

Call for Travel Support Programme for “SMEs Growth Romania”

Guidelines for the Travel Support, part of the Fund for Bilateral Relations on Programme level

EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021

Introduction

The Programme “SMEs Growth Romania” has the objective to increase value creation and sustainable growth in Romanian business sector. Further, the Programme will seek to stimulate and develop long-term business cooperation between Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway (hereafter referred to as “the Donor States”) and Romania based on business development and innovation. “SMEs Growth Romania” is encouraging bilateral project partnerships in all three focus areas of the Programme:

1. **Green Industry Innovation** targets initiatives for development and/or application of innovative green technologies, development of innovative products and solutions, greener production processes, more efficient handling of resources and technological systems, material efficiency activities and waste management;
2. **ICT** targets initiatives for development and application of digital technologies that could mobilise growth and innovation for industrial and other economic sectors;
3. **Blue Growth** targets initiatives for development and/or application of innovative technologies, processes, solutions, products or services based on blue resources from the Black Sea, inland waters and rivers and coastal areas.

The Programme “SMEs Growth Romania” is a part of the two mechanisms EEA (European Economic Area) Grants and Norwegian Financial Mechanism that have two overall objectives of equal importance:

- Contributing to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area; and
- Strengthening bilateral relations between the Donor States and the Beneficiary States.

These guidelines will give the ruling criteria for **this CALL**.

The **objective** of the Travel Support is to enhance the business cooperation and improve mutual knowledge and understanding between Donor States and Romania.

What is offered?

The support from the Fund for Bilateral Relations is a travel grant awarded as a lump sum (meaning one standard rate). The following are available for applicants:

- A lump sum **Travel Support per entity** per country of EUR 1,200 for Norway / Romania, EUR 1,500 for Iceland / Romania and EUR 1,500 for Liechtenstein/Romania.
- Continuous submission of applications (until depletion of the budget).
- The Travel Support is awarded as de minimis aid under "COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid" as published in the Official Journal L 352, 24.12.2013, pages 1-8".
- **NOTE:** In case a Romanian company wishes to visit one entity in Norway and one in Iceland or Liechtenstein, they are eligible for EUR 2,700. In this case, Innovation Norway will award 1 Travel Support, hence, no need to submit 2 applications.
- **Total budget** for this CALL is EUR 50,000.

How to apply?

The language of your **applications shall be English!** We apply a simplified application procedure. Please follow the instructions presented at the weblinks indicated below.

- Applications shall be completed online at this weblink:
www.innovationnorway.no/PA01TravelSupport
- It is important to **fill in all the sections of** the online application with clear details as follows:
 - Entity name, contact person, telephone, e-mail and website;
 - The entities registration number;
 - Main line of business / economic sector;
 - Main purpose of the travel and meetings;
 - The purpose and expected outcome of visit to Romania/ Norway/ Iceland/ Liechtenstein;
 - Meeting agenda in Romania/ Norway/ Iceland/ Liechtenstein, List the entities, location, contact details and person that the company will meet.
- Before traveling you need to obtain Innovation Norway's written approval. A confirmation will be sent you by email from the official Programme email address RO.Business@innovationnorway.no

Who can apply?

Applicants and partners must be constituted as legal entities in Romania or one of the Donor States.

The following entities are eligible for financial support under this CALL for Travel Support:

- **From Romania:**
 - Private enterprises, constituted as legal entities in Romania, functioning in accordance to enforced Romanian legislation on commercial companies, respectively: Law 31/1990 regarding commercial companies, republished, with subsequent modifications and completions or Law 346/2004 regarding stimulating

establishment and development of small and medium sized enterprises, with subsequent modifications and completions.

- Non-profit and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), constituted as legal entities in Romania, functioning according to the in-force Romanian legislation on nongovernmental organizations, respectively: associations, foundations and federations established according to Governmental Ordinance 26/2000 or Law 21/1924 regarding associations and foundations, with subsequent modifications and completions.

Entities with the role of managers of Romanian clusters are eligible for funds if they are legally established as one of the categories mentioned above.

Only NGOs that support business development will be eligible for funds (e.g. social enterprises, business organizations).

NGOs should be independent of local, regional and central public authorities, public institutions, political parties, religious cults and religious organizations.

Romanian public owned enterprises (with 25% public ownership or more) will **not** be eligible for funds.

NOTE: Romanian entities active in the following sectors are **excluded** from financing in this CALL (in line with provisions of COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) No 1407/2013¹):

- fishery and aquaculture sector;
- primary production of agricultural products;
- processing and marketing of agricultural products.

- **From Donor states:**

Private or public entities legally established in Norway, Liechtenstein or Iceland.

Eligible activities and expenditures

- Travel costs in connection to/or associated with the search for partners for donor partnership projects and the development of such partnerships;
 - A partnership project must constitute of at least one entity from Romania and one entity from one of the Donor States;
 - Partnership projects must be developed within one of the three focus areas of this Programme;
 - Travel Support is awarded per entity and not per person.

Disbursement of funds and reporting

- Reimbursement principle (you pay first and ask for reimbursement from Innovation Norway after the travel).
- The reimbursement request will be composed of the following documents: **(a) Travel Report, (b) Financial Identification Form** and **(c) De minimis aid declaration** (the templates for these three documents are available at www.innovationnorway.no/PA01TravelSupport) **(d) proof of travel.**

¹ For more details, please see:

http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/legislation/de_minimis_regulation_en.pdf

- The documents mentioned at letters (a)-(d) should be sent, stamped and signed, **scanned**, at the Programme's official email address - RO.Business@innovationnorway.no), within maximum **one month** after the travel took place.
- The costs are reimbursed to the entity that has incurred the expenses and not to a natural person.

Selection criteria

- Applications for Travel Support are assessed by Innovation Norway on a continuous basis (until the depletion of the available budget);
- In order to be awarded Travel Support the following criteria must be fulfilled:
 - All sections in the online application is filled in correctly;
 - The planned activities are within the objective of this Travel Support;
 - Applicant and partner(s) are eligible;
 - The partnership project is developed within one of the three focus areas of this Programme;
 - Planned activities/costs are eligible.
- The support will be awarded on **first-come, first-served** basis.

[For eventual clarifications, send e-mail to: RO.Business@innovationnorway.no](mailto:RO.Business@innovationnorway.no)