**ANNOUNCEMENT OF A CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

**The Minister of Climate as the Operator of the**

**“Environment, Energy and Climate Change” Programme**

**announces a call for proposals for co-financing of projects aimed at**

**“Improved energy efficiency in school buildings”, to be financed from the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2014-2021**

**with an amount of EUR 20,000,000, i.e. PLN 86,318,000.** [[1]](#footnote-1)

1. **Aim of the Call for Proposals**

The main aim of the Call for Proposals [[2]](#footnote-2), intended to co-finance projects in the programme area: *Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Energy Security* is improvement of energy efficiency in school buildings in which educational activities are carried out[[3]](#footnote-3) through supporting the modernisation of school buildings consisting in comprehensive energy efficiency investments[[4]](#footnote-4)undertaken to bring school buildings to the „**passive**”[[5]](#footnote-5) or „**near-zero emissions**” standard.

Projects should lead to CO2 emissions reductions, reduction of primary energy consumption, increase of the share of energy generated from renewable energy sources (if projects scope includes energy production) and to increase public awareness concerning energy efficiency while maintaining the highest energy and cost efficiency.

1. **Type of projects**

To be eligible for co-financing, the purpose of the project shall be to:

* insulate building envelopes of the building, including outer walls, ground floors, roofs and flat roofs,
* replace windows and outer doors,
* refurbish heating systems and change the sources of heat and hot water or to connect to more energy and environmentally efficient heat source,
* install/refurbish cooling systems, including the implementation of renewable energy sources
* replace ventilation systems with recuperation and air conditioning system,
* install and implement energy management systems in school buildings,
* implement weather automation,
* implement renewable energy sources technology,
* replace interior lighting with energy-efficient interior lighting, as a task to be conducted alongside the energy efficiency improvements.

Heat or electricity sources that use renewable energy sources include:

* high-efficiency combined electricity, heat or cooling production units and systems (high-efficiency cogeneration and trigeneration);
* heat production units fuelled by biomass (biomass boilers);
* photovoltaic systems;
* heat pumps;
* solar collectors;
* small (micro) wind turbines
* electricity and heat production units and systems fuelled by biogas;
* heat production units fuelled by geothermal energy (systems meant to use electricity obtained from geothermal sources)

All buildings, heat or energy sources, heat substations, systems, machines or other appliances which are a part of the project implementation shall belong to or be commanded by the same Project Promoter as the buildings which are being improved.

The projects selected within the scope of this call will contribute to achieving the Programme’s Outcome 3: “ Improved energy efficiency in buildings, industry and municipalities” and Output 3.1 “Energy efficiency in school buildings supported” which indicators and targets are listed on the table below, in accordance with Annex I to the Programme Agreement, signed in Warsaw on 7th February 2020.

| **Programme Area** | **Outcome/**  **Output** | **Expected programme results** | **Indicator** | **Unit of measurement** | **Baseline values** | **Target value** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| PA12 | Outcome 3 | Improved energy efficiency in buildings, industry and municipalities | Estimated annual CO2-emissions reductions (in tonnes/year) | tonnes/year | 0 | 593 200[[6]](#footnote-6) |
| Estimated energy production from renewable sources (in MWh/year) | (MWh/year) | 0 | 25 144 |
| Estimated primary energy savings (MWh/year) | (MWh/year) | 0 | 676 908 |
| Number of people benefitting from increased energy efficiency | Number | 0 | 12 160 |
| Output 3.1 | Energy efficiency in school buildings supported | Number of school buildings for which energy efficiency measures have been implemented | Number | 0 | 14 |
| Number of awareness raising campaigns carried out | Number | 0 | 14 |
| Number of people reached by awareness raising campaigns | Number | 0 | 20 000 |
| Number of professionals trained (in energy efficiency measures) | Number | 0 | 30 |

1. **Eligible applicants**

The following entities are eligible applicants and may apply for grants as part of the Call for Proposals:

* Any entity in accordance with Article 7.2.1 of Regulation[[7]](#footnote-7) on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 governing a public or a non-public primary or secondary school.

1. **Donor partnership projects**

In accordance with art. 7.2.2 of the Regulation, any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, as well as non-governmental organizations established as a legal person either in the Donor States, Beneficiary States[[8]](#footnote-8) or a country outside the European Economic Area that has a common border with Poland, or any international organization or body of agency thereof, actively involved in, effectively contributing to, the implementation of a project, are considered eligible project partners.

Projects submitted in partnership with an entity from the Donor States (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein) will receive additional points in accordance with the merit criteria.

In the case of a donor partnership project submitted in a partnership with an entity from the Donor States, the provision of a letter of intent, a partnership agreement or other evidence to confirm the cooperation with the Project Partner from the Donor States shall be required at the stage of the submission of an application for a grant. Prior to the conclusion of a project agreement on the implementation of a project submitted in partnership with a partner from the Donor States, the submission of a signed partnership agreement in the English language and its translation into the Polish language shall be required.

In order to support the process of establishing partnerships with partners from the Donor States, the Programme Operator encourages applicants to consult the information provided on [the EEA Grants website](https://eeagrants.org/partnership-opportunities) and in the Partnership Guide, which is an attachment to the present Announcement.

1. **Amount allocated to the Call for Proposals**

EUR 20,000,000 i.e. PLN 86,318,000 [[9]](#footnote-9)

1. **Grant rate**

The grant rate of the requested co-financing shall be up to 70% of eligible expenditures.

1. **Minimum grant amount**

EUR 500,000, i.e. PLN 2,157,950. [[10]](#footnote-10)

1. **Maximum grant amount**

EUR 5,000,000 i.e. PLN 21,579,500 [[11]](#footnote-11)

1. **Period of eligibility of expenditures in projects**

The period of eligibility of expenditures in projects shall start on the day that the Programme Operator (the Ministry of Climate) decides to award the project grant.

The period of eligibility of expenditures in projects shall expire on 30 April 2024.

1. **Evaluation and selection process**

The Applicant shall fill in an application for the award of a grant and, subsequently, submit it to the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management (hereinafter the National Fund) in the manner described in Section 13 of the Announcement of the Call for Proposals.

The evaluation of a project shall consist of an administrative evaluation (based on administrative and eligibility criteria) as well as a merit evaluation comprised of stage one and stage two (based on merit criteria).

An administrative evaluation of projects shall consist in verifying a project to determine whether it meets or fails to meet the administrative and eligibility criteria (the so-called yes-no evaluation).

The administrative evaluation lasts up to 4 weeks counted from the date of submission of the application, excluding the time needed for appeal procedure.

If even one administrative/eligibility criterion is not met, the Applicant shall be invited to correct or improve it or to provide an explanation. Failure to submit an application within the period specified in the announcement, cannot be improved/supplemented and thus results in application’s rejection.

The Applicants whose applications will be rated negatively or left without consideration at this stage shall be informed in writing of the reasons for negative evaluation or leaving without consideration and be able to appeal the decision to the National Focal Point via the Programme Operator.

A merit evaluation shall consist of two stages:

* Stage one of the evaluation: covering compliance with the applicable rules for the award of state aid, the principles of equal opportunity and non-discrimination, an assessment of the financial condition of the Applicant and an assessment of the eligibility of the project. This shall be a yes or no evaluation.

The Applicants whose applications are rejected at this stage shall be informed in writing of the reasons for rejection.

There is no possibility to appeal at this stage.

* Stage two of the evaluation: consisting in points-based scoring of a project by at least two external and independent experts designated by the National Fund which shall be selected in a competition procedure. The experts shall evaluate a project separately in accordance with the stage two merit criteria as published in the Announcement of the Call for Proposals.

The merit evaluation (stage I and stage II) lasts up to 12 weeks counted from the day of the notification about positive results of the formal evaluation, excluding the time needed for appeal procedure.

The Applicants who do not accept the score which they are given shall be able to appeal it to the Programme Operator.

At each stage of the merit evaluation, the Applicant may be asked once and in writing for clarifications on the application submitted.

The National Fund shall draw up a draft ranking list of positively evaluated projects, taking into account the results of assessments delivered by external experts. Applications shall be ranked in order of decreasing scores. The ranking of projects shall be based on the average of the scores given by experts. In case of a discrepancy between the experts’ scores exceeding 30% of the higher score, the National Fund shall commission an independent evaluation of the application to a third external expert. In such cases, for the purpose of preparing the ranking list of projects, the average of the numbers of points in the two closest scores shall be used.

The Applicants whose applications are rejected after stage two of the merit evaluation shall be informed in writing of the reasons for rejection and their right to appeal the decision to the Programme Operator.

A draft ranking list shall be submitted for review at a session of the Selection Committee. In justified cases, the Selection Committee may modify the ranking list. The Chairperson shall submit a list of recommended projects with justification for modifications to the Programme Operator, along with a reserve list and a list of rejected projects, as well as the reasons for their rejection.

The final decision on the award of a grant shall be taken by the Programme Operator.

1. **Payment scheme**

Each Project Promoter may receive payments to the project in the form of:

* advance payments

The amount of a single advance payment may not exceed 40% of the total grant amount. The first advance payment shall be made to the Project Promoter within 30 days of the date of submission of the request for an advance payment[[12]](#footnote-12).

Subsequent advance payments shall be made on the condition that 70% of all the previously made advance payments is settled in payment requests or returned as an unused advance payment.

Detailed obligations and restrictions for the use and settlement of advance payments are specified in the Guide for Applicants which is an attachment to the present Announcement.

* reimbursement

Payments to the Project Promoter shall be made on the basis of approved payment requests.

The total amount of advance payments and reimbursements may not exceed 90% of the total grant amount.

* final payment.

The final payment representing 10% of the total project grant amount shall be made after the final project report is approved.

1. **Eligible expenditures, excluded costs, in-kind contribution, expenditure documentation**

**12.1 Expenditures are eligible** in accordance with the general rules laid in Article 8 of the Regulation on the implementation of the EEA Grants 2014-2021, with the following exceptions:

**Direct expenditures:**

* Equipment:

The purchase of used equipment shall not be eligible.

The rules for the settlement of expenditures shall be laid down by the Programme Operator in the project contract.

**Indirect costs:**

Indirect costs shall be all eligible costs which cannot be identified by the Project Promoter and/or the Project Partner as directly attributable to the project.

The only allowable method for identifying indirect costs shall be a flat rate of up to 25% of total direct eligible costs, excluding the direct eligible costs of subcontracting and the costs of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the Project Promoter or Project Partner, in accordance with Article 8.5(1)(b) of the Regulation.

The detailed method for calculating indirect costs has been developed by the Programme Operator and can be downloaded below.

The method for calculating the indirect costs and their maximum amount shall be determined in the project contract. The method for calculating the indirect costs of a Project Partner shall be stipulated in the partnership agreement between the Project Promoter and the Project Partner.

**12.2 Excluded costs are specified in Article 8.7 of the Regulation.**

**12.3 Own contribution:**

In principle, the own contribution shall be made in cash.

In order to secure some or all of the own contribution, the beneficiary may use financial instruments in the form of funds made available under the National Fund loan programme. Information on the loan programme is available on the website of the National Fund.

It is only in projects where the Project Promoter is a non-governmental organisation that the in-kind contribution in the form of voluntary work may represent up to 50% of the own contribution required for a project under the programme.

In such a case, the Applicant shall calculate the value of the in-kind contribution taking into account:

- the amount of time worked on a voluntary and unpaid basis for the project, expressed in the number of hours,

- the standard hourly and daily rates for a given type of work performed in accordance with the rates normally paid for such work.

Due to the wide variety of types of work that the volunteer can carry out in the project, the size of rates proposed by the Applicant for individual works will be verified by an expert at the stage of merit evaluation of the grant application The accepted amount of the above rates will be recorded in the project agreement.

**12.4 Cost documentation**

The costs incurred under the project should be documented with the help of received invoices or accounting documents of equivalent probative value. The specific obligations of the beneficiary in this respect are specified in the project agreement.

In the case of donor partnership projects, the Project Partner whose primary location is in one of the Donor States may provide proof of expenditures incurred in the form of a report of an independent auditor or a competent and independent public officer, certifying that the claimed costs have been incurred in accordance with the Regulation, the relevant law and national accounting practice.

1. **Date and manner of the submission of grant applications**

The date of the notice of the call for proposal – 13.03.2020.

The opening date for receiving applications from Applicants – 03.04.2020.

The closing date for receiving applications from Applicants – 15.07.2020 **at 3 p.m.**

**The manner of submitting applications**

A grant application shall be prepared using only the Grant Application Generator (GAG). The detailed rules for the submission of a grant application using the GAG are laid down in the Competition Rules which are an attachment to the present Announcement.

Grant applications, along with attachments, shall be submitted to the National Fund in electronic form via the GAG available on [the National Fund website](http://nfosigw.gov.pl/oferta-finansowania/srodki-norweskie/generator-wnioskow-o-dofinansowanie/).[[13]](#footnote-13) The grant application form is available along with instructions for filling in the application at the following address: https://gwd.nfosigw.gov.pl.

Two options for signing an electronic application shall be allowed:

* 1. using a certified electronic signature which produces legal effects equivalent to those of a handwritten signature;
  2. using a trusted profile on the Electronic Platform for Public Administration Services (ePUAP).

**Application submission date**

The prepared applications shall be submitted in electronic form using the GAG.

The date of submission of the application is the date and time of receipt of the application at the inbox of the National Fund on the ePUAP Platform, confirmation of which is the Applicant's receipt of an electronic confirmation of submission of the application (e-mail containing the date and time of receipt of the application on the National Fund inbox).

Applications submitted after the deadline shall not be considered.

The Programme Operator shall allow one Applicant to submit more than one application under the same call but in different project scope. If two applications are submitted for the same material scope, the application previously submitted will be assessed. The Program Operator does not allow the possibility of self-correction of the application submitted.

1. [**Legal framework and programme documents**](https://www.eog.gov.pl/en/site/learn-more-about-the-grants/legal-documents/#/domyslne=1)

* [Programme Agreement for the EEA Grants](https://eeagrants.org/resources/poland-climate-2014-2021-programme-agreement) Programme for “Environment, Energy and Climate Change” in Poland;
* [Memorandum of Understanding on the Implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021](https://www.eog.gov.pl/media/69169/MoU_EOG_20142021.pdf) between Iceland, the Principality of Lichtenstein, the Kingdom of Norway and the Republic of Poland on 20.12.2017;
* [Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2014-2021](https://eeagrants.org/resources?title=&field_resource_type_target_id=197);
* [Procurement Guidelines for the EEA Grants 2014-2021 and the Norway Grants 2014-2021](https://www.eog.gov.pl/media/71162/Wytyczne_KPK_w_zakresie_zamowien_publicznych_podpisane_2019_03_06.pdf);
* [Guidelines on the Information and Visual Identification for the EEA Grants 2014–2021and the Norway Grants 2014–2021](https://www.eog.gov.pl/media/69203/EEA_Communication_Design_Manual.pdf);
* [Guidelines on Appeals](https://www.eog.gov.pl/media/71161/Wytyczne_KPK_w_zakresie_procedury_wyboru_projektow_konkursowych_2019_03_06.pdf) and any other guidelines governing fulfilling tasks connected with EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 implementation adopted by the FMC or NFP published at [www.eog.gov.pl](http://www.eog.gov.pl) website

1. **List of attachments to the call announcement**

* Competition Rules;
* Administrative and eligibility criteria; merit criteria;
* Checklist’s template;
* Partnership Guide;
* Methodology for calculating indirect costs;
* Project agreement template (will be published later);
* Guide for Applicants.

1. **List of attachments required for a grant application**

The following attachments shall be enclosed with a grant application:

1. Energy audit prepared in the accordance with the Resolution of the Minister of Infrastructure dated 17 March 2009 concerning the detailed scope and form of energy audits and a part of renovation audit, a model audit charter and the algorithm for calculating profitability of energy efficiency improvement projects, as stated in the Resolution of the Minister of Infrastructure and Development dated 3 September 2015.;
2. Technical and ecological appendix, along with the audit summary containing calculation of CO2 reduction;
3. Administrative permits and decisions, which allow the project to be implemented, or a schedule for obtaining them
4. Copies of title cards, along with table of contents of technical documentation, which is a basis for receiving administrative permits to implement the energy efficiency improvements (where applicable)
5. Documents confirming a project partnership – a letter of intent with an entity from the Donor States, a partnership agreement with an entity from the Donor States or other proof of cooperation between partners (where applicable);
6. Calculation of indirect costs, based on the methodology for the calculation of indirect costs (where applicable);
7. Documents defining the legal status of the applicant – applies to non-public entities governing schools;
8. Documents confirming authorisation of the Applicant’s representatives;
9. Financial documentation, based on the legal form of the Applicant and the form of their financial reporting;
10. Documents confirming that the Applicant secured funds necessary to co-finance the project;
11. Statement by the Applicant, reporting a lack of animals protected as a species by the Nature Protection Regulation dated 16 April 2004 (Dz. U. 2016, 2134, subsequently amended), particularly birds and bats, on the grounds intended for the project, along with a copy of a conducted environmental inventory control focused on the presence of the species protected by the Nature Protection Regulation dated 16 April 2004, particularly birds and bats, on the grounds intended for the project or a copy of a request to conduct prohibited activities towards the protected species, submitted to the appropriate regional nature protection director for the location of the project, in accordance with art. 56 related to art. 52 of the Nature Protection Regulation dated 16 April 2004, along with a copy of the previously mentioned environmental inventory control.
12. In cases where conducting the environmental inventory control focused on the presence of protected species, including birds and bats, before the deadline for the grant application submission (in cases where the application documentation is prepared outside of the breeding season), the Applicant shall prepare a statement in which they will declare an intended date for the environmental inventory control, along with an approximate date of when the Applicant will be able to delivered to the National Fund:
    1. statement by the Applicant, reporting a lack of animals protected as a species by the Nature Protection Regulation dated 16 April 2004 on the grounds intended for the project or
    2. in cases where the environmental inventory control confirms the presence of a protected species, a copy of a request to conduct prohibited activities towards the protected species, submitted to the appropriate regional nature protection director for the location of the project, in accordance with art. 56 related to art. 52 of the Nature Protection Regulation dated 16 April 2004
13. Statement by the Applicant, reporting that the project shall be implemented adhering to the 27 April 2001 Environment Protection Law with subsequent amendments (Dz. U. 2017, 519 subsequently amended) and 3 October 2008 Bill on making information about the environment and its protection available, role of the society in environment protection and on the environmental impact assessments, as well to the 14 January 2020 Nature Protection Law, art. 33;
14. Review and/or approval to implement the project, issued by the appropriate environmental protection body, or a confirmation of a request for such review/approval;
15. Approval of the owner, manager or perpetual usufructuary of the grounds, on which the project is supposed to be implemented, in cases where the Applicant is not the owner, manager or perpetual usufructuary of said ground (where applicable);
16. Attachments adequate for info-promo activities in accordance with appendix 3 to the Regulation on the implementation of the EEA Grants 2014–2021 and the Norway Grants 2014-202, such as: communication Plan of the project, website of the project – graphic concept and navigation chart, schedule of trainings, workshops, conferences, events and festivals, along with their planned duration and range of topics (where applicable);
17. Attachments adequate for rising awareness on activities focused on energy efficiency, such as: outlines of planned trainings, workshops, seminars, conferences, events, festivals along with their duration and thematic scope, campaigns, publications, brochures, etc. (including technical parameters) (where applicable), screenplay summary for a TV/radio programme, etc. (including technical parameters and estimated expenditures for one episode) (where applicable),
18. Other documents, submission of which by the Applicant is deemed necessary.

**In accordance with Article 7.3 of the Regulation on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, the grant application should include information regarding all consultants involved in the preparation of the application.**

1. **Language of an application grant**

**Grant applications**, along with attachments, shall be submitted in the Polish language. In addition, the following shall be submitted in the English language:

* a letter of intent, a partnership agreement or other proof of cooperation between partners (in the case of partnership projects with foreign entities, particularly, those from the Donor States);
* a brief summary description of the project, along with the justification of the need to implement the project and the roles of partners (included in a grant application - in the Summary tab).

1. **Contact with the Programme Operator**

Any queries about the Call for Proposals shall be sent to the following e-mail address:

**National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management**

e-mail: [mfeog\_energia@nfosigw.gov.pl](mailto:mfeog_energia@nfosigw.gov.pl)

**Ministry of Climate**

e-mail: [mfeog@klimat.gov.pl](mailto:mfeog@klimat.gov.pl)

Questions shall be answered as soon as possible, but at the latest within 7 working days.

**Reporting irregularities:**

Citizens who have had suspicions of maladministration and corruption in relation to the Financial Mechanisms may report them to the Financial Mechanism Office, the National Focal Point and other relevant institutions listed on [the EEA Grants website.](https://www.eog.gov.pl/strony/zapoznaj-sie-z-funduszami/zasady-zglaszania-nieprawidlowosci/)

1. The amount of the allocation of the Call for Proposals given in EUR and subsequently recalculated into the national currency and expressed in PLN, using an average monthly currency exchange rate as published in the Official Journal of the European Union (the C series), calculated for the last six months preceding the month when the call is announced, where EUR 1= PLN 4,3159) Grant amount in PLN is indicative. The grant shall be awarded in EUR, but the funds shall be paid in PLN, based on the European Commission’s monthly accounting exchange rate of the Euro (EUR/PLN) for the month in which the payment of the funds will be made. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In line with the [Programme Agreement for the EEA Grants](https://eeagrants.org/resources/poland-climate-2014-2021-programme-agreement) Programme for “Environment, Energy and Climate Change” in Poland [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Public or non-public primary or secondary schools; boarding houses and dormitories are not considered as school buildings. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Definition of *comprehensive energy efficiency investments* is provided in the Guide for Applicants [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Definition of *passive standard* is provided in the Guide for Applicants. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Estimated CO2 emissions savings based on emissions factors of existing sources to be replaced/modernised of approx.: 0.25 tCO2/MWh for buildings (output 3.1) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Any entity, public or private, commercial or non-commercial and non-governmental organisations, established as a legal person in Poland, as well as international organisations or bodies or agencies thereof acting in Poland. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Beneficiary States: Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Malta, Cyprus, Croatia, Slovenia, Portugal. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Amount in PLN is indicative. The grant shall be awarded in EUR, but the funds shall be paid in PLN, based on the European Commission’s monthly accounting exchange rate of the Euro (EUR/PLN) for the month in which the payment of the funds will be made. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. As above [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. As above [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. In case of this call the interim payments in pre financing instalments are also considered advance payments. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Preparing the application in the GAG will be possible from the opening date for receiving applications. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)