



Joint Committee for Bilateral Funds

Statutes and Rules of Procedure

EEA Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014 - 2021

**Government Office of the Slovak Republic
National Focal Point**

I. Legal framework

- a) This document shall be read in conjunction with the Regulations on the Implementation of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021, the Bilateral Fund Agreement and the Bilateral Guideline. In case of any inconsistency between this document and the Regulations or the Bilateral Fund Agreement, the Regulations and the Bilateral Fund Agreement shall prevail.
- b) In accordance with Article 4.2.1 of the Regulation on the Implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014 – 2021 and the Regulation on the Implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014 – 2021 (hereinafter referred to as “the Regulations”), the National Focal Point hereby establishes the Joint Committee for Bilateral Funds 2014-2021 (hereinafter referred to as “the JCBF”).

II. Role of the JCBF

- a) The JCBF is established according to the Art. 4.2 of the Regulations and Art. 3.2.1 of the Bilateral Guideline.
- b) The tasks of the JCBF shall include:
 - 1. discussing matters of bilateral interests, identifying initiatives and reviewing the overall progress towards reaching the objective of strengthened bilateral relations;
 - 2. adopting the Work Plan for the fund for bilateral relations to be discussed at the annual meeting;
 - 3. identifying and allocating bilateral funds to programmes of bilateral interest.

III. Composition

- a) The JCBF shall be chaired by the National Focal Point and composed of the following members:
 - 1. The National Focal Point.
 - 2. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic.
 - 3. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, represented by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bratislava.
 - 4. The Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
 - 5. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Liechtenstein.
- b) The members shall designate their representatives. The designation shall proceed in a flexible manner, e.g. by an e-mail addressed to the National Focal Point from the statutory of the member or from a person who should normally be recognised as competent to do so under the organisational structure of the member.
- c) The representative may appoint their deputy or deputies by a written notification submitted to the National Focal Point. The deputy shall have the same rights as the representative.
- d) The Secretary of the Committee shall be appointed by the Chairperson.

IV. Functioning

1. Meetings of the JCBF

- a) The JCBF shall meet at least once a year, prior to the annual meeting.
- b) Additional meetings of the JCBF may be organised based on a justified proposal of any of the members and with the agreement of the Chairperson.
- c) The NFP shall be responsible for organising the meetings of the JCBF.
- d) The NFP shall send the meeting invitation, draft agenda and other relevant documents to the members of the JCBF and the FMO at least two weeks before the scheduled meeting, for comments.

- e) Meetings may be conducted via video link or teleconference, by agreement of the members.
- f) In case of need and with the consent of all members, meetings may be conducted also as per-ollam meetings.
- g) The FMO and the Slovak embassy(ies) to the Donor States shall be invited to participate at the meetings of the JCBF as observers.
- h) Any member of the JCBF may invite representatives from the POs, DPPs or others to participate in the meetings as observers if/when their participation is needed for specific issues to be discussed. This should be done with the knowledge of the Chairperson.
- i) The language of the JCBF shall be English, i.e. the meetings shall be conducted in English and all documents presented to and produced by the JCBF shall be in English.
- j) The Chairperson may, if necessary, appoint his or her temporary replacement.
- k) The JCBF meeting shall be considered valid if all members are represented, or if none of the absent members expressly objected to holding the meeting or meetings in their absence.
- l) In case a member of the JCBF cannot participate in the meeting, it may provide a written input to the NFP in advance to the meeting. Requests for participation through video link or phone conferencing should be accommodated.

2. Decision-making by the JCBF

- a) Decisions from the JCBF shall be taken by consensus among the members.
- b) In case no consensus can be reached, the decision shall be taken by the Financial Mechanism Committee.
- c) Decisions taken at the meeting of the JCBF shall be set out in the agreed Minutes.
- d) The Minutes from the meetings shall be drafted by the NFP, summarising the main points discussed at the meeting and following the structure of the agenda.
- e) The draft Minutes of the meetings shall be circulated to all members of the JCBF and the FMO no later than 2 weeks after the meeting. Comments to the Minutes may be provided within 5 working days.
- f) The final Minutes shall be sent to the members of the JCBF and the FMO generally no later than four weeks after the meeting. The decisions of the JCBF are effective after the consent with the final text of the Minutes is delivered in writing by the last member, or in case of absence of any objection within 5 working days.

3. Work Plan

- a) The NFP shall, in consultation with the Donors, prepare a draft Work Plan.
- b) The draft Work Plan shall be submitted to the members of the JCBF and the FMO for comments at least four weeks prior to the meeting of the JCBF.
- c) The draft Work Plan shall be further developed and adopted by the JCBF.
- d) The Work Plan shall include a brief description of the implementation system for the fund for bilateral relations, major activities to be organised under the fund, and the programmes of bilateral interest.
- e) The adopted Work Plan will be discussed at the Annual Meeting.
- f) Modifications to the Work Plan may be proposed by any of the members at any time. The modification proposal shall be prepared by the NFP, submitted to the members of the JCBF and

the FMO for comments at least four weeks prior to adoption by the JCBF, and reported on at the annual meeting.

- g) Any comments to the Work Plan made at the Annual Meeting shall be taken into account by the JCBF.

4. Bilateral funds to programmes

- a) Any allocation of bilateral funds to programmes included in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is not subject to further approval by the JCBF.
- b) The JCBF may decide to grant additional bilateral funds to programmes of bilateral interest.
- c) The allocation of additional funds for bilateral relations as described in paragraph (b) above, shall be based on expressions of interest submitted by the Programme Operators.
- d) Following the JCBF's assessment of the expression of interest, the JCBF allocates funds to programmes of bilateral interest. The funds shall be managed in accordance with any recommendation from the JCBF.

5. Calls for proposals

- a) The NFP shall be responsible for organising calls for proposals and drafting the call text, including eligibility criteria, according to the provisions of the Work Plan.
- b) The JCBF and the FMO shall be consulted on the calls for proposals' text and comments received shall be duly taken into consideration.
- c) The calls for proposals shall be published on the websites of the NFP, the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Slovak Republic and the EEA and Norway Grants and be advertised as widely as possible.
- d) Rules for awarding funds shall be agreed by the JCBF.

6. Predefined bilateral initiatives

- a) All members of the JCBF may propose predefined bilateral initiatives to be included in the Work Plan. Proposals shall be sent to the NFP in order to be assessed and submitted for consultation/approval to the members of the JCBF, with the FMO in copy, along with the related modification of the Work Plan.
- b) The predefined initiatives will be assessed during the meeting of the JCBF. The result of the assessment will be part of the Minutes from the respective meeting.
- c) The predefined initiatives shall be implemented in accordance with any recommendations from the JCBF.
- d) The contracting, monitoring and verification of predefined bilateral initiatives decided in the Work Plan shall be carried out by the NFP, except for predefined activities implemented at programme level by entities other than the PO.

7. Monitoring and reporting

- a) The NFP shall report on the use of the fund for bilateral relations, including the work of the JCBF, in the Strategic Report and at the Annual Meeting.
- b) The JCBF shall be invited to comment on the Strategic Report before the NFP submits it to the Donors.

8. Final Provisions

- a) The Statutes and Rules of Procedure shall be adopted by the JCBF and enter into force upon the signature of the Chairperson.
- b) Any changes or supplements hereto must be made by way of written amendments. This does not concern cases when there is a successor of the member that has taken over the member's duties.

In Bratislava, on

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Ján Krak

Director General of the Section of Bilateral Financial Instruments
under the authority of the Head of the Government Office
as awarded under the Mandate no 12/PL/2014 as of 11 June 2014