

EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021

Fund for Bilateral Relations

Call for bilateral initiatives proposals - Timișoara European Capital of Culture 2023

1. The EEA and Norway Grants and the Fund for Bilateral Relations

The **EEA and Norway Grants** represent the contribution of **Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein** to reduced social and economic disparities within the European Economic Area and to strengthen bilateral relations with the 15 beneficiary states in southern and central Europe. More information is available on www.eeagrants.ro

The Fund for Bilateral Relations was set-up within the EEA and Norway Grants in order to support initiatives between entities in **Romania** and entities in **Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein** (**hereinafter called the “Donor States”**) with the specific objective of **strengthening bilateral relations**, i.e. enhanced cooperation and improved mutual knowledge and understanding between Romania and the Donor States. The Fund is managed by the National Focal Point for the EEA and Norway Grants in Romania.

2. Context and purpose of the call

"European Capital of Culture" is a European Union initiative aiming to highlight the richness and diversity of cultures in Europe, celebrate the cultural features Europeans share, increase European citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural area and foster the contribution of culture to the development of cities.

Timisoara was designated European Capital of Culture for the year 2021, with the project concept **“Shine your light – Light up your city!”** (more information available on timisoara2021.ro).

The present call aims to finance **bilateral initiatives**, developed and carried out in cooperation between Romanian and Donor States entities, in the context of **Timisoara European Capital of Culture 2023**. The initiatives shall aim to strengthen the cooperation and increase mutual knowledge and understanding between **Romania, Norway, Iceland and/or Liechtenstein**.

3. Who can apply?

Any public or private entity, as well as non-governmental organisations, established as a legal person either in the Donor States or Romania are considered **eligible promoters and partners**.

Public entities and non-governmental organisations established as a legal person in an EEA and Norway Grants Beneficiary State or a country outside the European Economic Area that has a common border with Romania are also **eligible as partners** of bilateral initiatives.

Note: Authorities or institutions financed from public funds may establish partnership agreements with private entities in Romania only by applying a transparent and non-discriminatory procedure for the selection of partners from the private sector.

4. What activities are supported?

The organisation of events, workshops, conferences, seminars, campaigns, festivals, artistic productions, exhibitions, fairs, etc. aiming at the sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practice between Romania and the Donor States, in relevant fields, such as:

- cultural and creative sectors,
- preservation and use of cultural heritage,
- promotion of cultural and ethnic diversity and inter-cultural dialogue,
- sustainable urban development, green city, smart city, city of the future, new technologies.
- connections/lessons learned/cooperation/crossovers to European Capitals of Culture from the Donors States (e.g. Bergen 2000, Stavanger 2008 and Bodø 2024)

Each initiative must include cooperation between one or more legal persons in one of the Donor States and one or more legal persons in Romania

Note: The above-mentioned types of activities are not limitative. Activities of the bilateral initiative other than the above mentioned may be considered eligible, if the Promoter justifies the need to carry them out for the purpose of the bilateral initiative.

Note: Events must reflect the bilateral ambition throughout the event programme, e.g. through a focus on exchanging relevant experiences between the Donor States and Romania. Both Promoters and Partners shall be actively involved in planning and organising the activity.

Note: This call does **not grant support for economic or commercial activities** (the grant will cover 100% of the eligible costs) and bilateral initiatives that generate income will not be accepted for financing (e.g. attendance to cultural events shall be free and any tickets issued will be free of charge).

5. What is the available budget?

The budget made available for the present call is **€2,000,000**. The available budget may be increased, based on the number and quality of received applications.

6. What are the conditions for financing and payments?

- Financing rate: 100%
- Minimum grant amount: €50,000
- Maximum grant amount: €100,000
- Payments towards Promoters of selected bilateral initiatives shall be made either as pre-financing or reimbursement (in accordance Government Emergency Ordinance no. 34/2017)
 - for public entities - pre-financing of up to 100% of the grant amount or reimbursement of incurred expenditures
 - for private entities - advance payment of up to 70% of the grant amount and a final payment of up to 30% or reimbursement of incurred expenditures

7. What expenditures are supported?

7.1 Conditions for the eligibility of expenditures

In order to be considered eligible, expenditures must be incurred effectively by the Promoter or partner and meet the following conditions:

- (a) to be incurred between the first and the last eligibility day according to the financing contract;
- (b) to be connected with the subject of the financing contract and indicated in the estimated overall budget of the bilateral initiative;
- (c) to be proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the bilateral initiative;
- (d) to be used for the sole purpose of achieving the objective(s) of the bilateral initiative and its expected results, in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

7.2 Types of expenditures considered eligible

- (a) costs for the organization of bilateral events;
- (b) international and internal travel costs, provided as lump sum, according to the provisions of MoEF Order 348/2018. If the provisions of this Order are not applied, travel costs will be provided in accordance with the national legislation regulating travel costs for public sector staff;
- (c) fees and salary costs, provided that they are strictly related to the implementation of the bilateral activities and achievement of results (salary costs for “project management” are not eligible);
- (d) costs related to promotional and information activities;
- (e) registration fees, if applicable;
- (f) exchange rate losses, provided that they are due to exchange rate fluctuations and can be covered from the grant (e.g. the unfavourable exchange rate differences resulting from the operations carried out by the Promoter or of the Partner, related to the financial transactions, shall be considered eligible expenditures, if their value falls under the total budget of the initiative);
- (g) costs of audit for the purpose of certification of expenditures made by promoters/partners from states or beneficiary states other than Romania;
- (h) VAT, donor provided that it cannot be recovered by the promoter and/or partner;
- (i) bank fees/charges for financial transactions strictly related to the requirements of the financing contract or partnership agreement (such as transfers to partners).

7.3 Excluded costs

- (a) interest on debt, debt service charges and late payment charges;
- (b) charges for financial transactions and other purely financial costs, except costs related to accounts required by the National Focal Point or the applicable law and costs of financial services imposed by the initiative contract;
- (c) provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- (d) fines, penalties and costs of litigation
- (e) exchange rate losses (e.g. if a promoter/partner spent the full euro amount but not the whole budget in local currency, the grant paid from the initiative will not support any amount beyond the initiative grant awarded in euro);
- (f) recoverable VAT;

- (g) costs that are covered by other sources;
- (h) excessive or reckless expenditure;
- (i) indirect costs.

8. How do we verify the expenditure declared?

Costs incurred by promoters and partners shall be supported by receipted invoices, or alternatively by accounting documents of equivalent probative value. Where activities are implemented in the framework of competitive tendering procedures, payments by promoters and partners shall be supported by receipted invoices based on the signed contracts.

8.1. For Romanian entities

Costs claimed by Romanian promoters and partners shall be supported by the submission of proof of expenditure - receipted invoices, or alternatively by accounting documents of equivalent probative value. All the procurement within the initiative shall be verified according to applicable legislation (all documents related to procurement shall be requested) (detailed in Annex 5).

8.2. For Donor State entities

A report by an independent and certified auditor, certifying that the claimed costs are incurred in accordance with the Regulations for the implementation of the EEA and Norway Grants, the national law and accounting practices of the initiative partner's country, shall be seen as sufficient proof of costs incurred. **Donor States entities** may also opt for a competent public officer to provide a report, certifying that the claimed costs are incurred in accordance with the Regulations for the implementation of the EEA and Norway Grants, the national law and accounting practices of the initiative partner's country, provided that the relevant national authorities have established the legal capacity of that competent public officer to audit that entity and that the independence of that officer, in particular regarding the preparation of the financial statements, can be ensured.

9. What are the conditions for procurement?

Promoters and partners shall comply with the applicable national and European Union law on public procurement in the implementation of the bilateral initiative.

10. What are the deadlines?

Date of launching of the open call: **17 March 2021**

Date of closing of the open call: **20 December 2021**, 16:00 hours the latest (Romanian time).

End date for the implementation of the initiatives: **31 December 2023**.

11. How to apply?

Applications under this call shall be submitted via the web-module developed on the www.eegrants.ro website, managed by the National Focal Point, available at t2023.eegrants.ro.

The application file contains the following data/documents:

- the grant application form (annex 1) signed by the legal representative and scanned;
- declaration of eligibility (annex 2) signed by the legal representative and scanned;
- declaration on the processing of personal data (annex 3), signed by the legal representative and scanned;

- partnership agreement (Annex 4), required only if the partner manages a part of the budget) or letters of intent signed by partner that confirm the involvement in the activities of the bilateral initiative;

Note: All the documents shall be prepared in Romanian or English.

Procedure of submission:

1. Fill in the contact and identification information: title of the initiative, promoter, contact person, telephone number, e-mail address;
2. Fill in each Annex with all the requested information;
3. Scan each Annex at **300 dpi in PDF file format**. Make sure that the total size of each document does **not exceed 10MB**;
4. Upload all the documents of the application using a single web session on the dedicated web-address: t2023.eagrants.ro.
5. After filling-in all the information and uploading all the documents, confirm and then submit the application, no later than the deadline mentioned at point 10 of the Call.

Note: The application can be submitted only after filling-in all the fields and uploading all the requested documents.

All the documents related to the application received by the National Focal Point will be automatically registered and the applicant will receive a confirmation by e-mail with the submitted information and the registration number. If no confirmation is received, the applicant has the obligation to contact the NFP at the following email address: eeagrants.bilateral@mfe.gov.ro.

Note: In order to avoid overloading the electronic registration system, it is recommended to avoid submitted the content of the bilateral initiative application in the last day.

12. How do we evaluate and select the bilateral initiative?

The applications received shall be evaluated in the order of their registration. The evaluation shall be carried out according to the Annex 6 to this Call.

During the evaluation, the evaluation committee may ask for clarifications whenever they deem appropriate. The requests for clarifications shall be addressed through a PDF electronically signed letter sent to the e-mail address where the application has been received from.

The minimum score for the approval of the bilateral initiative is **60 points**.

Grants will be awarded to the initiatives on the basis of the final ranking list (including the reserve list), within the available budget. Initiatives that will be included in the reserve list will be eligible for funding, in case of additional funds or within the limit of disbursed funds.

Each promoter of the initiative shall be informed on the outcome of the evaluation/selection through a letter sent to the e-mail address where the content of the bilateral initiative application has been received from. The decision of the selection commission is final and cannot be appealed.

The promoters of the initiative selected to receive grants shall be formally notified and shall sign a financing contract with the National Focal Point, based on the template provided in Annex 7.

13. Contact information

The promoters of the initiative can submit questions about this call for proposals using the following address: eeagrants.bilateral@mfe.gov.ro

Answers to questions will be communicated by the National Focal Point in maximum 5 working days.