

OPEN CALL
under the
FUND FOR BILATERAL RELATIONS
EEA and Norway Grants 2014 – 2021
SLOVAKIA

1. BASIC DATA AND CONDITIONS

The Fund for Bilateral Relations (hereinafter referred to as “the Fund”) was established to enhance cooperation and improve mutual knowledge and understanding between Slovakia and the Donor States – Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

Call closure:	31 st December 2024 or until its total allocation is used
Call number:	FBR03
Areas of Support:	All programme areas defined by the Blue Book . The areas are listed in the Grant Application forms ¹ .
Maximum grant to be applied for:	EUR 70,000 for smaller-scale bilateral events, EUR 300,000 for bigger, strategic bilateral initiatives.
Minimum grant to be applied for:	EUR 30,000 for smaller-scale bilateral events, EUR 50,000 for bigger, strategic bilateral initiatives.
Co-financing:	No co-financing is requested by the applicants
Total allocation:	EUR 2,000,000, out of which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EUR 1,000,000 is reserved for smaller-scale bilateral events - EUR 1,000,000 is reserved for bigger, strategic bilateral initiatives. The National Focal Point reserves the right to modify the Call allocations, as needed.
Announced by:	Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic – the National Focal Point
Eligible applicants and partners:	All legal entities established in Slovakia or in one of the Donor States are eligible applicants and partners. An international organisation can be an applicant or a partner, as long as there is a Slovak and a Donor State entity involved in the initiative as an applicant or as a partner. Number of partners is limited to four.
Further eligibility limitations:	The Programme Operators of the Programmes within the EEA and Norway Grants 2014 – 2021 are not eligible to apply.
Further conditions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each Slovak applicant must have at least one partner from a Donor State and vice versa. 2. The Grant Application shall be submitted on the standard form attached to this Call. There is a separate standard form for smaller-scale bilateral events (Annex A1) and a separate standard form for bigger, strategic bilateral initiatives (Annex A2).

¹ Attached to this Call as Annex 1 (for smaller-scale bilateral events) and Annex 2 (for bigger, strategic bilateral initiatives)

	<p>3. The planned end date for a smaller-scale bilateral event shall not be later than two months following the planned start date.</p> <p>4. It is possible to submit several Grant Applications for several events, or for a series of events. However, the Grant Applications for smaller-scale events may only be submitted during the time-slots as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. By 15 July 2024 for events starting between 15 August and 15 October 2024 b. From 15 July to 15 September 2024 for events starting between 15 October and 15 December 2024 c. From 15 September to 15 November 2024 for starting between 15 December 2024 and 15 February 2025 d. From 15 November to 31 December 2024 for events starting between 15 February and 15 April 2025 <p>The Grant Applications submitted outside of their designated slots will be rejected.</p> <p>5. Bilateral initiative shall be completed (both physically and financially) by 30 April 2025².</p> <p>6. The mandatory attachment to the Grant Application is a signed Partnership Statement (letter of intent)³ and the Bank Account contract.</p>
<p>Funding source(s):</p>	<p>EEA Financial Mechanism (EEA Grants) - 48,541114% Norwegian Financial Mechanism (Norway Grants) - 51,458886%</p>

2. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Under the **smaller-scale bilateral events**, only activities directly related to the organisation of bilateral events are eligible. Events can be organised as one-day events, events lasting for several consecutive days or a series of events, i.e. events of a similar or related kind coming one after another. Events can be of various formats (types), e.g. conferences, concerts, study trips, workshops, professional training.

Under the **bigger, strategic bilateral initiatives**, it is expected that mostly initiatives with nation-wide impact will be supported, ideally with potential for further strategic cooperation between important, well-recognised and well-respected stakeholders both in Slovakia and in the Donor States., Broad range of activities is eligible, if they lead to a qualitative change (progress) in a certain, narrowly defined field. There usually is a well-defined strategic output, such as a feasibility study, a development plan, instruction manual for transferred knowledge or other similar output. It is also customary that the initiative leads to further cooperation in the defined field. In addition to events, examples of activities that can be carried out under bigger, strategic bilateral initiatives include data collection, reports, studies and publications, campaigns, exhibitions and promotional material, technical cooperation and exchange of experts, secondments and internships and other activities.

² Expenditures are considered to have been incurred when the cost has been invoiced, paid and the subject matter delivered (in case of goods) or performed (in case of services and works). Exceptionally, 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.

³ The Partnership Statement Template is listed in [Annex 10](#) of the Bilateral Fund Guide, version 1.1.

Both strategic bilateral initiatives and smaller-scale bilateral events **must not** generate profit. If an initiative generates income as a part of its operation, the use of this income shall be described in the Grant Application. Under events, only non-commercial events, with no or symbolic entrance fees (due to state aid limitation), can be supported⁴.

For **bigger, strategic bilateral initiatives**, the applicant shall select at least 3 indicators listed in the [Annex 4](#) to the [Bilateral Fund Guide](#). For smaller-scale initiative, the indicators have already been pre-defined by the National Focal Point in the Grant Application form.

Unless otherwise agreed by the National Focal Point, all initiatives shall be completed (both physically and financially) by 30 April 2025. The Final Report shall be submitted within two months following the planned completion date of the Initiative, but not later than **30 May 2025**. The National Focal Point reserves the right not to reimburse the grant or its part in case the above mentioned was not complied with.

3. ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES

Under this Call, only expenditures falling under Article 8.8, point 1, a) and c) of the Regulations⁵ are eligible. Eligible expenditures therefore are those related to:

- activities aiming at strengthening bilateral relations between the Donor States and Slovakia;
- networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practice between entities in Slovakia and entities in the Donor States and/or international organisations.

Under the **smaller-scale bilateral events**, only the following categories of expenditures are eligible:

- Performers' fees
- Travel costs
- Costs of services and goods related to the event
- Costs of organising the event

Under the **bigger, strategic initiatives**, all types of expenditures are eligible, provided that they meet the conditions listed in this Call and in Article 8.2 of the Regulations.

The so-called “excluded expenditures”, listed in Article 8.7 of the Regulations, are not eligible.

⁴ The European Commission considers that public funding of cultural or heritage conservation activities that are open to the general public free of charge fulfils a purely social and cultural purpose that is not economic in nature. Similarly, the fact that visitors to a cultural institution or participants in a cultural or heritage conservation activity, including nature conservation, which is open to the general public have to pay a monetary contribution which covers only a fraction of the actual costs does not alter the non-economic nature of that activity, since it cannot be regarded as a genuine remuneration for the service provided.

⁵ Regulation on the Implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 and Regulation on the Implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021

No expenditures incurred before and after the dates set in the Grant Offer Letter shall be eligible. The Grant Offer Letter is an annex to the Grant Contract and will be shared with the applicant if the Grant Application is approved.

4. GRANT APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION

All Grant Applications shall be prepared in English and submitted electronically at bilateralnyfond@mirri.gov.sk, along with the following mandatory attachments:

- a) Signed partnership statement (letter of intent). Recommended template for this statement can be found in the Bilateral Fund Guide as [Annex 10](#).
- b) Bank Account contract to the account listed by the applicant in the Grant Application.

The Grant Application should be received well before the planned start of the initiative. When drafting the schedule of the initiative, applicants shall take into account the evaluation process, thus it is recommended to schedule the activities not earlier than 4 weeks following the submission of the Grant Application. While aiming to be flexible, the National Focal Point reserves the right to reject applications not meeting this deadline. Resubmission can be allowed in case the Call closure is not approaching.

Grant Applications shall be evaluated using the FIFO system ("First In First Out").

5. SELECTION PROCEDURES

Grant Applications will be evaluated in the order they are received (FIFO – First In First Out principle), which means that the applications are being assessed in the exact same order in which they were delivered. The detailed information on the selection procedures can be found in the Selection Criteria attached to this Call.

6. FINANCING AND REPORTING

Generally, payments are provided as reimbursement of already incurred costs. However, an advance payment of up to 80 % of the Grant may be provided by the NFP following the signature of the Grant Contract. By way of derogation from point 21.2 of the [Bilateral Fund Guide](#), applicants are not obliged to set up separate account or accounts to receive payments of the Grant. The sole exception are Slovak state budgetary organisation, which are obliged to proceed in line with point 21.3 of the said [Guide](#).

Reimbursement is based on the approved Final Report, which must be submitted by the beneficiary within two months after the planned completion date.

For bigger, strategic initiatives lasting more than 6 months, an Interim Report shall be submitted to report on the progress in the implementation of the bilateral initiative.

Extraordinary payment may be paid by the NFP upon request.

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

Please note that all applicants are required to disclose any consultant involved in the preparation of the Grant Application.

In case of partners spending the grant, a partnership agreement must be signed between the applicant and the partner. While no specific template of partnership agreement has been specifically developed for initiatives funded under the Bilateral Fund, the applicants may adjust the document that can be found in the [Annex 6 to the Bilateral Guideline](#). It is recommended that the partnership agreement is signed only if and after the Grant Application is approved. Until then, the letter of intent shall suffice.

Before and during preparation of the Grant Application it is recommended to become familiar with the following documents, as amended.

- [Bilateral Guideline](#) issued by the Financial Mechanism Office;
- [Bilateral Fund Guide](#) issued by the National Focal Point;
- [Regulation](#) on implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014 – 2021 and [Regulation](#) on implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014 – 2021;
- Guidelines, instructions and other documents issued by the Financial Mechanism Office, National Focal Point and Ministry of Finance of the SR (Certifying Authority).

These documents are published on the websites www.eeagrants.sk / www.norwaygrants.sk and/or www.eeagrants.org. The NFP may also introduce the FAQ section, if relevant.

The National Focal Point can be contacted for queries by:

- e-mail: bilateralnyfond@mirri.gov.sk (questions received by e-mail will be responded within 10 days);
- phone: +421-2-2092 8465

8. CALL ANNEXES

1. Grant Application form for smaller-scale bilateral events
2. Grant Application form for bigger, strategic bilateral initiatives
3. Selection criteria and selection procedure