



EEA Grants 2009-2014

Guideline for Applicants

Call for proposals

under the Fund for Bilateral Relations within Programme *RO05 – Energy Efficiency*

1. Context

The EEA Grants represent the contribution of Iceland, the Principality of Liechtenstein and the Kingdom of Norway to reduce social and economic disparities within the European Economic Area and to strengthen bilateral relations with the 16 beneficiary states in southern and central Europe.

Programme *RO05 – Energy Efficiency* (hereinafter called the “Programme”) is financed under the EEA Grants 2009-2014, with a total budget of 612,426 € (85% grant, 15% national co-financing).

The Programme’s overall objective is to reduce emission of greenhouse gases and air pollutants. The Fund for bilateral relations within RO 05 will support and strengthen the relations between the donor states and Romania in what concerns the energy efficiency.

The Fund for Bilateral Relations (hereinafter called the “Fund”) established within the Programme, amounting to **139,417 Euros**, is dedicated to supporting initiatives meant to develop bilateral relations through cooperation and transfer of knowledge between the eligible beneficiaries and partners from Romania and Donor States in the field of energy efficiency, i.e. through supporting the organization of bilateral seminars, conferences, workshops, study visits, courses, meetings, etc.

2. Institutional framework

The Programme is managed by the Ministry of European Funds, through the General Directorate for Non-Reimbursable Financial Mechanisms and Instruments, as Programme Operator in cooperation with the Norwegian Embassy in Romania.

The MEF/Programme Operator fulfils the following tasks and responsibilities in the implementation of the Fund:

- ensures that the financed initiatives contribute to the general objectives of the EEA Grants 2009-2014 and of Programme RO05 and that they are implemented in compliance with the Regulations, as well as with the specific Agreements signed with the Donor States;
- collects the applications for financing, selects the initiatives to be financed and signs the financing contracts for each particular initiative;
- verifies the direct results of the initiatives and the expenditures declared by the Beneficiaries of the initiatives, their compliance with the provisions of the Regulation for the Implementation of the EEA Grants, of the financing contracts, as well as the compliance with the national and European Union legislation.



3. Legal framework

- (a) Protocol 38b to the EEA Agreement on the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2009-2014;
- (b) Regulation on the Implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014, issued by Iceland, the Principality of Liechtenstein and the Kingdom of Norway, hereinafter called “Donor States”, according to art. 8(8) in the Protocol 38b to the EEA Agreement on the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2009-2014;
- (c) The Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014, signed between Iceland, the Principality of Liechtenstein and the Kingdom of Norway and the Government of Romania;
- (d) The guidelines adopted by the Financial Mechanism Committee according to the Regulations;
- (e) The Government Emergency Ordinance no. 6/2013 on the modification and completion of the Government Emergency Ordinance no. 96/2012 establishing measures to reorganize the central government and for amendment of legislation;
- (f) Government Emergency Ordinance no. 88/2012 on the institutional framework for coordination, implementation and management of financial assistance granted to Romania through the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the programming period 2009-2014, approved and amended through the Law no. 246/2013;
- (g) Government Emergency Ordinance no. 23/2013 on the financial management of the external non-reimbursable grants related to the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 and to the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014, approved and amended, as well as the methodology rules for its implementation, approved by Order no. 2793/2015;
- (h) Law No. 98/2016 on public procurement and the Methodological Norms of 2 June 2016 published in The Official Journal of Romania no. 423 of 6 June 2016;
- (i) Ministry Order no. 1284/2016 approving the competitive procedure for private applicants/beneficiaries for awarding supply contracts, services or works financed from European funds;
- (j) Government Emergency Ordinance no. 66/2011 on the prevention, identification and sanctioning of irregularities occurred in the collection and use of the European funds and/or of the national public related funds, approved and amended by the Law no. 142/2012, as amended;
- (k) Minister of European Funds Order no. 1055/16.10.2014 regarding the application of lump sums in the case of travels financed under the Funds for Bilateral Relations at national and programme level under the EEA Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014;
- (l) Government Decision no. 518/1995 as subsequently amended and supplemented;
- (m) Government Decision no. 1860/2006 as subsequently amended and supplemented.



4. Eligible activities

The fund is dedicated to supporting bilateral initiatives that correspond to the general objective of the Programme - **Reduced emissions of greenhouse gases and air pollutants** and the following **outcomes**:

- Improved energy efficiency in buildings;
- Increased energy efficiency in industry and the transport sector;
- Increased utilisation of excess heat;
- Improved capacity at national, regional and local level to undertake energy-efficiency measures;
- Increased awareness of and education in energy efficiency.

Thus, the financed initiatives under this call shall include activities meant to strengthen the bilateral dimension of the programme and to develop bilateral relations through cooperation and transfer of knowledge between the eligible beneficiaries and partners from Romania and Donor States in the field of energy efficiency and within the objectives described above. In the Grant Application Form, the applicants must describe and detail the way in which the proposed activities will contribute to this objective.

For this purpose, the organization of conferences, seminars, study visits, workshops, courses, trainings and other similar initiatives are considered eligible activities.

For the purposes of this call, the following definitions of energy efficiency shall apply:

- Energy efficiency = ratio of output of performance, services, goods or energy, to input of energy for this purpose (Directive 2012/27/EU).
- Saving energy = reduce energy consumption, changing behaviour by reducing economic activity (Energy Efficiency Plan, the European Commission, March 8, 2011).
- Efficient use of energy, increasing energy efficiency = achievement of a unit of product or service without reducing the quality or its performance, while reducing the amount of energy required for this product, good or service (Law 199/2000 regarding the efficient use of energy amended by Law 120/2002).

5. Eligible beneficiaries and partners

The beneficiaries and eligible partners under the Fund are the following categories of entities registered in Romania or donor states, **relevant for the field of energy efficiency**:

- Public institutions, central or local public authorities;
- Inter-governmental organisations;
- Governmental agencies;
- Public universities and public research institutes;
- Non-governmental organizations, associations, foundations, professional associations, employers' associations activating in the field of energy efficiency (only entities within this category having carried out this activity for at least one full fiscal year are eligible).



6. Deadlines

Date of launching the call: 15 November 2016.

Date of closing the call: 28 February 2017 or until funds depletion. The date of submission is considered the postage/courier date.

End date for the implementation of the initiatives: **31 October 2017.**

7. Budget and financing

Budget of the call: 139,417 Euro.

Minimum grant amount: 30,000 Euro.

Maximum grant amount: 139,417 Euro.

Financing rate: 100%

Applicants may opt for either an advance payment system or a reimbursement payment system, based on the financing needs of the proposed initiatives, as detailed below:

- The advance payment involves the provision of an advance payment for carrying out the foreseen activities of maximum 100% for public entities and maximum 70% for other entities of the eligible amount of the initiative (according to the Government Emergency Ordinance no. 23/2013, as amended), based on an advance payment application, and, if applicable, a final payment, based on a final payment application, according to Annex 2 and Annex 4 to these Guidelines; the requested advance payment will be made in correlation with the timing of the approved activities.
- The reimbursement (available only in the case of private applicants) involves the payment of the expenditures already incurred by the Beneficiary, based on a reimbursement application, according to Annex 2 and Annex 4 to these Guidelines.

8. Eligibility of expenditures

The following types of expenditures shall be considered eligible:

- (a) cost of the international travel (return), economy class;
- (b) accommodation expenditures: hotel, medical insurance and daily allowance (in the limits established by the applicable legislation);
- (c) local transport in Romania or in the country where the applicant is traveling;
- (d) VAT, provided that it cannot be recovered by the beneficiary and/or partner;
- (e) travel and salary costs for lecturing experts (not for staff involved in implementation);
- (f) fees and travel costs for participation in conferences, seminars, courses, meetings and workshops;
- (g) costs related to the feasibility studies and for the elaboration of financial and economic



analyses;

- (h) costs of conferences, seminars, courses, meetings and workshops;
- (i) expenditures related to promotional and information activities;
- (j) fees for external consultancy;
- (k) cost of audit (if applicable).

Travel costs are financed based on the provisions of MoEF Order no. 1055/2014, as follows:

(a) Lump sums established for travels financed under the Fund for Bilateral Relations at national level, irrespective of the country of origin of the beneficiary, are as follows:

- for travels of 3 to 4 days (2 to 3 accommodation nights): 1600 Euro/person
- for travels of 5 to 6 days (4 to 5 accommodation nights): 2000 Euro/person (with a justification for the extended duration of the travel)

(b) For travels with a different duration from the above-mentioned, the real costs method shall apply, based on supporting documents and in the limits set by the national legislation (Government Decision no. 518/1995 as subsequently amended and supplemented). The same method shall apply whenever travel and/or accommodation costs are covered from other sources (e.g. organisers of the event).

In all cases where the provisions of Order no. 1055/2014 do not apply, travel costs are financed in accordance with the provisions of GEO no. 518/1995 as amended.

Note: please see Annex 4 for detailed guidance on the requested supporting documents and the application of lump sums.

Note: If the applicant/beneficiary does not apply the provisions of the Minister of European Funds' Order no. 1055/2014 related to the value of the lump sums or on expense justification, the assessment of the application, respectively the verification of expenses shall be performed in compliance with the provisions of Government Decision no. 518/1995 as subsequently amended and supplemented and / or GD no. 1860/2006 as subsequently amended and supplemented.

For the expenditures incurred by a beneficiary or a partner located in a donor state, shall be seen as sufficient proof of costs incurred:

- a) a report by an independent and certified auditor, certifying that the claimed costs are incurred in accordance with the Regulation, the national law and accounting practices of the beneficiary's or partner's country;

or

- b) a report by a competent public officer, certifying that the claimed costs are incurred in accordance with this Regulation, the national law and accounting practices of the 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.

Period of eligibility of expenditures: between the date of the call launch until **31 October 2017**.



Conditions for the eligibility of expenditures:

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

- (a) they are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility specified in the financing contract; costs in respect of which an invoice has been issued in the final month of eligibility are also deemed to be incurred within the dates of eligibility if the costs are paid within 30 days of the final date for eligibility.
- (b) they are connected with the subject of the financing contract and they are indicated in the estimated overall budget of the initiative;
- (c) they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the initiative;
- (d) they must be used for the sole purpose of achieving the objective(s) of the initiative and its expected outcome(s), in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

9. Submission of applications for financing:

The application file shall include:

- The Grant Application Form (Annex 1) signed by the legal representative or by his proxy
- Declaration on honour regarding eligibility (Annex 6)
- Declaration on honour regarding avoidance of double financing (Annex 7)
- Partnership Agreement (only in the case where the partner manages part of the budget) or letters of intent providing clearly for the responsibilities of each partner. Partnership Agreement/letters of intent shall be required in original at the time of the Financing Contract signature.
- Articles of Incorporation and Deeds proving the activity in the field of energy efficiency and the date of establishment for NGOs, associations and foundations;
- Proof of registration in the Associations and Foundations Registry.

All the documents shall be filled in Romanian or English. Romanian applicants shall express the budget in the national currency (Lei - using inforeuro exchange rate afferent to the month in which the application is submitted).

The applications for financing shall be submitted at the General Registration Desk of the Ministry of European Funds (see section 12), as well as in digital format to the e-mail address: bilateral.relations@fonduri-ue.ro.



10. Evaluation of the applications

The financing applications submitted shall be continuously evaluated as they are registered, until the entire financial allocation is spent. The evaluation shall be carried out according to the Annex 8 to this Guideline.

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

The minimum score for the approval of the grant application is **60 points**.

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

11. Contracting

The applicants selected to receive grants shall be contacted and shall sign a financing contract with the Programme Operator. The financing contract shall establish the terms and conditions of the grant, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the parties, provisions related to payments and reimbursement, together with the form of the reports.

12. Contact

MINISTRY OF EUROPEAN FUNDS

General Directorate for Non-Reimbursable Financial Mechanisms and Instruments

Programme Operator

Ion Mihalache Blvd, Nr. 15-17, Sector 1, Bucharest

E-mail: bilateral.relations@fonduri-ue.ro