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# Programme Justice

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Programme area grant support:

Correctional Services and Pre-trial Detention

Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Judicial System

Strengthening Rule of Law

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## Call for Proposals of Grant Applications for Bilateral Initiatives

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The Fund for Bilateral Relations of the Programme Justice

Norway Grants 2014 - 2021

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On 15 May 2024 the **Ministry of Finance** acting as **Programme Operator of the Justice Programme** announces **call for proposals** of grant applications for **bilateral initiatives** under the **Fund for Bilateral Relations** at Programme Level financed by the **Norway Grants 2014 - 2021** (hereinafter referred to as the "Call").

The aim of the Call is to deepen bilateral cooperation in the areas of penitentiary and post-penitentiary care, treatment programmes and support for reintegration activities, including programs aimed at reducing drug use, increasing motivation to change and increasing the competences of sentenced persons to imprisonment.

The call is **exclusively addressed to the promoters of the projects supported by a grant from the open calls and pre-defined projects** under the Justice Programme in the programming period of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014 - 2021 (hereinafter referred to as the Norway Grants 2014 - 2021).

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## I. Call identification and time settings

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<b>Programme Operator (Grant Provider)</b>	<b>The Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic</b>
<b>Call Code</b>	<b>BAJU1</b>
<b>Call Name</b>	<b>Promotion of Bilateral Cooperation under Justice Programme</b>
<b>Call Announcement</b>	<b>15 May 2024</b>
<b>Date and Time of the Start of Grant Applications Acceptance</b>	<b>15 May 2024; 12:00</b>
<b>Date and Time of the End of Grant Applications Acceptance</b>	<b>Till allocation commitment, but no later than 30. 9. 2024; 12:00</b>

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## II. Objective and Focus of the Call

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Along with reducing economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area, the main objectives of the Norway Grants 2014-2021 include strengthening bilateral relations between Norway and the beneficiary countries. The aim of the Fund for Bilateral Relations of the Justice Programme is thus to support the establishment of new and the development of existing forms of cooperation between the Czech Republic and Norway, while the Fund serves as a flexible source of funding for activities of common interest to entities from both countries.

The Call is dedicated to **further development of bilateral cooperation** between the Czech Republic and Norway in the field of justice, beyond the already implemented projects. The Justice Programme in the programming period 2014 - 2021 supported justice projects in the total amount of CZK 163 594 776. During the period, 2 open calls were launched under this programme, supporting 5 projects by a grant. In addition, 3 pre-defined projects were supported directly.

The Call invites the final beneficiaries who have cooperated with Norwegian partners in the past to **continue and extend this cooperation**. Both **former and new Norwegian partners** can be

involved in a bilateral initiative. At the same time, the call also allow the project promoters who have not yet been active in bilateral cooperation to **engage in creating new bilateral partnerships**.

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### III. Call Allocation

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The financial allocation of the Call for regranting is **CZK 5 000 000**. In the event that additional funds become available within the EEA and Norway Grants 2014 - 2021 programming period, the Programme Operator may increase the allocation of the Call until the end of Grant Applications Acceptance.

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### IV. Eligible Applicants

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The Call is **restricted**. **Eligible applicants (hereinafter referred to as "applicant(s)") are promoters of the projects supported by a grant from the open calls and pre-defined projects under the Justice Programme in the programming period of the Norway Grants 2014 - 2021**. Specifically, the following already closed **calls** are relevant:

- JU1A – Support of reintegration of persons conditionally released and released from prison
- JU1B – Professional care for imprisoned drug users and its continuity after release

and the following **pre-defined projects** are applicable:

- JU-PDP1-001 – Common Education System – strengthening cooperation in the criminal justice and social system
- JU-PDP2-001 – Strengthening the rehabilitation of prisoners through treatment
- JU-PDP3-001 – Back to life

**Partner organisations** (project partners) from the Czech Republic and Norway that have been involved in projects supported under the above-mentioned calls and in the pre-defined projects **are not eligible applicants** under this call, however, they are eligible partners of a bilateral initiative (see below).

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### V. Eligible Partners

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An eligible compulsory partner of a bilateral initiative is an entity from Norway established as a legal entity. An eligible partner is also an entity from the Czech Republic that has been a partner in a project supported by a grant from the above-mentioned open calls and pre-defined projects of the Justice Programme in the programming period of the Norway Grants 2014-2021.

The applicant is required to submit the grant application **in partnership with at least one entity from Norway**. Private persons from Norway are not eligible partners of the bilateral initiative.

The grant application must be accompanied by any of the following **evidence proving the established partnership** with a Norwegian entity as a mandatory Annex A:

- previous email communication with the Norwegian partner,
- a declaration of partnership (Letter of Intent),
- a partnership agreement,
- other evidence of the existence of the partnership.

Evidence of partnership must demonstrate the **active involvement of the Norwegian partner** in both the preparation and implementation phases of the bilateral initiative. If the partnership evidence is not submitted with the grant application, the application will be automatically rejected.

In case of partnership with a Czech entity, the applicant is required to also submit a **Declaration of Partnership** as a mandatory Annex K.

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## **VI. Eligible Initiatives, Supported Activities and Implementation Timeframe**

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This call supports development and expansion of **bilateral cooperation between entities from the Czech Republic and Norway in the field of justice**. It aims to strengthen mutual partnership and sharing of experience in the areas of penitentiary and post-penitentiary care, treatment programmes and support for reintegration activities, including programs aimed at reducing drug use, increasing motivation to change and increasing the competences of sentenced persons to imprisonment.

The call supports a wide range of bilateral activities. Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practice, sharing of best or innovative practices in addressing societal challenges, creation of joint outputs beneficial to the professional and general public and other activities leading to mutual enrichment and strengthening of cooperation between entities from the Czech Republic and Norway are supported.

The basic **prerequisite for the eligibility of the activities is that the applicant, each Norwegian partner and possibly each Czech partner actively participate in their preparation and implementation**. Active participation in the implementation of the initiative means active involvement in key joint activities.

**Examples of specific activities** and their outputs that can be included in the grant application and funded by the Bilateral Fund of the Justice Programme:

- Workshops, meetings, visits, seminars and conferences on topics of common interest;
- study trips of the applicant to Norway and of the partner to the Czech Republic;
- capacity building and short-term training;
- data collection, reports, articles and publications;
- exhibitions, performances and other specific socio-cultural activities;
- information campaigns and promotional materials;
- technical cooperation and exchange of experts;
- secondment of staff for short-term internships.

The above list of specific activities/outputs is not exhaustive and serves only as a guide to possible activities and outputs that can be supported by the Bilateral Fund of the Justice Programme.

**Activities must not generate profit.** If the activity generates income from its implementation, the applicant is required to describe in the grant application how this income will be used.

The implementation of the activities **may start no earlier than the date of eligibility of the expenditures**, as specified in the grant approval letter issued by the Programme Operator (grant provider). **The latest date for completion of the implementation of the activities** and therefore **the latest expected date of completion of the bilateral initiative is 31 March 2025. The latest date of eligibility of expenditures is 15 April 2025.**

In view of the deadline for the eligibility of the initiative's expenditures and the deadline for the submission of the final report and payment request, which is set at 15 April 2025, the Programme Operator of Justice Programme recommends applicants to consider completing the bilateral initiative earlier than 31 March 2025. When drafting the timeline for the bilateral initiative implementation, it is recommended to plan the completion of individual key activities well in advance of the ultimate deadline for bilateral initiative completion.

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## VII. Grant Amount

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**The minimum grant amount is CZK 500 000.**

**The maximum grant amount is CZK 1 250 000.**

The Bilateral Fund of the Justice Programme **covers 100 % of eligible expenditures.** Grant beneficiaries are not obliged to provide co-financing of activities.

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## VIII. Eligible Expenditures and Their Reimbursement

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In general, expenditures that meets the following criteria are considered eligible:

- they are **incurred in accordance with the objective and purpose** 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 (expressed in terms of indicators to be met) with the lowest possible expenditures, while maintaining an appropriate quality.
  - Effectiveness – the use of resources to achieve the maximum scope, quality and benefit of the initiative with respect to the amount of resources spent.
  - Efficiency - the optimal use of resources to achieve the declared aim and purpose of the initiative.

From the time perspective, the expenditures are eligible if they were **incurred and paid during the period of eligibility. The starting date of eligibility of expenditures is set in the grant approval letter** issued by the Programme Operator (grant provider) in case of approval of the grant

application. **Expenditures are eligible up to 1 month after the final date for achieving the purpose of the initiative / completion of the initiative, but no later than 15 April 2025.** The final date of eligibility of expenditures is again specified in the grant approval letter.

In terms of content, the following types of expenditures are 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 travel costs, flat rate for per-diems, costs for domestic missions, participation fees, flight cancellation fee insurance, train/bus tickets cancellation fee insurance and other related costs);
- remuneration of experts;
- costs related to analyses, studies and other technical documents elaboration;
- interpretation and translation of materials;
- costs related to the organisation of conferences, seminars, workshops or other events described in the grant application (e.g. conference rooms and technical equipment rental, catering and other related costs);
- costs related to publicity and information activities as part of the publicity of the initiative;
- costs for external consultancy and other professional services;
- audit report issuance demonstrating the eligibility of the Norwegian partner's costs.

In addition to the above listed categories, other necessary expenditures directly related to the implementation of bilateral activities are also eligible. These planned expenditures must be described and justified in a detailed budget. They must also have a clear link to the activities specified in Chapter 2 of the grant application.

Eligible expenditures, including their financial limits and other restrictions, are detailed in Annex 1 of 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').

Grant applicants shall enter the planned eligible expenditures in the form of individual budget items in the detailed budget form, which is a mandatory annex to the grant application (Annex B). Expenditure shall be stated in CZK. For the calculation of the planned expenditures initially in EUR (e.g. flat rate for per-diems), the fixed exchange rate for the Call shall be used: **25 CZK / 1 EUR**. For conversions from other currencies (e.g. NOK) to CZK, it is recommended for the purpose of calculating the planned expenditure to use the monthly exchange rate of the European Commission applicable in the month of submission of the grant application, available at [https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/procedures-guidelines-tenders/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-infoeuro\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/procedures-guidelines-tenders/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-infoeuro_en).

**The incurred expenditures will be reimbursed ex-post to the project promoter following approval of the final report. The Call does not allow grant applicants to request an advance payment.**

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## IX. Elaborating Grant Application

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The grant application, including all mandatory annexes except Annex C (Brief summary of the initiative in English) and, where applicable, Annex A (Evidence of partnership with an entity from the donor country) must be elaborated in the Czech language. The application and specific annexes must be elaborated on the standardised forms available in the Annexes to the Guidelines. The applicant shall follow the instructions provided in Annex 1 of the Call and the requirements set in the Guidelines when preparing the grant application.

The applicant shall prepare and submit the following compulsory documentation creating the complete grant application:

- Grant application for funding of a bilateral initiative (see Annex 2 of the Guidelines for the standardised form);
- Evidence proving the established partnership with entity from a donor state (standardised form (Letter of Intent) for partnership with an entity from Norway - see Annex 2A of the Guidelines - or previous email communication with the bilateral partner, partnership agreement or other similar document proving that (each) Norwegian partner is actively involved in the planning of the bilateral initiative and will be directly involved in the implementation of the joint key activities);
- A detailed budget (standardised form - see Annex 2B of the Guidelines);
- A brief summary of the initiative in English (standardised form - see Annex 2C of the Guidelines);
- Detailed timetable of the initiative;
- Bank identification (standardised form - see Annex 2D of the Guidelines - or other confirmation from the bank proving the existence of the applicant's bank account and containing the information requested in the standardised form);
- State aid declaration (standardised form - see Annex 2E to the Guidelines);
- Identification of the ownership structure of the applicant and the persons acting on its behalf (standardised form - see Annex 2F to the Guidelines);
- Full extract from the Register of Beneficial Owners (the annex is relevant only if the applicant is the registering person according to Act No 37/2021 Coll., on the registration of beneficial owners);
- Power of attorney to act for the applicant (the annex is relevant only if the application is signed by a person authorised by the statutory body);
- Declaration by the founder agreeing to submit the initiative application (the annex is only relevant for contributory organisations if the grant is to be transferred via the founder);
- Declaration of partnership with an entity from the Czech Republic (standardised form - see Annex 2G of the Guidelines; the annex is only relevant if the initiative involves a Czech entity as a partner).

The applicant may attach other relevant annexes to the grant application.

The grant application must be signed with **qualified electronic signature** of the applicant, i.e. the signature of the applicant's statutory body or a person authorised to act for the applicant on the basis

of a power of attorney to represent the applicant. In addition, the following annexes must bear the same signature: State aid declaration and Identification of the ownership structure of the applicant and of the persons acting on its behalf.

The Annex Bank Identification can be submitted using a standardised form with a qualified electronic signature (original document) or a handwritten signature (copy/scan of the original document) of the statutory body or a person authorised to act for the applicant on the basis of a power of attorney to represent the applicant and the bank. Alternatively, the applicant may submit another certificate containing same data and which fulfils all the requirements within standardised form. An example would be an electronic confirmation of the existence of a bank account downloaded from internet banking, which contains automatically inserted electronic signature of the bank.

The Annex Full extract from the Register of Beneficial Owners shall be submitted in the format of the original document downloaded from the relevant portal automatically signed by electronic signature of the issuing authority.

Other annexes requiring a signature may be submitted with a qualified electronic signature (original document) or with handwritten signature (copy/scan of the original document) of the applicant's statutory body or a person authorised to act for the applicant on the basis of a power of attorney to represent the applicant. For the annexes providing evidence of partnership, the same requirements apply for the signature of the partner as for the applicant.

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## **X. Grant Application Submission**

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Each applicant is allowed to **submit only 1 grant application**. In the event of multiple grant applications being submitted by the same applicant, only the application submitted first will be evaluated. Other grant applications will be automatically rejected by the Programme Operator.

The grant application comprising all mandatory annexes must be **submitted at least 2 months before the planned start of the bilateral initiative**. The length of the evaluation process may be affected by the capacity of the Programme Operator and the total number of grant applications received. In case of a late submission, the application will be accepted for evaluation. However, the Programme Operator cannot guarantee that in case of a positive evaluation and approval of the grant application, the project promoter will be able to start the implementation of the bilateral initiative by the expected date indicated in the grant application.

The applicant shall **submit the grant application comprising complete mandatory documentation only to the Programme Operator's databox with ID xzeaauv** and addressed to International Relations Department, Centre for Foreign Aid - Preparation and Coordination Unit. Grant applications submitted in other way (e.g. electronically by e-mail or in paper form by post) will not be accepted.



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## XI. Grant Application Assessment

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The call is open as a „rolling call” with deadline for submitting a grant application no later than 30 September 2024 by 12:00. If the available allocation is committed, the call may be closed before this date. Information on eventual early closure will be published on the Programme Operator's website <https://www.norwaygrants.cz/en/news-eea-and-norway-grants>.

The evaluation of the submitted grant applications will be carried out on a rolling basis in the order in which they are received by the Programme Operator in his databox until the allocation is committed. The Programme Operator reserves the right to change the order of the evaluated grant applications within the available allocation if deficiencies were detected, the applicant was invited to complete or correct the application and failed to remedy the deficiencies within the set deadline.

Grant applications are assessed and evaluated exclusively by the Programme Operator. The Programme Operator checks the compliance with formal and eligibility criteria of the applicant and the partner (as specified in Chapter XII below) as the first step. Failure to comply with the irremediable formal and/or eligibility criteria will result in automatic rejection of the grant application. If deficiencies are detected under remediable criteria, the applicant will be informed and invited to make the necessary corrections. Unsuccessful applicants whose grant applications are rejected for failure to meet the evaluation criteria will receive a grant rejection letter. This letter contains detailed reasons for the rejection of grant application and instructions on the possibility to lodge an appeal within 15 days of delivery.

If the grant application meets the formal requirements and eligibility criteria, the Programme Operator proceed with evaluation of quality based on substantive criteria. The following is evaluated:

- 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 Norwegian entities: each Norwegian 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.

Each grant application is evaluated against the substantive criteria set out in Chapter XII below.

The Programme Operator reserves the right to invite the applicant to provide any additional supporting documents or information necessary for the evaluation. This may also include requests to supplement, clarify or amend the information stated in the grant application. The Programme Operator will specify **requests** for completion of information or additional documentation,

clarification or explanation of the information provided and any other requests in an **e-mail** sent to the e-mail addresses of the contact persons responsible for the initiative entered in the grant application. Programme Operator will also inform the applicant about the time limit for compliance with the requests and a specify method for correcting any deficiencies identified. **A reasonable time will be given to the applicant.** The applicant may request the Programme Operator for an extension of the deadline for compliance with the specified requirements.

If the request for an extension of the deadline for compliance with the requirements is granted, the grant application will be placed at the end of the list of evaluated grant applications. This measure is intended to ensure an efficient evaluation and to minimise delays in the assessment of the other grant applications submitted within the Call.

If a grant applicant fails to comply with the requirements within the specified time limit, i.e. **fails to provide** the required documentation, additional information, clarifications, amendments or other requirements necessary for completion of the evaluation, his grant application will be **rejected**. Providing **unsatisfactory** additional information, **insufficient** clarification, **incomplete** amendments or failing to comply with other 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 grant requested, at the rate set by the Programme Operator.

An incomplete or poorly elaborated grant application, requiring completion of documentation, additional information, clarification or necessary modifications, prolongs the evaluation process and may jeopardise the planned start of the initiative. The grant applicants are therefore advised to familiarize themselves with the Guidelines including the annexes thoroughly, and to contact the Programme Operator in case of any doubts regarding the requirements.

The **successful applicant** will be notified of the result of the evaluation by an **approval letter** sent to the applicant's databox. The approval letter will contain, inter alia, information on the amount of the approved grant and the period of eligibility of the expenditures. Afterward, the Programme Operator will issue the **legal act awarding the grant**.

If the grant application is **rejected**, the legal act rejecting the grant application will be sent to the unsuccessful applicant, including the reasons for the rejection. This legal act cannot be appealed.

There is no legal entitlement to the grant. Complaints about the evaluation process can be submitted to the Programme Operator's databox (ID: xzeaauv).

The evaluation process is specified in more detail in the Guidelines (Chapter IX).

#### **Information on the state aid compliance.**

Initiatives are generally not expected to fulfil the characteristics of state aid. In case of identification of state aid, only de minimis grant support will be allowed in the Call under Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2831 of 13 December 2023 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid. Before awarding a grant, the Programme Operator will verify that the initiative meets the conditions of this scheme. The applicant is required to provide the documents necessary to demonstrate compliance with the conditions for de minimis

regime. The link between the applicant/project partner with a financial participation to other undertakings within the same undertaking (Article 2(2) of the De minimis Regulation) will be documented by the applicant in the form of an affidavit.

De minimis aid is limited to a ceiling of EUR 300 000 per one undertaking per three-year period, which is assessed on an ongoing basis. De minimis aid is deemed to be granted on the date on which the legal act awarding a grant enters into force or becomes effective. The Programme Operator shall record the details of the grant awarded in the de minimis regime in the Central Register of de minimis aid within 5 working days after the date on which the grant was awarded.

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## **XII. Formal, Eligibility and Substantive Criteria**

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### **1) Formal criteria**

- The grant application was submitted within the deadline set in the call for proposals.
- The grant application was submitted to the Programme Operator's databox (ID: xzeaauv).
- The grant application was submitted on the official form available in Annex 2 of the Guidelines for applicants and project promoters.
- The grant application and all mandatory annexes were drawn up in the language specified in the call.
- The grant application was electronically signed by an authorised person with a qualified certificate.
- The grant application comprises all the mandatory annexes specified in the call.
- All mandatory annexes are complete and were submitted in the required form in compliance with the Guidelines for applicants and project promoters.
- The applicant submitted only one grant application<sup>1</sup>.

### **2) Eligibility criteria**

- The applicant is eligible.
- The partner(s) are eligible.
- The initiative corresponds with the aim of the call.
- The planned completion of the initiative does not exceed the latest date for completion of initiatives set out in the call.
- The requested grant amount is in line with the conditions set out in the call.
- The project does not constitute state aid within the meaning of Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union or fulfils the definitional characteristics of state aid with the possibility of awarding a grant in de minimis regime in accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2831 of 13 December 2023 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

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<sup>1</sup> In case the applicant submitted more than one grant application with the call, the Programme Operator will evaluate only the first application submitted. The other submitted grant applications will be automatically rejected,

### 3) **Substantive criteria**

- 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.
- Each Norwegian partner and, if any, Czech partner is actively involved in the preparation and implementation of the initiative and contributes to the achievement of the aim and purpose of the initiative through activities jointly implemented with the applicant.
- The timeframe of the activities is realistic, reflecting the interconnection and content of the individual activities.
- 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.

Individual evaluation criteria are specified in Annex 2 of the call.

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## **XIII. Consultations on the Call**

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The Programme Operator offers consultation on queries concerning the call, in particular where the specific information cannot be looked up by the applicant himself in the Guidelines, their annexes or the text of the call. Query shall be sent by e-mail to: **czp@mfcz.cz**. A reply will be delivered to the applicant within 5 working days. Queries may be made 5 working days before the deadline for submitting the grant application at the latest.

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## **XIV. List of Annexes to the Call**

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Annex 1 – Preparation of a grant application

Annex 2 – Formal, eligibility and substantive criteria