

**OPEN CALL FOR ON-LINE BILATERAL INITIATIVES
BETWEEN SLOVAKIA AND NORWAY**
under the
FUND FOR BILATERAL RELATIONS
EEA and Norway Grants 2014 – 2021
SLOVAKIA

1. BASIC DATA AND CONDITIONS

Generally, the Fund for Bilateral Relations (hereinafter referred to as “the Fund”) was established to enhance cooperation and improve mutual knowledge and understanding between Slovakia and the Donor States – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

This Call is specifically aimed at cooperation between Slovakia and Norway.

Call closure:	31 st December 2021 or until its total allocation is used
Call number:	FBR02
Areas of Support within this call:	A. Political and institutional cooperation ¹ between Slovakia and Norway B. Cultural cooperation - cultural exchange, promotion of culture and cultural development in Slovakia and in Norway
Maximum grant to be applied for:	EUR 50,000
Minimum grant to be applied for:	EUR 10,000
Co-financing:	No co-financing is requested by the applicants
Total allocation:	EUR 200,000
Announced by:	The Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the SR – the National Focal Point
Eligible applicants and partners:	A. Under <i>political and institutional cooperation</i> , all public entities, professional unions, academic institutions and institutions with specific public mission established in Slovakia or in Norway are eligible to apply. B. Under <i>cultural cooperation</i> , all legal entities established in Slovakia or in Norway are eligible to apply.
Further eligibility limitations:	The Programme Operators of the Programmes within the EEA and Norway Grants 2014 – 2021 are not eligible to apply.
Further conditions:	1. Each Slovak applicant must have at least one partner from Norway and vice versa. No more than two partners may participate in the implementation of an initiative. 2. Preferences will be given to initiatives that are more than one-off.

¹ For the purpose of this Call, as “institutional” cooperation is considered cooperation between public authorities, ministries, self-government authorities, professional unions, academic institutions as well as institutions with specific public mission.

	The implementation of the initiative should be finished until 31 st August 2022. 3. The mandatory attachment to the Grant Application is a signed Partnership Statement ² .
Funding source(s):	EEA Financial Mechanism (EEA Grants) - 48,54% Norwegian Financial Mechanism (Norway Grants) - 51,46%

2. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The range of activities eligible for support under the Fund is broad, including any initiatives leading to strengthening bilateral relations, enhancing cooperation and improving mutual knowledge and understanding between Slovakia and Norway in the abovementioned Areas of Support, provided that both the final beneficiary and the partner(s) are actively involved in planning of the initiative and its implementation. The Fund shall support well-balanced partnerships (bilateral or multilateral) where all parties benefit from the cooperation.

Generally, the initiatives shall have a clear bilateral profile and serve the purpose of strengthening bilateral relations between Slovakia and Norway in the Areas of Support. The activities within the initiative must be accommodated at on-line cooperation.

This call generally supports complex and longer-term initiatives instead of one-off activities. Taking into account principles of proportionality and the grant amount provided under this Call, complex initiatives combining various bilateral activities are expected. Welcomed are series of events, such as workshops, seminars, round tables or discussions that will be logically planned in longer time period. An application focused solely on one day workshops or an organisation of only one on-line conference/discussion has lower likelihood to receive support under this Call.

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

- virtual series of trainings and capacity building;
- virtual conferences and series of events;
- virtual workshops, meetings, visits, conferences and seminars on topics of common interest in the abovementioned Areas of Support;
- development or translation of information materials;
- on-line studies with participants and/or inputs from Norway and Slovakia;
- broadcasting of on-line discussions between leading Slovak and Norwegian experts/professionals in the abovementioned Areas of Support;
- on-line lectures of leading (academic) experts/professionals from Slovakia and Norway on certain topics within the abovementioned Areas of Support;
- creation of new ways of on-line management;
- on-line round tables between students, NGOs, representatives of minorities or any other groups;

² The Partnership Statement can be signed by any person representing the organisation with the power to declare interest of the organisation to enter into such partnership. Scanned signed version is sufficient. Should the partner request financial contribution, a Partnership Agreement shall be concluded after approval of the initiative, but prior to its implementation.

- on-line campaigns, exhibitions and promotional materials;
- on-line data collection;
- publishing of joint reports, studies and publications (virtual and / or physical).

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

While this call is focused on on-line initiatives, appropriate physical outputs are possible. If this is the case, it is necessary to describe a mitigation plan for the possibility that the physical outputs will not be delivered. The mitigation plan has to describe an eventual virtual fall-back option.

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

The Applicant shall select at least 4 indicators listed in the Bilateral Fund Guide. Implementation of the initiative must have a tangible result that both partners contributed to. It can be in form of a video, virtual presentation, study, analysis, strategy, virtual publication or others. Taking into account that most of the activities will take place in virtual space, the publicity requirements stated in the chapter 35. of the Bilateral Fund Guide are vital. Non-compliance with these rules may lead to a reduction of the approved project grant.

Unless otherwise agreed by the National Focal Point, the initiative needs to be financially completed within one month from the last day of eligibility of expenditures stated in the Grant Offer Letter, and the Final Report should be submitted no later than two months following the substantive completion of the activity. The National Focal Point reserves the right not to reimburse the grant or its part in case the above mentioned was not complied with.

3. ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES

Under this Call, only expenditures falling under Article 8.8, point a) and c) of the Regulations³ are eligible. Eligible expenditures therefore are those related to:

- activities aiming at strengthening bilateral relations between Norway and Slovakia;
- networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practice between entities in Slovakia and entities in Norway and/or international organisations.

Except for the so-called “excluded expenditures” listed in Article 8.7 of the Regulations, all types of expenditures can be eligible, provided that they meet the conditions listed in this Call and in Article 8.2 of the Regulations.

No expenditures incurred before and after the dates set in the Grant Offer Letter shall be eligible. While there are no limitations regarding the types of expenditures (salaries, travel costs, purchase of

³ Regulation on the Implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 and Regulation on the Implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021

equipment etc.), experience shows that the general principles on the eligibility of expenditures contained in Article 8.2. of the Regulations need to be considered. This is especially relevant as far as the *proportionality* and *necessity* of expenditures is concerned. As an example, purchase of equipment or consumables such as PCs, laptops, furniture might not be considered proportionate. Expenditures on wages that would be incurred irrespective of the implementation of the initiative might also be considered unnecessary (and thus not eligible). Further details can be found in the Bilateral Fund Guide, issued by the National Focal Point.

In relation to the nature of this Call, the most common types of expenditures are salary costs and fees, rental of virtual rooms, rental of equipment, costs of providing quality lecturers, moderators, costs of creating on-line publications, development of videos and other kind of communication materials, preparation of studies and monographs, or purchase of advertising or other media coverage costs.

4. GRANT APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION

All Grant Applications shall be prepared in English and submitted electronically at bilateralnyfond@vicepremier.gov.sk⁴, along with the following mandatory attachment:

- a) Signed Partnership Statement². A recommended template for this statement can be found in the Bilateral Fund Guide.

The Grant Application should be received in a due time prior to its scheduled start of implementation. When drafting the schedule, applicants shall take into account that the evaluation may take up to 4 weeks, thus it is recommended to plan the activities not earlier than 8 weeks following the submission of the Grant Application. While aiming to be flexible, the National Focal Point reserves the right to reject applications not meeting this deadline. Resubmission can be allowed in case the Call closure is not approaching.

5. SELECTION PROCEDURES

Grant Applications shall be evaluated in the order they are received (FIFO principle), which means that the applications are being assessed in the exact same order in which they were delivered. The Selection criteria are attached to this Call, where the detailed information on the selection procedures can be found.

6. FINANCING AND REPORTING

Generally, payments are provided as reimbursement of already incurred costs. If the grant amount exceeds €25,000, an advance payment of up to 80 % may be provided by the National Focal Point following the signature of the Grant Contract. Detailed justification shall be provided.

⁴ The email contact bilateralnyfond@vicepremier.gov.sk may be changed during the call period. The Applicants shall be informed of such a change on the websites www.eeagrants.sk / www.norwaygrants.sk without any delay.

The reimbursement is based on the approved Final Report submitted by the final beneficiary within two months after the completion of substantive implementation.

In case of longer initiatives (more than 6 months), an Interim Report shall be submitted, in order to report the progress in the implementation of the bilateral initiative.

7. STATE AID

The activities eligible under this Call (on-line networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practice; joint seminars; workshops and trainings; etc.) are aimed at cross-border cooperation between Slovakia and Norway. The activities are non-economic in nature.

Before approving a Grant Application, the National Focal Point will carry out a state aid test. If applicable, the grant or its respective part can be provided as de minimis aid under the scheme number DM-8/2019 published at www.eeagrants.sk, if conditions for granting this aid are met.

8. FURTHER INFORMATION

Please note that all applicants are required to disclose any consultant⁵ involved in the preparation of the Grant Application (Part 6 of the Grant Application).

Before and during preparation of the Grant Application it is recommended to become familiar with the following documents, as amended.

- Bilateral Guideline issued by the Financial Mechanism Office;
- Bilateral Fund Guide issued by the National Focal Point;
- Regulation on implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014 – 2021 and Regulation on implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014 – 2021;
- Guidelines, instructions and other documents issued by the Financial Mechanism Office, National Focal Point and Ministry of Finance of the SR (Certifying Authority).

These documents are published on the websites www.eeagrants.sk / www.norwaygrants.sk and/or www.eeagrants.org. The National Focal Point may also introduce the FAQ section, if relevant.

The National Focal Point can be contacted for queries by:

- e-mail: bilateralnyfond@vicepremier.gov.sk⁴ (questions received by e-mail will be responded within 10 calendar days);
- phone: +421-2-2092 8464.

⁵ Staff of the National Focal Point providing general advices or answers on queries by phone is not considered as consultants and therefore should not be listed on the list of consultants.

9. CALL ANNEXES

1. Grant Application form
2. Selection criteria and selection procedure