

ANNOUNCEMENT of the launching of the bilateral fund at national level for 2016

Version 1.0

Bratislava, 15.8.2016

Component	Published by	Source of financing	Code of measure
Strengthened bilateral relations between the Slovak Republic and donor states in cultural area – alternatively, CULTURAL COMPONENT	National Focal Point – the Government Office of the Slovak Republic (NFP)	EEA Financial Mechanism (alternatively, EEA Grants)/ Norwegian Financial Mechanism (alternatively Norway Grants)	BFCLT16
Strengthened bilateral relations between the Slovak Republic and donor states in environmental area - alternatively, ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENT			BFENV16
Strengthened bilateral relations between the Slovak Republic and donor states in social area - alternatively, SOCIAL COMPONENT			BFSOC16

A. INTRODUCTION

The National Focal Point (hereinafter only referred to as the “NFP”) hereby notifies eligible applicants of the launching of a call for applications for financial contribution to implement activities to strengthen bilateral relations between the Slovak Republic and donor states (Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland).

For complete information regarding the granting process, please consult the Guidelines for the bilateral funds at national level.

Bilateral relations generally refer to political, cultural, historic or economic ties between the Slovak Republic and the donor states. For the purposes of this announcement, bilateral relations refer to cooperation, at institutional level, between Slovak entities and donor state’s entities in a wider

- a) context of culture and arts (thematic component 1);
- b) environmental context (thematic component 2);
- c) social context (thematic component 3);

and their mutual strengthening with respect to their promotion towards the wider public, and to their sustainability.

Donor states are Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland.

Grant Application means an application submitted by the applicant under this announcement and in the form attached as Annex 1 to this announcement.

Payment claim means a payment request submitted by the applicant after an activity has been implemented, under which the NFP reimburses the costs incurred by the applicant in accordance with the approved application for contribution and with the decision on the approval of the application for contribution. The form of the payment claims is attached as Annex 2 to this announcement.

Applicant under the bilateral fund is an entity from Slovakia.

B. AIM OF THE ACTIVITIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED

The primary objective of the bilateral fund at national level is to provide financial support to strengthen the bilateral relations between institutions in Slovakia and in the donor states, in particular through:

- a) strengthening and developing existing bilateral relations under the relevant component;
- b) establishing new ties and opportunities for sustainable cooperation;
- c) developing the bilateral dimension in the implementation of EEA and Norway grants.

The bilateral fund at national level is designed for financing activities with a strong potential and relevance for strengthening bilateral relations. The bilateral fund at national level typically supports one-off activities rather than a coherent set of activities (projects). They primarily involve complementary activities with clearly defined objectives and focus which relate to the organisation of, or participation at, conferences, seminars and workshops, study tours or information activities relevant to strengthen bilateral relations.

C. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants are entities from the Slovak Republic.

The applicant **must submit a clear proof of its work** in the field for which it applies for contribution for at least 1 year prior to the date of submission of the application for contribution. The proof of work in the relevant field is provided in the relevant section of the form of the grant application. Alternatively, the relevant experience can be proven also by a minimum one year experience of any of the applicant’s employee.

The eligible applicant may submit **only one application for contribution** under this announcement¹.

¹ In case of applicants such as Universities or other scientific institutes, the respective Faculty or Department is considered as an applicant despite the fact that the legal status of organisation is represented by a different person (for example rector). These kinds of organisations,

The applicant **must** have **at least one partner from a donor state** for the implementation of the activity for which the contribution is requested. **The partner shall be with financial participation or without financial participation in the implementation of that activity.**

D. ELIGIBLE PARTNERS²

1. Entities from Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland (private or public entities, including non-governmental organisations) – mandatory partner;
2. Entities from the Slovak Republic (private or public entities, including non-governmental organisations) – non mandatory partner;
3. International organisations³ - non mandatory partner.

The applicant shall specify **only one partner with financial participation** in the grant application.

The applicant must submit a clear proof of the partner with financial participation's work in the relevant field for at least 1 year prior to the date of submission of the grant application. The proof of the partner's work in the relevant field is provided in the relevant section of the form of the application for contribution. Alternatively, the relevant experience can be proven also by a minimum one year experience of any of the partner's employee.

The eligibility requirements do not apply to partners without financial participation. The number of **partners without financial participation** is limited to a **maximum of 2 partners**.

E. PARTNERSHIP

The applicant implements the activity **in partnership with at least one donor state partner**. Other partners from Slovakia, donor states or international organisations may also be engaged in the implementation of the activity. The relationship between the applicant and the partner with financial participation may not substitute any supplier-customer relations. The grant shall specify a part / parts of the activity to be implemented by the partner.

In relation to the NFP, the liability for all obligations and any misconduct on the part of the partner is borne by the applicant. The applicant and the partner with financial participation shall conclude a partnership agreement before submitting the grant application. The draft agreement is attached as Annex 4 to this announcement. The draft of the Partnership Agreement has to be submitted together with the grant application and the signed hard copy has to be submitted as an attachment of the Payment Claim.

Organisation of events shall be carried out jointly by the Slovak applicant and the donor state partner.

Activities related to participation in events shall be implemented through participation of representative/representatives of the Slovak applicant at events organized by the donor state partner.

For all three components, **study tour** activities **shall be implemented as a study tour by representative/representatives of the Slovak applicant to the donor state partner and or vice versa.**

The sustainability of the bilateral cooperation is evidenced by the applicant in the mandatory annex entitled "Overview, description and evaluation of future expectations after the completion of the implementation of the activity with focus on further/continued development of bilateral cooperation." The NFP recommends describing the future cooperation **by using concrete milestones** instead of using a general description.

therefore, may submit more grant applications, while the same organisational unit (faculty or department) may submit only one grant application.

² Every bilateral activity shall be implemented in a partnership with a donor partner. In case of a partnership with an international organisation or Slovak partner, a donor partner is needed.

³ International organisation listed in the official List of international organisation published at website of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs - https://www.mzv.sk/sk/zahranicna__politika/prehľad_medzinarodnych_organizacii_a_zoskupeni

F. ELIGIBLE AREAS

As a general rule, activities can only be implemented in Slovakia or in the donor states. Within the other EEA and EU territories, activities can be implemented only in exceptional cases necessitated by the specific character of activities; in that case, however, an explicit written consent granted by the NFP is necessary.

G. THEMATIC FOCUS OF INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS

Cultural component	The cultural component is focused on the area of culture and arts. This field has considerable potential for the development of bilateral relations, networking and exchange of experience. The component provides a possibility to establish cooperation between institutions in Slovakia and in donor states in order to promote cultural values, diversity of cultures, specifics of cultural environment with a unique focus on the engagement of partners from Slovakia and donor states. At the same time, it focuses on expert / scientific events in the field of culture with a unique focus on sharing know-how and good practice between institutions in Slovakia and in donor states.
Environmental component	The environmental component has considerable potential for the development of bilateral relations, networking and exchange of experience and transfer of know-how between Slovak institutions and institutions in donor states.
Social component	The social component focuses on a wide range of social issues and topics including Roma issues. These issues have considerable potential for the development of bilateral relations, networking and exchange of experience in social issues. The component provides a possibility to establish cooperation between institutions in Slovakia and in donor states in order to apply new, advanced and effective measures and practices, exchange of experience, transfer of know-how and good practice.

H. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES, LIMITS

The applicant is eligible to submit grant application under one component and for one type of activity only.

The minimum financial limit for all types of activities under all three components is EUR 1,000.

Thematic component	Name of activity	Maximum financial limit (EUR)
Cultural component	Organisation of events - support for the organisation of events in Slovakia or in the donor states in order to engage partners from the donor states and Slovakia. For the purposes of this announcement, event means, in particular: a conference, seminar/workshop/training course, exhibition, competition, concert, festival, exposition, audio-visual performance, showcase, artistic performance (theatre, dance, puppet theatre), etc.	20 000
	Study tour to a donor state (applicant) or to Slovakia (partner) of exceptional importance for the transfer of know-how and networking between Slovak institutions and donor state institutions in the field of culture.	10 000
	Participation in events - e.g., in a conference, seminar, workshop, exhibition, concert, festival, exposition in a donor state (applicant) or in Slovakia (partner) with exceptional importance for the strengthening of the bilateral relations in the field of culture.	5000
Environmental component	Organisation of events - support for the organisation of environmental events in Slovakia or in the donor states in order to engage partners from donor states and Slovakia. For the purposes of this announcement, event means, in particular: a conference, seminar/workshop/training course	20 000
	Study tour to a donor state (applicant) or to Slovakia (partner) of exceptional importance for the transfer of know-how and networking between Slovak institutions and donor state institutions in the field of the environment.	10 000
	Participation in events - e.g., in a conference, seminar or workshop in a donor state (applicant) or in Slovakia (partner) of exceptional / strategic importance for the strengthening of the bilateral relations in the field of the environment.	5 000
Social component	Organisation of event in the social field — a conference, seminar/workshop/training course focused on cooperation in this field, particularly in order to engage partners from the donor states and Slovakia.	20 000
	Study tour to a donor state (applicant) or to Slovakia (partner) of exceptional importance for the transfer of know-how and networking between Slovak institutions and donor state institutions in the social fields.	10 000
	Participation in events – e.g., in a conference, seminar or workshop in a donor state (applicant) or in	

Slovakia (partner) of exceptional / strategic importance for the strengthening of the bilateral relations in the social field social issues.	5 000
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Eligible costs are costs that relate to the implementation of activity and are related to the achievement of the objective of the measure particularly travel costs, costs related to the organization of events etc. (following Articles 7.2; 7.7.2 and 7.7.3 of the Regulation on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism and the Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism).

When financing travel expenses, except for flight tickets, lump sums compensation shall apply. Only flight tickets in economy class are eligible. Lump sums compensation is calculated as follows:

1. The term lump sums compensation means compensation for accommodation, meals, travel insurance, local transport (including transport from airport to accommodation) and necessary extra expenses;
2. Lump sums compensation shall be determined in accordance with current rates stipulated by the European Commission which are published at <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/perdiem-rate-20150318.pdf> and that represent a rate for one night stay, respectively. The lump sum for the business trip that lasted more than 12 hours (without overnight stay) in the Slovak Republic or the donor state (respectively when other State is not mentioned in the decision as an eligible area for the implementation of activities) is reduced by 60%;
3. Title for a lump sums compensation is reported by a report from business trips abroad, which must be signed by the business trip participants and must contain information about the progress and results of the trip and accurate time data path must be apparent from it (beginning and end of the business trip abroad - the date and time);
4. The lump sum compensation for participants of a domestic business trip in the Slovak Republic or the donor state (respectively when other State is not mentioned in the decision as an eligible area for the implementation of activities) is reduced by 40% if the travel takes place only in one state.

The limits specified in Annex. 1 of the newest versions of Project Promoter and Project Partner Guide, issued the Government Office as the National Focal Point, shall adequately apply on the other costs.

I. REQUIRED OBJECTIVES, OUTCOMES AND RESULTS OF ACTIVITIES

The applicant will chose **one** of the three pre-defined activities, **one pre-defined objective** and one **pre-defined result** pursuant to Annex 3 to this announcement.

The implementation of the activity must also meet at least one horizontal objective under the relevant thematic component; the applicant will chose the relevant horizontal objective in the grant application, and describe how this objective will be met.

J. ELIGIBLE PERIOD FOR THE SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS

The grant applications may be submitted from **15. 8. 2016**.

The implementation of the Bilateral Fund is **continual** from the above mentioned date of the opening of the bilateral fund for 2016 and the **FIFO system ("First in First out") is applied**. The Bilateral Fund is open **until the allocated funds are fully used**. Once all allocated funds are utilised, the NFP shall publish an announcement about the full utilisation of funds at its web page www.eeagrants.sk / www.norwaygrants.sk.

The sooner the grant application is submitted the higher are the chances of the grant applications to be supported. The available funds are reserved for the grant applications that have met the formal and eligibility criteria until the process of assessment is over.

The date of final close of the Fund is **31. 10. 2017**. In case of fully reserved amount before the deadline, the NFP will inform the public on the full use of the available allocation at the www.eeagrants.sk / www.norwaygrants.sk web sites.

K. ASSESSMENT OF THE GRANT APPLICATIONS

The assessment process of the grant applications shall take no longer than 30 working days. In case of any requests for additional information, the 30 days period will be extended until full information is provided. **Therefore, the recommended start of bilateral activities is at least 30 working days from the date of submission of the grant application.** Further information on the assessment process is provided in the Guideline for Bilateral Fund.

Any Grant Application submitted less than 30 working days before the planned start of the activity implementation will be automatically rejected due to no compliance with the formal criteria of eligibility.

L. ELIGIBLE IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The activities (substantive implementation) need to be implemented from the date of the decision on the approval of the grant application until **31 January 2018**, unless the decision stipulates otherwise.

The financial implementation of the activity needs be completed within two months from the completion date of the substantive implementation of the activity. This means that within two months from the completion date the payment claim need to be submitted to the NFP.

M. ALLOCATIONS PER COMPONENTS

The indicative allocation is 105 000 EUR. The allocations for each component are stated in the table below. Before sending the Grant Application it is recommended to check the availability of funds at bilateralnyfond@vlada.gov.sk.

In case, all funds allocated for a component are reserved by 30.11.2016 or the remaining funds are not sufficient to cover the latest grant application, such grant application shall be listed in a reserve list.

The reserve list shall start to be filled when all funds for a certain component are reserved or the remaining amount of funds in a component does not meet the financial requirements of an actually submitted grant application or by the 30.11.2016. Only one reserve list shall be established and the grant applications shall by listed in the reserve list according to the date and time of their submission to the bilateralnyfond@vlada.gov.sk. In case of a greater passage of time (more than 30 working days from their original submission), the applicant shall be asked about relevance of the originally submitted grant application. In case such a grant application is no longer relevant, the grant application shall be discarded.

In case of available funds in one or more components at midnight of 30.11.2016, the NFP shall merge funds from all components into one allocation. Information about this change shall be published on the webpage www.aeagrants.sk / www.norwaygrants.sk.

Funds from merged allocation shall be reserved for submitted applications regardless of the original component.

	Amounts of funds allocated for the funding of applications for contribution in 2016
Cultural component	EUR 35 000
Environmental component	EUR 35 000
Social component	EUR 35 000

N. FINANCING

The system of financing is based on **reimbursements** made under submitted payment claims attached as Annex 2 to this announcement.

No co-financing of the activities by the applicant **is required**. The total amount of the provided contribution represents total eligible expenditure (costs) of the activity.

The information about procedures and conditions for the submission of grant applications are included in the Guidelines for the drawing of funds from the bilateral fund at national level.

No legal entitlement to the provision and payment of the contribution under the bilateral fund at national level exists.

O. FORMAL REQUIREMENTS OF APPLICATION FOR CONTRIBUTION

1. The grant application must be delivered by **electronic means** to bilateralnyfond@vlada.gov.sk in the form attached as Annex 1 to this announcement (the “draft” must be clicked). **All relevant sections of the application for contribution should be filled in.**⁴
2. The grant application **must be submitted in partnership** with a donor state entity pursuant to point C of this Announcement.
3. The grant application must be submitted in English only (except the annex according to the 5 below, which can be in Slovak).
4. Along with the grant application, **the applicant must submit the individual mandatory annex entitled “Overview, description and evaluation of future expectations after the completion of the implementation of the activity with focus on further/continued development of bilateral cooperation”** evidencing the sustainability of the bilateral cooperation.
5. Where a donor partner or an international organisation with financial participation is involved, the applicant must submit a statement from the register of organisations to prove the partner’s legal status, and a proof of eligibility of the partner from the formal point of view.
6. The grant application must be submitted more than 30 working days prior to the planned start of activity implementation according to the **point K** above.
7. The grant application must be submitted within the eligibility period for the submission of applications for contribution specified in **point L** above.
8. No other application for contribution has been approved for the applicant under this announcement.

If the grant application fails to meet any of the formal requirements referred to in point 1 through 7, the grant application will be dismissed by the NFP during the initial evaluation of the application.

P. FACTUAL REQUIREMENTS OF GRANT APPLICATION

1. The grant application must clearly aim towards the strengthening of the bilateral relations and must be beneficial for the relevant thematic field.
2. The applicant must be an eligible applicant pursuant to point C of this announcement. The partner with financial participation must be a relevant institution pursuant to point D of the announcement.
3. The grant application must contain eligible expenditure as required under the announcement and Annex 1 of the newest versions of Project Promoter and Project Partner Guide, issued the Government Office as the National Focal Point, shall adequately apply on the other costs.

⁴ **Data size of the application for contribution and all relevant annexes** - if the 5Mb limit is exceeded, the applicant will archive the relevant documents in a .zip or .rar format and upload them to a freely accessible web data storage site. The accompanying email must contain a hyperlink through which the NFP can download the relevant documents. If the accompanying email does not contain such hyperlink, the NFP may classify this failure as non-compliance with the formal requirement specified in point L(1) of the announcement.

4. The grant application contains correct data in individual data sections, proposal for the implementation of the activity is clearly structured, contains relevant outcomes and results and its timetable is realistic and effective.
5. The applicant has met the limits on activities as well as expenditure limits under this announcement and Annex 1 of the newest versions of Project Promoter and Project Partner Guide, issued the Government Office as the National Focal Point, shall adequately apply on the other costs.

If the grant application fails to meet any of the criteria referred to in point 1 and 2, the grant application will automatically be referred by the NFP, within the initial evaluation, to a bilateral commission with a proposal for its dismissal.

If the grant application fails to meet any of the criteria referred to in point 3 and 4, the NFP may request that deficiencies are removed / documentation is supplemented, or refer the grant application to the bilateral commission with a proposal for its dismissal.

If the grant application fails to meet the criterion pursuant to point 5, the NFP will reduce the eligible expenditure in accordance with the limits defined in this announcement and/or in the Guidelines for the drawing of funds from the bilateral funds at national level, or request that deficiencies are removed / documentation is supplemented.

Q. CONDITIONS FOR APPROVAL OF APPLICATION FOR CONTRIBUTION

1. The National Focal Point has at its disposal available financial resources allocated for the financing of the grant application.
2. The application meets all formal requirements.
3. The application meets all factual requirements.

If the application for grant is approved, the Focal Point shall electronically inform (in 5 working days after the whole approval process is completed) the applicant about approval of the grant application and shall inform them about conditions of the grant. At the same time the Focal Point determines the period within which the applicant must state whether they accept the conditions for grant. The applicant is obliged to submit affirmative, respectively negative opinion in due time. In the event that the applicant does not respond within the deadline, the grant application will be automatically rejected.

Together with the opinion, the applicant shall submit the grant application signed by an authorized person by post. The grant application must be signed by the applicant's statutory representative or by a person authorised to act on behalf of the applicant. The signature of the person authorised to submit the application must be authenticated; this does not apply to public administration applicants.

In case the grant application complies with the formal criteria during the initial evaluation and the National Focal Point does not have any available financial resources at its disposal for the given component and year, such application for contribution will be placed on the reserve list. The applicant will be notified by email to that effect. If funds become available under the given component and in the given year, the evaluation process will be resumed for the application which was originally placed on the reserve list, using the same order of precedence based on which it was placed on the reserve list. If no financial resources become available, the grant application will be dismissed following the expiry of the eligibility period for the submission of grant applications specified in point E of this announcement.

R. ENSURING PUBLICITY OF ELIGIBLE ACTIVITY

In the course of the implementation of the eligible activity, the publicity of the event and bilateral relations between Slovakia and donor states must be ensured. Simultaneously, basic publicity shall be ensured also within the activity – participation in an event and/or on a study trip- for example in form of publishing a report at a website or sending direct emails to institutions operating in the relevant field on achieved benefits and added values from the activity implementation.

S. COMMUNICATION

Any inquiries concerning the bilateral funds and this announcement may be sent by **email** bilateralnyfond@vlada.gov.sk or via phone at + 421 2 209 25 574.

T. CHANGES IN THE GRANT APPLICATION

1. The applicant is required to implement activities in accordance with the approved grant application and in accordance with the decision by the National Focal Point on the approval of the grant application and with the Guidelines for the drawing of funds from the bilateral fund at national level.
2. The budget for the activity specified in the grant application may be adjusted without consent from the National Focal Point only if the transfer between budgetary items does not exceed 15% of total eligible expenditure for the activity. Any transfer between budgetary items **in excess of 15 %** of total eligible expenditure requires **prior consent from the National Focal Point**. Creation of new budgetary items / sub-items is not permitted; financial volumes may only be transferred provided that the limits specified in Annex 1 of the newest versions of the Project Promoter and Project Partner Guide, issued by the Government Office as the National Focal Point.

U. ANNEXES

1. Grant application form
2. Payment claim form
3. Implementation chain and overview of objectives, results and outcomes of the activity to be implemented
4. Draft partnership agreement