

Selection Procedure and appraisal criteria within the Fund for bilateral relations

PL - Justice

I. General rules

Fund for bilateral relations is set for activities aimed at strengthening bilateral relations between Norway and the Beneficiary State.

This selection procedure applies to the bilateral initiatives within the following programme areas:

- PA19 Correctional Services and Pre-trial Detention
- PA22 Domestic and Gender-based Violence

1. Entities eligible to request funds from the Fund for bilateral relations :

- a) Predefined project promoters;
- b) Predefined project partners;
- c) Donor State Programme Partners (DPPs): Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service;
- d) Potential Project Partners under the Small Grant Schemes for the activities which aim at establishing partnership
- e) Project Promoters under the Small Grants Scheme;
- f) Project Partners under the Small Grants Scheme;
- g) Programme Operator (PO): Polish Ministry of Justice.

2. Eligible partners:

Any entity, public or private, commercial or non-commercial and non-governmental organizations, established, as a legal person in the Beneficiary State or in Norway, are considered eligible partners. Their activity has to be connected with PA 19 or in PA 22.

3. Fund for bilateral relations is managed by the Programme Operator and includes:

- a) Allocation set in the Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 in the amount of €400,000;
- b) Allocation from the Fund for bilateral relations based on expressions of interest.

4. Decisions on the management and use of the Fund for bilateral relations allocated to the programme shall be made by consensus between the PO and the DPPs in the Cooperation Committee.

5. In accordance with article 8.8 of the *Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021*, expenditures related to the following activities are eligible within the Fund for bilateral relations:

- a) activities aiming at strengthening bilateral relations between Norway and the Beneficiary States;
- b) the search for partners for donor partnership projects prior to or during the preparation of a project application, the development of such partnerships and the preparation of an application for a donor partnership project;



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- c) networking, transfer of knowledge, sharing experiences between entities in Beneficiary State and entities in Norway and/or international organisations. This can be done in form of conferences, seminars, workshops etc.
 - d) activities aiming at strengthening cooperation and exchanging experiences and best practices between the Programme Operator and similar entities within the Beneficiary State and Norway, as well as international organisations, provided at least one entity within Norway is involved in the activity.
6. The Cooperation Committee decides which proposals of bilateral activities fulfil the above mentioned criteria hence can be considered as eligible for the Fund for bilateral relations.
 7. Templates of following documents: Bilateral Activity Questionnaire and Application form will be provided by the Programme Operator.

II. Selection procedure for applications submitted by the DPP or by the PO

1. The promoter of the activity submits the Bilateral Activity Questionnaire for the approval of the Cooperation Committee.
2. The Bilateral Activity Questionnaire shall include:
 - information on the promoter of the activity;
 - information on the partner/s;
 - planned results;
 - short description of a bilateral activity (max 2 pages);
 - amount requested from the Fund for bilateral relations.
3. The proposal is circulated to the Cooperation Committee members.
4. Members of the Cooperation Committee decide either to recommend or not to recommend the proposal for funding. Before delivering the opinion, they could ask the promoter questions or give their comments.
5. Each member of the Cooperation Committee shall inform the Programme Operator about his or her opinion within 14 days from the date of receipt of the proposal.
6. Any negative opinion issued by a member of the cooperation committee shall be justified.
7. The decision on funding shall be made according to standard decision-taking process described in the Rules of Procedure of the Cooperation Committee. In the event of a tie the Chairman has a deciding vote.
8. The bilateral activities proposed by the DPPs or by the PO are implemented in line with decision of the Cooperation Committee, on the basis of a Partnership agreement under the Fund for bilateral relations concluded for each individual activity between PO and DPP/s. The detailed budget as well as the timetable of a bilateral activity shall be attached to a Partnership Agreement.
9. Applications may be submitted throughout the whole financing period.



III. Selection procedure for applications submitted by the pre-defined project promoters pre-defined project partners, project promoters and potential project partners under the small grant scheme.

The procedure has two stages: the first stage is a Bilateral Activity Questionnaire. The second stage following a positive assessment of the Bilateral Activity Questionnaire, is the formal application for funding submitted by the applicant.

First stage

1. The applicant submits a Bilateral Activity Questionnaire for approval by the Cooperation Committee. The Bilateral Activity Questionnaire shall include:
 - a. information on the applicant
 - b. information on the partner/s
 - c. planned results;
 - d. description of a bilateral activity;
 - e. amount requested from the Fund for bilateral relations
2. Members of the Cooperation Committee make an assessment of the Bilateral Activity Questionnaire and give their opinion. Before delivering the opinion, they could ask the applicant questions through the Programme Operator or give their comments.
3. Each member of the Cooperation Committee shall inform the Programme Operator about her or his opinion within 14 days from the date of receipt of the questionnaire.
4. Any negative opinion issued by a member of the Cooperation Committee shall be justified.
5. It is possible for the Cooperation Committee to approve the Bilateral Activity Questionnaire during its meeting without the need for exchange opinions of the CC members within next 14 days.
6. In case the bilateral activity received the majority of positive opinions, the applicant is asked to submit an application for funding within the Fund for bilateral relations.

Second stage:

1. The applicant submits the application for funding for approval by the Cooperation Committee. Application for funding includes:
 - a. application form
 - b. detailed budget
 - c. partnership agreement or in case the agreement has been not yet signed - letter of intent of the partner entity
2. The Programme Operator is responsible for formal verification of the application which should be carried out within **7 working days** from the date of submission of the application.
3. After the formal assessment is completed, the Programme Operator circulates the application to the members of the Cooperation Committee.
4. Substantial appraisal of the application for the Fund for bilateral relations is carried out by the Cooperation Committee.

5. Each Member of the Cooperation Committee is responsible for filling out the “Application appraisal sheet – Fund for bilateral relations” containing the criteria approved by the Cooperation Committee and presenting their recommendation to approve or reject the application to the Chairman and other Members of the Committee.
6. If the Cooperation Committee Member recommends to reject the application he or she is obliged to provide justification. It is possible for a member of the CC to provide an applicant with the amendments to the application that in her/his opinion should be introduced in the application.
7. The final recommendation of the Cooperation Committee on the awarding of grant within the Fund for bilateral relations is adopted according to standard decision-taking process described in the Rules of Procedure of the Committee. In the event of a tie the Chairman has a deciding vote.
8. The recommendation of the Cooperation Committee may be adopted during the Committee meeting or by circulation, using electronic means of communication.
9. If the Cooperation Committee recommends to award grant to the applicant, the Programme Operator is responsible for submitting the draft grant awarding decision for signature of the Minister of Justice or authorized Member of the Board.
10. If the Committee recommends to reject the application, the Programme Operator informs the applicant of the justification and indicates necessary amendments to the application. The Programme Operator may determine the deadline for submitting a revised version of the application form.
11. The Cooperation Committee is obliged to adopt the recommendation referred to in point 7 within **4 weeks** from the date of receiving the application for appraisal. The Chairman of the Committee is responsible for coordinating the work of all Committee Members and determining deadlines for providing individual “Application appraisal sheets – Fund for bilateral relations” and recommendations.
12. Applications may be submitted throughout the whole period.

IV. Appraisal criteria

1) Obligatory criteria - the application can either meet or not meet the envisaged obligatory criteria (0-1 appraisal)

- a. The proposed activity falls within the scope of PA19 *Correctional Services and Pre-trial Detention* or PA22 *Domestic and Gender-based Violence* - **obligatory**
- b. The proposed activity consists in searching for partners from a donor state, development of such a partnership and preparation of an application for a partnership project or/as well as networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practice between Project Promoters and entities in Donor State – **obligatory**



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- c. Types of costs to be reimbursed/financed are covered by the catalogue of costs eligible under the Fund for bilateral relations and incurred in compliance with respective provisions of national and European law, especially in regard to public procurement and state aid – **obligatory**
- d. The proposed activity is cost-effective, which means that the requested amount of grant is proportionate to the type of actions and planned outcomes - **obligatory**

2) Non-obligatory criteria – the application will be assessed on a scale of 1 to 3, where 1 is the lowest rating and 3 is the highest one.

- a. The application envisages the development of at least one common output (e.g. a report, publication etc.)
- b. The proposed activity is addressed to the main target groups within bilateral cooperation namely prison and probation employees and penitentiary judges.
- c. The common output has the effect on direct target groups (outcome). The application envisages the involvement of partner institution's representatives in preparing, organizing and implementation of substantial actions of the project (training, development of project outputs etc.)
- d. The applicant plans to make further use of the outcomes/outputs achieved thanks to the reimbursement/financing.
- e. The proposed activity has the purpose to strengthen the justice chain.
- f. There is a link between the objectives of the proposed activity and the special concerns highlighted in the Memorandum of Understanding.
- g. The application covers actions contributing to the dissemination of knowledge about the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the Donor State.

The application is appraised positively if it meets at least 5 criteria, inclusive of all obligatory criteria.

