** for proposals or in **PO's invitation to submit a grant application** for the PDI. If

advance payments are allowed and the approved grant application requests an advance payment, the amount of the advance payment (**maximum 60 % of the approved grant amount**) will be transferred to the PP's bank account as soon as possible (within approximately 10 working days) after the legal act awarding the grant is issued¹⁹.

The advance payment must be deducted in the payment request submitted with the final monitoring report. If the total eligible expenditures actually incurred are lower than the amount of the advance payment, the PP is obliged to refund the unused funds. Together with the official request for submission of the final monitoring report (i.e. after approval of the draft monitoring report by the PO - see Chapter XII), the PP will be requested to refund these unused funds within the deadline to the bank account specified by the PO.

If these unused funds are not refund within the deadline set by the PO, the case is treated as a suspected irregularity in accordance with Act No 218/2000 Coll., on budgetary rules.

If an advance payment is applied, the entire grant must be settled in accordance with Act No 218/2000 Coll. on budgetary rules after completion of the initiative.

XII. Procedure for submitting a monitoring report and a payment request

The PP submits a final monitoring report including a payment request for approval by the PO and reimbursement of all incurred expenditures within the initiative. The final monitoring report is to be submitted by email to the PO's address BFrealizace@mfcrcz, no later than **1 month after the end of the period of eligibility of the initiative** as set in approval letter and legal act, but **no later than 15 April 2025**.

In justified cases, the PP may extend the deadline for submitting the final monitoring report.

A final monitoring report has to be elaborated on the **required form** (see Annex 4 for a template) and shall consist of:

Content part comprising:

- a description of the progress of the initiative and its key activities,
- summary information on the implementation of the initiative, its final results and outputs, including an assessment of the contribution to strengthening bilateral cooperation, and an evaluation questionnaire (see Annex 8 for a template),

¹⁹ In accordance with Act No. 218/2000 Coll., on budgetary rules, the organisational unit of the state and a state contributory organisation are not eligible for receiving advance payments.

- quantification of results and description of outputs achieved and bilateral indicators fulfilled during the monitoring period,
- a summary of the use of budget and information on budget modifications.

The PP shall attach to the final report annexes demonstrating the implementation of the activities, e.g. invitations to seminars, study tour programme, meeting agenda, photo documentation, outputs of the initiative such as studies, articles, publications, evaluation questionnaires, etc.²⁰

A **payment request** comprising:

- a filled in payment request form (see Annex 6 for a template) declaring the total amount of expenditures actually incurred, rounded down to the nearest CZK, to be reimbursed (or the amount to be reimbursed after deduction of the advance payment, if applicable),
- a list of expenditures incurred (see Annex 5 for a template) including relevant documentation in the form of annexes - scans of invoices and other relevant accounting documents²¹ above the financial limit of CZK 10 000²²,
- copy of bank account statements and cash documents of the PP proving the payment of all expenditures above the financial limit of CZK 10 000.
- a statement from the accounting system declaring that all expenditures to be reimbursed are recorded as the EEA and Norway Grants expenditures within the PP's accounting system, or an audit report²³ (the recommended template is provided in Annex 7) covering all expenditures incurred by the Donor State partner and/or an international organisation (if relevant) and substituting the above mentioned accounting documentation. Expenditures for the audit report are considered eligible provided that they comply with the general principles of eligibility of expenditure as defined in the Guidelines of the National Focal Point for Eligible Expenditures under EEA/Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021.

The PO / partner does not submit accounting documents for the actual expenditures when flat-rate is applicable. Instead, documents confirming the implementation of the activity and eligibility of the expenditures have to be provided, e.g. the programme of the mission including information on meals provided, participant list, photo/video documentation or minutes of the mission. Documents are intended also to confirm that a reduction in the amount for per-diem due to free accommodation or meals received is not applicable.

²⁰ The PP is required to attach documentation to each completed activity so that the PO can evaluate the implementation of the initiative and the eligibility of the expenses incurred. This documentation may be further used by the PP for publicity purposes.

²¹ The relevant documents must meet the requirements of an accounting document within the meaning of Article 11 of Act No 563/1991 Coll., on Accounting, as amended (except for point f); entity from Donor States and international organisations must follow the applicable accounting standards and generally accepted accounting principles of the country in which the entity is established.

²² A single expenditure not exceeding CZK 10 000 does not need to be supported by relevant accounting documents in the payment request. The original of all invoices and other relevant accounting documents (bills, receipts, purchase orders, etc.) relating to such expenditure shall be archived by the PP/partner. The PP/partner is obliged to provide all accounting documents and accounting records on request during the assessment of the payment request, during on-the-spot checks and audits.

²³ The audit is carried out by an independent auditor who is qualified to audit the accounting documents or by a competent and independent public official. The audit report should confirm that the expenditure complies with the Regulation, national legislation and the relevant national accounting procedures. Details are available in the Guidelines of the National Focal Point for Eligible Expenditures under EEA/Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021

The PO assesses the submitted final monitoring report including the annexes and the payment request. If necessary, the PO invites by email the PP to provide additional information or documents. Once the final monitoring report has been approved, the PP is requested to officially submit the report (with electronic signature of the statutory body or authorised person) via databox. The PO reimburses the approved eligible expenditure to the PP's bank account within 15 working days from the date of approval of the payment request.

XIII. Publicity

All approved initiatives has to fulfil the publicity requirements for the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 published by the Financial Mechanisms Office in the Regulation on the Implementation of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 and in the Publicity and Design Manual. These documents are available on the websites www.eeagrants.cz and www.norwaygrants.cz.

PP is obliged to implement the initiative in accordance with the above mentioned documents to the appropriate extent with regard to the initiative's activities. As a minimum, the PP has to insert the logo of the EEA Funds (in Good Governance and Health Programmes) and the Norway Grants (in Justice and Human Rights Programmes) to the materials and documents created and published within the initiative (e.g. promotional materials bearing the logo of the relevant grant mechanism of the programme from which the initiative is funded, in an appropriate format). Logos, templates and document designs are available for download on the website

<https://www.eeagrants.cz/en/general-information/promotion/downloads>.

The PP is also responsible for publishing the outcome and/or individual outputs of the initiative (e.g. on its website, social media profile, etc.). The PP is instructed to indicate in the grant application the expected method of publication of the outcome and/or individual outputs of the initiative and to provide evidence of the fulfilment of the publicity in the monitoring report, including relevant documentation in the form of annexes to the monitoring report (e.g. photo documentation in the case of events).

XIV. Modifications

The PP may submit a request for a modification of the initiative to update or modify its content. Such a modification request may be submitted at the earliest after the legal act awarding the grant has been issued.

The PP shall first submit the modification request to the PO by email to address BFrealizace@mfcz.cz for consideration (submission of a modification request does not apply to Type C amendments - see below). The PO assess the draft modification request²⁴ (in particular whether the planned modification is justified considering the approved initiative) and inform the PP about the decision.

There are three types of modifications that can be requested under the initiative:

- A) Modifications affecting the legal act awarding the grant, which must be officially requested by a document (see Annex 9 for a template), are submitted first as a draft by email to address BFrealizace@mfcz.cz and subsequently following PO's evaluation and invitation officially submission submitted by data databox:
- Extension of the end date of the initiative implementation (i.e. achievement of the objective of the initiative) - the modification must be approved by the PO ex ante. The modification request must be submitted to the PO no later than 10 working days before the original end date of the initiative and approved by the PO before the original end date of the initiative (in exceptional cases, a shorter deadline for the latest submission of the modification request is acceptable on the basis of proper justification and if agreed with the PO and if the administration of such a modification request within a shorter period is feasible by the PO). The completion date of an initiative can be eventually extended up to 31 March 2025.
 - Extension of the final date of eligibility of expenditures - the modification must be approved ex ante by the PO. The modification request must be submitted to the PO no later than 10 working days before the original eligibility deadline for expenditures and approved by the PO before the original eligibility deadline for expenditures (in exceptional cases, a shorter deadline for the latest submission of the modification request is acceptable on the basis of proper justification and if agreed with the PO and if the administration of such a modification request within a shorter period is feasible by the PO). The final date for the eligibility of expenditures can be eventually extended up to 15 April 2025.
 - Substitution of the statutory body of the PP (it is compulsory to notify PO of the substitution, however, the modification is not subject to approval by the PO).
 - Change of bank account (it is compulsory to notify PO of the change, however, the modification is not subject to approval by the PO).

²⁴ PO's assessment is not relevant for modifications comprising substitution of statutory body or change of a bank account. These are automatically accepted by the PO. C) type changes are assessed and eventually approved by the PO during the administration of monitoring reports.

B) Modifications not affecting the legal act awarding the grant and requiring the approval of the PO, which must be officially requested by a document (see Annex 9 for a template) submitted by email to address BFrealizace@mfcf.cz:

- new activities to be included and implementation within the initiative;
- new budget items to be included in the detailed budget (new items can be requested but without the possibility of increasing the grant - the total amount of the grant allocated to the initiative remains the same).

The modification request must be submitted at least 10 working days before the activities affected by the modification are implemented. In exceptional cases, a shorter deadline for the latest submission of the modification request is acceptable on the basis of proper justification and if agreed with the PO and if the administration of such a modification request within a shorter period is feasible by the PO.

The modification request is submitted by the PP to the PO without undue delay. The eligibility of the related expenditure for reimbursement is subject to approval of the modification by the PO. If the PP submits the request after the modification has been implemented (and possibly also financed), he runs the risk that if the modifications is not approved by the PO, the related expenditure will not be eligible for funding and will not be reimbursed by the PO.

C) Modification to be approved by the PO **ex-post** within the final monitoring report. Modification must be duly justified by the PP with regard to their consistency with the 3E principle, their contribution to strengthening bilateral relations and/or their necessity for the successful implementation of the initiative:

- modifications in the use of existing budget items (e.g. adjustments of unit prices and reallocation of funds between budget items);
- changes in the composition of the participants in the initiative due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g. illness).

C type modifications shall be described and justified by the PP in the final monitoring report. However, the **PO strongly recommends that C type changes, in particular those that have an impact on the agreed number of participants in the initiative, the indicators of the initiative, or the coordination/management costs of the initiative, are consulted with the PO prior to their implementation.** Expenditures related to a modification that is not approved ex-post in the final monitoring report by the PO (the modification is considered unjustified in view of the 3E principle, the contribution to strengthening bilateral relations and/or the necessity for the successful implementation of the initiative) will be considered ineligible.

XV. On-the-spot Checks

On-the-spot checks are carried out by the PO and/or the bodies entrusted by the PO, or by other authorities and their delegated bodies (Regional Financial Authority, Supreme Audit Office, Certification Authority, Audit Authority, NFP, FMO, Financial Mechanisms Committee, Board of Auditors, EFTA, Office of the Auditor General of Norway and Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The objective of these audits is to compare real implementation of the initiative with the plan introduced in the grant application and with the data and information provided in the final monitoring report and payment requests. At the request of the audit authorities, the PP is under an obligation to cooperate with the bodies carrying out an audit and to provide all documents and information that demonstrate the successful implementation of the approved initiative.

In the event of irregularities being detected by the PO or any other relevant entity, these irregularities shall be dealt with in accordance with the rules set in Chapter XVII below.

XVI. Evaluation

The NFP/FMO or the bodies delegated by them may carry out evaluations related to the overall objectives of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021. The PP is obliged to cooperate with the bodies concerned and provide them with requested documents and information.

XVII. Irregularities

Irregularity means any breach of the legal provisions governing the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021, European Union law or national legislation affecting or jeopardising any stage of the implementation of initiatives financed by the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021.

Entities implementing initiatives supported by EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 are obliged to notify the PO without delay of any suspected irregularity. If a serious irregularity is suspected, the PO may suspend payments to the initiative for the necessary period of time.

If an irregularity is suspected to be present in the initiative, the PO will assess the validity of the suspicion and, if confirmed, has the right to:

- withhold the grant/payment or its part in accordance with Section 14e of Act No 218/2000 Coll.;

- apply Section 14f(1) of Act No 218/2000 Coll. and invite the PP to undertake corrective measures and set a deadline for their implementation (only if the nature of the irregularity allows for correction);
- call on the PP to recover the grant/financial means their part in accordance with Article 14f(3) of Act No 218/2000 Coll.

The unpaid/refunded grant/financial means or their part shall correspond to the seriousness of a misconduct or will be determined in accordance with the Table of reduced levies for breaching budgetary discipline and conditions of awarded grant/financial means. If the PP objects to the application of Section 14e of Act No 218/2000 Coll., fails to undertake corrective measures or fails to refund the grant/financial means or their part (which is understood as a breach of budgetary discipline), the PO will refer the case to the tax office for further investigation and to decide whether a breach of budgetary discipline has occurred.

XVIII. Pre-defined initiatives of the Programme Operator / Programme Partner

The intention of the PO/PrgP to implement a PDI must be approved by the CC of the relevant programme, if the approval of the CC is relevant for the programme. The content of the initiative, eligible activities and expenditures are agreed by mutual consensus of the members of the CC, if relevant. Once the initiative has been mutually agreed or CC has been informed of the intention to implement the initiative, the PO/PrgP elaborates the grant application.

The PO shall follow the relevant provisions of the PO's Internal Manual when implementing the initiative. Initiative implemented by the PrgP are governed also by these Guidelines and, where appropriate, other instructions from the PO.

The PO/PrgP is required to follow the rules for eligible expenditure in accordance with this Guideline, unless otherwise specified by the CC (if applicable) or the PO.

A grant application including the mandatory annexes elaborated by the PO and signed by an authorised person of the PO is archived in accordance with the internal rules of the PO. A grant application including the mandatory annexes elaborated by the PrgP and signed by an authorised person of the PrgP is submitted by the PO to the designated person of the PO following PO's instructions (e.g. by email / through databox). The submitted grant application is archived in accordance with the internal rules of the PO. If relevant for the programme, the PO/PrgP must attach to the grant application a confirmation of the approval of the initiative by the CC (e.g. e-mail communication).

Following the assessment of the grant application for the PrgP's initiative, the PO's delegated person will issue an approval letter setting the conditions for the implementation of the initiative. Subsequently, in accordance with Act No 218/2000 Coll., on budgetary rules, the PO issues a legal act awarding the grant (letter from the Director of the department). Neither the approval letter nor the legal act awarding the grant is relevant for the initiatives implemented by the PO.

The PO/PrgP shall follow the publicity requirements in accordance with Chapter XIII. The PO/PrgP shall also follow PO's Small Scale Tender Procedure Guidelines when implementing an initiative. The PrgP shall follow the instructions for submitting monitoring reports set in Chapter XII and modification procedures specified in Chapter XIV.

The procedures set out in the PO's Internal Manual are applicable for the submission of monitoring reports and for the modification procedure if an initiative is implemented by the PO.

List of Annexes

Annex 1 – Eligible expenditure under the Bilateral Fund for Justice, Human Rights, Good Governance and Health Programmes

Annex 2 – Grant application for bilateral initiative funding (standardised form)

Annex 2A – Declaration of partnership with an entity from Donor State - Letter of Intent for the purposes of donor partnership initiative (recommended form)

Annex 2B – Detailed budget (standardised form)

Annex 2C – Brief summary of the initiative in English (standardised form)

Annex 2D – Bank identification (standardised form)

Annex 2E – State aid declaration (standardised form)

Annex 2F – Identification of the ownership structure of the applicant and the persons acting on its behalf

Annex 2G – Declaration of partnership with an entity from the Czech Republic (standardised form)

Annex 3 – List of indicators for bilateral initiatives

Annex 4 – Final report (template)

Annex 5 – List of expenditures incurred (template)

Annex 6 – Payment request (template)

Annex 7 – Audit report (template)

Annex 8 – Evaluation questionnaire

Annex 9 – Modification request (template)

Annex 10 – Per-diems flat rates