

Programul “Dezvoltare locală, reducerea sărăciei și creșterea incluziunii romilor”
finanțat prin Granturile SEE și Norvegiene 2014-2021

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS FOR BILATERAL FUNDS

CALL 1

Call for proposals for bilateral initiatives aiming to identify partners for donor partnership projects, the development of such partnerships and the preparation of an application for a donor partnership project to be submitted under the Local Development Programme

**”Local Development, Poverty Reduction and
Enhanced Roma Inclusion” Programme
(Local Development)**

EEA and Norwegian Grants 2014 – 2021

**Bucharest
January 2019**

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1. General Information about the Programme and the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021

1.1. Objectives, priority sectors and programme areas covered by the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021

The Programme “Local Development, Poverty Reduction and Enhanced Roma Inclusion” (Local Development) is implemented by the Romanian Social Development Fund (RSDF), as Programme Operator (PO), in partnership with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) (as Donor Programme Partner/ DPP) and Council of Europe (CoE) (as International Partner Organisation/ IPO) and is financed under the European Economic Area (EEA) and Norway Grants 2014-2021.

The overall objectives of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 are to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area and to strengthen bilateral relations between the Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) and the Beneficiary States through financial contributions in 5 priority sectors:

1. Innovation, Research, Education and Competitiveness
2. Social Inclusion, Youth Employment and Poverty Reduction
3. Environment, Energy, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy
4. Culture, Civil Society, Good Governance, and Fundamental Rights and Freedoms
5. Justice and Home Affairs

The Local Development Programme is covering 5 out of the 23 programme areas targeted by the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021, respectively:

1. Local Development and Poverty Reduction
2. Roma Inclusion and Empowerment
3. Human Rights - national implementation
4. Children and Youth at Risk
5. Good governance, Accountable Institutions, Transparency

1.2. Programme objectives and actions

Following the objectives of the 5 programme areas, the Programme is aiming to enhance Roma inclusion and empowerment, and social inclusion of children and youth at risk, to increase the use of social services by disadvantaged groups, to increase the knowledge of central and local government to enact good governance principles, and to increase the implementation of the recommendations made by the European Court of Human Rights for Romania.

The overall objective of the Local Development Programme is to actively contribute to strengthening the social and economic cohesion at national and local level in Romania. By facilitating cooperation and partnerships between entities from Romania and Donor States,

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the Programme will also contribute to strengthening bilateral relations between Donor States and Romania.

For achieving these objectives, 5 specific calls for project proposals will be launched under the Programme, in the following areas: Local Development, Poverty Reduction, Children and Youth at Risk, Roma Inclusion, and Human Rights. Other two calls will be launched under the two Small Grant Schemes, respectively: Roma Inclusion and Local Development.

Apart from the calls for project proposals, 4 pre-defined projects will be financed under the Programme, as follows:

1. “Sustainable social and education integration through sport activities” implemented by the National University for Physical Education and Sports (UNEFS) Bucharest, in partnership with the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences;
2. “INCLUDE - Inclusion of Children and Youth at Risk” implemented by the Council of Europe in partnership with Romanian stakeholders;
3. “Capacity building in the field of public governance – a coordinated approach of the Centre of the Government of Romania” implemented by the General Secretary of the Government, in partnership with OECD; and
4. “Improving access and quality of services to citizens” proposed by the Romanian Association of Communes (ACoR), in partnership with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) and with the Association of Romanian Municipalities (AMR).

The overall budget of the Programme is 82,352,941 Euro, out of which 70,000,000 Euro EEA and Norway Grants (25,000,000 Euro EEA Grants and 45,000,000 Norway Grants) and 12,352,941 Euro national contribution.

1.3. Bilateral relations under the Programme

Strengthening bilateral relations between Donor States and Beneficiary States is a major concern of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 and therefore of the Programme. In this respect, the Programme “Local Development, Poverty Reduction and Enhanced Roma Inclusion” encourages and provides support to entities in Romania and Donor States acting in the Programme areas in order to meet, share information and experiences, discuss/ agree about future cooperation, establish partnerships and develop donor partnership projects to be financed under the Programme.

Cooperation between entities in Romania, mainly Project Promoters and project partners who are receiving funds under the Programme, and entities from Donor States are encouraged and facilitated in order to make possible transfer of knowledge, experiences and best practices necessary in the preparation, implementation and sustainability of projects and, thus, on short term, to improve the implementation and results of the projects financed under the Programme and, on long term, to strengthen bilateral relations between the Donor States and Romania.

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In this respect, the action plan for bilateral activities developed under the Programme provides many opportunities for bilateral exchanges and cooperation, such as: calls and other facilities to access bilateral funds by eligible entities in Romania and Donor States, seminars for identifying partners for donor partnership projects (match making seminars), study visits in Romania and Donor States, meetings, trainings and international conferences, etc.

Among the calls and facilities to access bilateral funds, two are providing support for bilateral initiatives aiming (but not limited) to search for partners for donor partnership projects, the development of such partnerships and the joint preparation of an application for a donor partnership project.

The present guide regulates the way in which are submitted, evaluated and selected the application forms for Call 1 - call for proposals for bilateral initiatives aiming to identify partners for donor partnership projects, the development of such partnerships and the preparation of an application for a donor partnership project to be submitted under the Local Development Programme.

2. Conditions for accessing funds for bilateral relations related to the Call 1

2.1. Eligible applicants and potential project partners

Are eligible to apply for funding:

- Romanian entities that meet the eligibility criteria for Project Promoters or project partners specific to the calls for project proposals launched under the Programme;
- entities from Donor States that meet the eligibility criteria for project partners specific to the calls for project proposals launched under the Programme.

Considering the source of funding for each call for project proposals, they are eligible to initiate, submit and participate in bilateral initiatives funded under Call 1:

- in case of the restricted call for project proposals "Poverty Alleviation", funded by Norway Grants: eligible entities from Romania and Norway;
- in case of the call for project proposals "Inclusive Education for Children and Youth at Risk", funded by Norway Grants: eligible entities from Romania and Norway;
- in case of the call for project proposals "Acces to Funding", funded by EEA Grants: eligible entities from Romania, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway;
- in case of the call for project proposals "Local Development", funded by Norway Grants: eligible entities from Romania and Norway;
- in case of the call for project proposals "Roma Inclusion", funded by EEA Grants: eligible entities from Romania, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway;

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- in case of the call for project proposals "Express Interventions", funded by EEA Grants: eligible entities from Romania, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway;
- in case of the call for project proposals "Human Rights", funded by EEA Grants: eligible entities from Romania, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

In the **application form** for bilateral funds, the applicant and his potential partner (if it is identified at the time when the application for funding for bilateral relations is submitted) will need to demonstrate their previous experience in one of the Programme areas and to specify the call for project proposals in which they intend to submit a project – in order for the Programme Operator (PO) to be able to assess their eligibility in accordance with the specific criteria for the respective call for project proposals. Therefore, even if the grant for a bilateral initiative will not be conditioned by the submission and approval of a donor partnership project under one of the calls launched under the Programme, at the time of submitting the application, the applicant, and his potential project partner, if the case, must demonstrate that:

- meet/s the eligibility criteria for Project Promoters and project partners specific to the call for project proposals launched under the Programme in which they intend to submit a project. In this respect, the applicant and his potential partner (if it is identified at the time when the application for funding for bilateral relations is submitted) will submit, attached to the application form for bilateral funds, a **statement on eligibility** using the template presented in the Annexes. If needed, during the appraisal of the application form, the Programme Operator may request any documentation to support this statement;
- the bilateral initiative submitted for financing is in line with the general and specific objectives of that call for project proposals launched under the Programme and this call is active on the date of submission of the bilateral initiative;
- it has at least one project idea eligible within the targeted call for project proposals, to be discussed with the potential partner/s from Donor States/ Romania at their planned bilateral meeting/s.

An entity/ applicant can receive funding for a single bilateral initiative submitted under the Call 1.

2.2. Eligible activities

In accordance with the provisions of Article 8.8, points (a) and (b), of the Regulations and of the Bilateral Guidelines (Chapter 3.4.3) eligible activities will consist mainly of (but not limited to):

- search for partners (eligible under the Programme) for donor partnership projects prior to or during the preparation of a project application;
- the development of such partnerships and joint preparation and submission of an application for a donor partnership project.

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Within the Call 1, bilateral meetings between relevant entities in Romania and the Donor States will be funded, aimed at mutual knowledge, identifying common interests in the Programme areas, exploring the possibility of joint involvement in the preparation, submission and implementation of a project eligible within the Programme, respectively the signing of a letter of interest on future collaboration, the preparation of the partnership agreement and/ or the preparation/ completion of a project application to be submitted under an open call opened under the Local Development Programme. The participating organizations shall reserve a part of the planned time for the detailed discussions on the budget for the future project, according to the conditions of the specific call.

An application could propose one or more meetings, in Romania and/ or in Donor States.

The duration of a trip abroad in order to participate in the planned bilateral meeting/s should not exceed 5 days (including travel). To justify the duration of the trip, the applicant will submit together with the application form the following information (in one or several documents):

- **letter of invitation** (may be in the form of an e-mail) from the organizers of the bilateral meeting/ activity addressed to participants from abroad;
- **agenda** for the meeting/activity, to justify the proposed duration of the trip (may be in the form of an e-mail);
- **confirmation** from the participants from abroad that they will attend the meeting/ bilateral activity (may be in the form of an e-mail).

Bilateral activities should be planned before the deadline for submission of the project at the envisaged call for project proposals.

2.3. Eligible costs

In order to be authorized by the Programme Operator, expenses made by the beneficiaries of bilateral funds must comply with the provisions of Article 8.8 of the Regulations on eligible costs.

Eligible categories of expenditure are the following:

- the travel costs of the participants to the bilateral meetings/activities approved by the PO, namely transport and subsistence allowance, comprising accommodation and daily allowance (covering meals, local transport, travel insurance, telephone, exchange rates, tariff differences, etc.);
- meeting costs (eg: consumables, translation, rent room for hosting the meeting, etc.);
- any costs needed to prepare the application form/ project or to develop/ conclude the partnership (eg: costs of preparing feasibility studies or preparing some economic and financial analyzes necessary for the submission of the project, costs of acquiring some data necessary for preparation of the application, etc.);

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- other costs needed for the implementation of the bilateral activities (eg: costs of the audit services, according to the Art. 6.6.1 of the Bilateral Guideline, EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014 – 2021).

Travel costs (accommodation, transport and daily subsistence – including meals, local transport, travel insurance, phone calls, exchange rates, tariff differences) of participants in bilateral activities funded under the Call 1 will be calculated by the applicant based on the lump sums set out in the Order of the Minister of European Funds no. 348/2018, approving the Rules for the application of lump sums for travel financed under the Fund for Bilateral Relations and the Fund for Technical Assistance of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021 (published in the Official Gazette no. 429/ 21.05.2018), respectively:

For traveling abroad:

- for external travel to Norway: 220 EUR/day¹ + 600 EUR
- for external travel to Iceland: 245 EUR/day¹ + 900 EUR
- for external travel to Liechtenstein: 175 EUR/day¹ + 500 EUR
- for external travel to Romania: 160 EUR/day¹ + 800 EUR

For internal travel, in Romania:

- 110 EUR/day + lump sum for transport²

To calculate no. of the kilometers spent in order to determine the amount for the transport both for internal and external travel, applicants will use the websites http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources_en or <https://www.viamichelin.com/>.

In exceptional cases, where the Romanian beneficiary/ entity can not apply the Order no. 348/2018, the travel expenses will be settled/ accepted on the basis of the provisions of HG 1860/ 21.12.2006 and HG 518/ 10.07.1995, updated/ with the subsequent amendments and completions.

When lump sums are used, no other costs for participants related to travel, accommodation, meals, and communications should be considered eligible. According to the provisions of Order no. 348/2018, lump sums shall be justified by documents proving the travel, respectively boarding passes³ and travel reports approved by the leader of the sending organization, and shall be authorized only if the expected results of the action are fulfilled.

¹ the lump sum is granted for an entire day (24 hours), not for fractions

² 20 EUR for a distance beetwin 10 and 99 km/ 180 EUR for a distance beetwin 100 and 499 km/ 275 EUR for a distance beetwin 500 and 1,999 km

³ if the travel is done with the passenger car, instead of the boarding pass, the order to travel including the specification of the car number, will be presented because it contains the information necessary to verify that the participant traveled, the date of departure and return, the route, the stamp from hotel etc. If several participants are traveling with one car, only one transportation amount will be accepted.

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The other eligible costs requested by the applicant, if any, will be settled/ accepted based on the real costs, proved by Romanian beneficiaries with proper supporting documents and by the beneficiaries from Donor States with audit reports or reports issued by a competent and independent public officer recognized by the relevant national authorities as having a budget and financial control capacity over the entity incurring the costs and who has not been involved in the preparation of the financial statements, certifying that the claimed costs are incurred in accordance with the Regulation, the relevant law and national accounting practices (see art. 8.12.4 of to the Regulations).

All costs declared ineligible or unauthorized by the PO will be supported by the Beneficiary and/ or its partners, as the case may be.

2.4. The total financial allocation

The total amount of funds allocated for bilateral initiatives to be financed under the Call 1 is 50,000 Euro, covering the maximum costs of 10 (potential) eligible applications.

Depending on the needs (number and value of applications submitted by applicants/ approved by the PO), the amounts allocated for the Call 1 may be revised (reduced or supplemented, as the case may be). Any decision to revise the total amount allocated for the Call 1 will be published on the PO website, www.frds.ro.

2.5. Grant size and grant rate

The maximum amount of grant that can be allocated to an application is 5,000 Euro.

The funding rate is 100%. The applicant does not have to contribute financially (to provide a contribution, co-financing, etc.) for the implementation of the approved bilateral activities, but only to cover those costs that exceed 5,000 Euro, as well as the costs declared ineligible, if any.

2.6. Submission of the application form

Funds available under the Call 1 will be awarded exclusively on the basis of an application form written in English, using the template presented in the Annexes.

Eligible applicants can submit applications under the Call 1 starting with January 21, 2019. The Call 1 will be continuous and will be closed on June 5, 2020, at 15:00, when PO estimates that all the calls for project proposals planned to be launched under the Programme will be (near to be) closed.

Attention: Considering that the applications for funds for bilateral relations will cover preparation of eligible projects within all the 7 calls for proposals organized under the

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Programme and that these 7 calls have different deadlines for submitting the projects, also within the Call 1 were established intermediary deadlines for submitting applications, for each call for project proposals. These intermediary deadlines were established at about 30 days before the deadline of the respective call for project proposals, so that applicants have enough time (about one month from the date of approval) to conduct bilateral activities proposed and to submit the project in partnership with at least one entity from Donor States, within the deadline for that call for project proposals.

In this respect, there were established as interim deadlines for submission of applications to Call 1 the following dates¹:

- February 28, 2019, for the applications for bilateral funds aimed at preparing and submitting a donor partnership project under the restricted call for proposals "Poverty Alleviation", launched on December 6, 2018, with the deadline for submitting March 28, 2019;
- March 1st, 2019, for the applications for bilateral funds aimed at preparing and submitting a donor partnership project under the call for proposals "Inclusive Education for Children and Youth at Risk", launched on December 12, 2018, having as deadline for submitting April 4, 2019;
- February 28, 2019 (tbc.), for the applications for bilateral funds aimed at preparing and submitting a donor partnership project under the call for proposals "Acces to Funding", scheduled to be launched on January 28, 2019, having as deadline for submitting March 29, 2019;
- July 26, 2019 (tbc.), for the applications for bilateral funds aimed at preparing and submitting a donor partnership project under the call for proposals "Local Development", scheduled to be launched on May 15, 2019, having as deadline for submitting August 28, 2019;
- September 6, 2019 (tbc.), for the applications for bilateral funds aimed at preparing and submitting a donor partnership project under the call for proposals "Roma Inclusion", scheduled to be launched on June 27, 2019, having as deadline for submitting October 7, 2019;
- February 7, 2020 (tbc.), for the applications for bilateral funds aimed at preparing and submitting a donor partnership project under the call for proposals "Priority Interventions", scheduled to be launched on March 10, 2020, having as deadline for submitting May 25, 2020;
- June 5, 2020 (tbc.), for the applications for bilateral funds aimed at preparing and submitting a donor partnership project under the call for proposals "Human Rights", scheduled to be launched on April 8, 2020, having as deadline for submitting July 9, 2020.

The Call 1 could be closed earlier (but only during the last call for project proposals), if all the funds (including those reallocated, if applicable) related to Call 1, including those allocated

¹ the deadline for submitting applications under the call for project proposals are estimated, and will be set at the actual launch of the calls

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to the last call for project proposals (Human Rights) were already assigned.

If necessary, the OP will be able to modify or extend both the final deadline and the interim deadlines for the submission of bilateral initiatives under the Call 1, as appropriate (mainly to adjust it to the deadlines for the calls for project proposals).

Any decision to change/ postpone the interim deadlines and the final deadline will be published on the PO website, www.frds.ro.

Application file will contain all the following documents:

- application form, written in English, using the standard form published by the PO;
- statement of eligibility, written by the applicant, using the standard form published by PO;
- statement of eligibility, written by the potential partner (if it has already been identified), using the standard form published by PO;
- letter of invitation (may be in the form of an e-mail) from the organizers of the bilateral meeting/ activity addressed to participants from abroad;
- agenda for the meeting/activity, to justify the proposed duration of the trip (may be in the form of an e-mail);
- confirmation from the participants from abroad that they will attend the meeting/ bilateral activity (may be in the form of an e-mail).

Application file will be submitted in 2 hard copies (original and copy), in a sealed envelope, personally, by courier or mail (return receipt requested), at the PO office in Bucharest:

Fondul Român de Dezvoltare Socială (FRDS)

Str. Eugeniu Carada nr. 1, etaj 3, sector 3, București, cod poștal 030057

In the envelope, the applicant will also provide, on CD or USB stick, an electronic copy of the required documents (as listed above), assumed by the applicant to be identical with the printed copy of these documents.

The following information will be mentioned on the envelope:

EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014 – 2021

Programme “Local Development and Poverty Reduction, Enhanced Roma Inclusion”

Type of application: [*bilateral funds*]

Name of the applicant:

Nationality of the applicant:

Application file must be sent no later than the **interim deadline announced**, depending on the targeted call for project proposals. If it is sent by mail or courier, postmark (attested by stamp applied on the envelope) or the date when the envelope was received by courier service must be no later than the interim deadline announced (deadline day, at 24:00). If the

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file will be submitted personally, it must be submitted no later than the interim deadline announced, at 15:00/ 3:00 PM.

Applications submitted by fax or e-mail, and those that were submitted after the interim deadline will not be considered for appraisal.

After the interim deadline for submission of applications, the applicant can not amend or revise the application at its initiative.

The applicant may choose to withdraw the application file from the competition at any time prior to the approval of PO. In this case, the PO will return, upon request, the original file and will keep a copy of it.

PO will make public the awarded applications and the allocated amounts on www.frds.ro.

2.7. Evaluation and selection of the applications

Bilateral initiatives submitted under Call 1 will be evaluated and approved on the basis of the "first come, first served" principle, as far as they meet administrative and eligibility conditions as well as a minimum set of content criteria. Only the application forms submitted by eligible applicants will be taken into account for evaluation and approval.

The evaluation and approval of the bilateral initiatives submitted under Call 1 involves the following three steps:

1. Administrative and eligibility verification

Application file submitted will be assessed by PO, in order to verify if it meet all the administrative and eligibility criteria, respectively if:

- the Application File was submitted in time (on or after January 21, 2019, and before the announced interim/ final deadline);
- the application form has been submitted under the required conditions (personally, by post or courier; in two prints, one original, signed by the legal representative, and one copy of it, with attached CD/ USB stick on which the identical copy of the application file is presented, in electronic format; in a sealed envelope containing the information specified in this Guide);
- the application form was submitted using the standard form published by the PO;
- all the applicable sections of the application form are completed and are elaborated in English;
- the statement on eligibility was submitted by the applicant under the conditions required by the PO (in English, in the standard format published by the PO, complete, in original, with headers, signed);

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- the statement on eligibility was submitted by the potential project partner (if applicable/ already identified), under the conditions required by the PO (in English, in the standard format published by the PO, complete, in original, with headers, signed);
- the potential Project Promoter is eligible under the call for project proposals envisaged by the applicant;
- the potential project partner (if applicable) is eligible under the call for project proposals envisaged by the applicant;
- the letter of invitation from the organizers of the bilateral meeting/ activity addressed to participants from abroad, the agenda for the meeting/activity, and the confirmation from the participants from abroad that they will attend the meeting/ bilateral activity are attached to the application form;
 - the proposed bilateral activities are eligible;
 - the costs proposed for the implementation of the bilateral activities are eligible;
 - the requested amount falls within the maximum ceiling of 5,000 Euro;
 - bilateral activities are planned before the deadline for submission of the project at the envisaged call for project proposals.

All these criteria must be met so that the application form passes the administrative and eligibility stage. The Administrative and Eligibility Verification Grid is presented in the Annexes.

During the administrative and eligibility verification, the PO may ask the applicant for further information and documents.

The results of the administrative and eligibility verification will be communicated by the PO to the applicant within 10 days after the registration of the application form.

The applicant may appeal in writing on the rejection of the application form within a maximum of 30 working days from the date on which it was notified of the results of the administrative and eligibility verification. The appeal must be justified. The final result of the administrative and eligibility verification will be communicated by the PO to the applicant in writing, within 3 working days after the registration of the appeal to the PO and will be published on the PO's website.

2. Content evaluation

All the applications declared eligible will be evaluated on the basis of content criteria such as:

- stage of project development;
- the stage of identifying the partner in order to conclude the partnership for the project;
- the experience of potential partners in the project area;

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- the justification of the partnership and the added value it brings in the preparation and implementation of the project;
- medium and long term implications of proposed partnership;
- expected results/ outputs of the bilateral activities planned;
- relevance and justification of the planned activities and the costs.

The Content Evaluation Grid for Call 1 is presented in the Annexes.

An application may be proposed for approval only if, following the content evaluation, it receives at least 60 points.

3. Approval

The decision on the approval or rejection of the applications submitted under the Call 1 is taken by the Cooperation Committee¹ (CC) established at the Programme level, after analysing the results of the content evaluation.

In case of approval of an application, the CC may, if necessary, amend the budget proposed by the applicant, and also can set conditions to be met by the Beneficiary. If the CC proposes the conditional approval of the application, the PO will notify the applicant in writing of these conditions and will only issue the financing decision if the applicant fulfills all the conditions required by the CC.

If the CC decide to unconditionally approve or to reject the application, the PO will inform the applicant within 5 working days of the date of the CC decision.

All documents/ results related to the evaluation process of applications submitted under Call 1 will be confidential until the final decision is taken.

If necessary, the CC may also approve reserve lists, with applications that could be approved if available funds will be identified.

The PO will be able to reject or withdraw funding for an application at any time, if it proves that a double funding is identified (the Beneficiary has already received/will receive a funding for planned/ realized bilateral activities (fully or partially), whichever is the source of their funding). If double funding is discovered after approval and financing of the application, the Beneficiary will return the entire amount transferred by the PO, including the related penalties.

In the case of applications rejected by the CC there is no appeal procedure.

¹ Cooperation Committee is a body consisting of representatives from Program Operator (RSDF), Donor Programme Partner (KS) and International Partner Organisation (CoE). Representatives of National Focal Point and Financial Mechanism Committee/ Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs participate as observers.

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2.8. Reporting and payments

As beneficiaries, entities whose bilateral initiatives have been approved under the Call 1 will sign with the PO a financing contract (the template of which is presented in the Annexes).

In order to carry out the approved bilateral activities, upon request (see Request for Advance Payment presented in the Annexes), the public entities in Romania, as beneficiaries, will be able to receive as pre-financing an advance payment of up to 100 % of the approved grant.

The other beneficiaries (NGO in Romania, entities from Donor States) will be eligible for pre-financing and an advance payment of up to 60% of the approved grant amount. The difference of up to 100% of the amount of the approved grant will be granted to them after the Beneficiaries have submitted the Financial Intermediate Report (FIR) and an Interim Payment Request (see the FIR and Interim Payment Request templates in the Annexes) respectively after the approval of the report and the authorization by the PO of the expenditures declared in the report.

Authorization of the expenditure declared as being made from the amount received as advance payment is made following the financial verification of the FIR, as follows:

- in the case of the amounts approved based on the lump sums method, the authorization is made on the basis of documents proving the payment of the lump sums to persons designated to participate in the approved bilateral activities (the account statements documenting the transfers);
- in the case of amounts approved based on the real cost method, authorization is made on the basis of the supporting documents regarding all the expenses declared in the report.

Within maximum 30 days after the completion of all approved bilateral activities, the Beneficiary will submit to the PO, personally, by post or courier, the Report on Bilateral Activities (its format is presented in the Annexes), accompanied by the following supporting documents:

- for the travel costs in Romania and abroad, calculated using the lump sums, also the beneficiaries from Romania and Donor States or the International Organisations will provide: the boarding passes for all flights/ travel orders of each participant, travel report approved by the leader of the sending organization, and the statements of the bank account or the payment orders, in order to justify the amounts received by each participant;
- for the other costs, calculated using the real cost method:
 - o the beneficiaries/ entities from Donor States/ International Organisations will provide, according to art. 8.12.4 of the Regulations, an audit report or a report issued by a competent and independent public officer recognized by the relevant national

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authorities as having a budget and financial control capacity over the entity incurring the costs and who has not been involved in the preparation of the financial statements, certifying that the claimed costs are incurred in accordance with the Regulation, the relevant law and national accounting practices;

- the Romanian beneficiaies will provide a report on procurements and the procurement files (if applicable), invoices, transport tickets, tax vouchers, other documents.

Attention: the report will have an OPIS/ list of documents. The documents attached to the report have to be organized on the main sections (technical, financial, procurement etc.) and their pages have to be numbered in order specified in the OPIS/ list of documents!

Each Beneficiary has the obligation to record in his own accounting the financial operations of the grant, according to the generally accepted accounting principles and to keep analytical accounting for this grant. Analytical accounts shall be coded in such a way as to allow easy identification of the accounts. Attached to the Report on Bilateral Activities, Romanian beneficiaries will also provide accounts sheets/ records, to justify all financial transactions.

On each original payment document the Romanian beneficiaries will apply the following phrase: (1) "Funded by the Local Development Programme - bilateral initiatives, contract no. ... from the date of ... ". On the supporting documents that involve payments (eg travel orders, payment arrangements, tax bills, invoices, expense statements, etc.), the Romanian beneficiaries will also apply the phrase: (2) „Endorsed for payment for the amount of.....”, name, surname and signature of the responsible person (with these attributions) designated by the Beneficiary.

On each copy of a supporting document attached to the Report the beneficiaries will apply, in original, the term «According to the original», the signature of the legal representative of the organization and its stamp.

The audit report and the report issued by a competent and independent public officer, provided by the entities in the Donor States, must comply with the provisions of the Regulations (see Article 8.12.4).

Beneficiaries will also attach to the Report on Bilateral Activities any other relevant document showing how the approved bilateral activities were implemented and promoted (for example, photos taken during activities, press releases and/ or press articles and/ or announcements published on the sites/ social media accounts of entities participating in bilateral activities or on other relevant sites/ social media accounts related, informative materials/ communication products, reports/ studies etc. elaborated/ used during the activities, etc.).

The promotion of the bilateral activities/ initiatives and the dissemination of their results, at least on the Beneficiaries’ website and/ or on their own social media accounts, is mandatory

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and should be documented in the Report on Bilateral Activities. Failure to do so may result in withdrawal of funding/ unauthorizing the expenses.

To justify the grant, the Beneficiary will attach to the Report a minutes of the meeting/ a joint statement, signed by all participants in the meeting/ bilateral activities, attesting their participation and the conclusions of the meeting/ activities, as well as the final agenda, justifying the funded duration of the trip abroad.

If any other deliverables are made during the bilateral activities (partnership agreement, project/ application form/ project budget, letter of intent/ agreement for future cooperation etc.), whether they are in a final or intermediate form, should also be attached to the Report on Bilateral Activities.

For more details on reporting and payment terms, please read the contract template, attached to this guide.

The Report must be provided by the beneficiaries both in original and in electronic format. The electronic version should be sent by e-mail to bilaterale@frds.ro, while the paper version, signed and stamped, with all relevant annexes, should be submitted personally or by post/ courier to the PO headquarters in Bucharest:

Fondul Român de Dezvoltare Socială (FRDS)

Str. Eugeniu Carada nr. 1, etaj 3, sector 3, București, cod poștal 030057

3. Other useful information

3.1. Facilitation of partners identification

To identify potential partners from Donor States, entities from Romania may consult the following sources of information:

- a database of NGOs in Norway is available here: <http://www.ngonorway.org/bilateral-partnerships/finding-partners>
- a facility for identification of partners among local or regional authorities in Norway is available on the website of The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) - www.ks.no
- information on potential partners among local authorities in Iceland can be searched on the website of the Icelandic Association of Local Authorities – <http://www.samband.is/um-okkur/english/>

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Eligible entities from Romania and the Donor States interested to attend match-making seminars (seminars that bring together entities from Romania and Donor States, aiming to facilitate bilateral partnerships for development and implementation of donor partnership projects) are invited to submit an expression of interest at bilaterale@frds.ro. Based on these letters of interest, PO will communicate directly to these entities details on the date and the goals of the match-making seminars to be organized under the Programme.

PO will organize match-making seminars only for the calls "Inclusive Education for Children and Youth at Risk", "Local Development", "Roma Inclusion", and "Human Rights" and only if there will be requests also from eligible entities from the Donor States.

3.2. Help-desk services

During the period when the calls for project proposals and for bilateral funds will be opened, potential applicants may receive, on request, help desk services through which the PO will respond to requests for information and clarification received directly at its headquarters in Bucharest, by phone or e-mail.

Those who are interested may send questions about bilateral funds allocated to Call 1 no later than 10 working days before the interim deadline for applications announced. PO will address these requests immediately (for example, in case of a phone call), or if a more elaborate response is needed, within 3 working days after receiving the question/ request for clarification.

Any entity (potential Project Promoter, project partner or Beneficiary) interested in obtaining more details on bilateral funds allocated to Call 1 can contact PO:

- by e-mail, at info@frds.ro
- by phone, from Monday to Friday, based on a programme posted on the PO website: <http://frds.ro/index.php?id=136> (www.frds.ro/ Programul Dezvoltare locala/ Help Desk)

4. Annexes

1. Application form
2. Statement on eligibility for potential Project Promoters and project partners
3. Administrative and eligibility verification grid
4. Content evaluation grid
5. Financing contract
6. Request for Advance Payment
7. Interim Payment Request
8. Financial Intermediate Report
9. Notification for budget transfers
10. Report on Bilateral Activities
11. Partnership agreement