

## GUIDELINE FOR APPLICANTS FOR BILATERAL INITIATIVES UNDER PROGRAM I: “Local Development & Poverty Reduction”

This bilateral call aims at strengthening the relations, between legal entities (including NGOs) in the beneficiary states and in the Donor States and/or international organizations. Strengthening relations can include networking, cooperation, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practices.

The National Focal Point (the General Secretariat for Public Investments & the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF), Ministry of Economy & Development in Greece) is responsible for management and control of the use of this fund. The Fund Operator (FO) shall contract the beneficiaries and shall request funds to cover the cost of activities financed from the fund for bilateral relations from the (NFP).

The FO will ensure reporting to the NFP which will enable the NFP to fulfil its reporting obligations to the FMO and the Donor States.

The available funding will be allocated to the initiatives proposed through a transparent selection procedure. For more information concerning the application process, the eligibility criteria, as well as the evaluation and selection process, kindly read the relevant sections in the current document, which is also uploaded on the respective website of the FO.

The Call, along with the application template, the budget template and the Guideline, is being accessible to the project promoters through FO’s website.

**Activities such as short-term international exchanges of experiences and know-how, including participation in conferences, to foster communication amongst NGOs and other entities in Greece and the donor states are eligible for funding.**

### 1. Selection Criteria

There are three types of selection criteria **administrative criteria, eligibility criteria and evaluation criteria**. Administrative & eligibility criteria are set for the potential partners/organizations, which the three pre-defined organizations might choose for a bilateral initiative proposal/application.

All submitted applications will be reviewed by the Fund Operator for compliance with the administrative and eligibility criteria.

By administrative and eligibility criteria we refer to the timely submission of complete applications and compliance with eligibility requirements of the Call for proposals under the bilateral initiatives (eligibility of applicants, eligibility of partners and eligibility of application).

Applications must be submitted **in English** by the deadline stated in the open call text in order to be considered eligible.

## 1.1 Administrative Criteria

**Administrative Criteria** are conditions for accepting each application. The supporting documents should be uploaded online together with the application form and the budget form.

Without compliance with the administrative criteria, the application shall not be further assessed. Administrative criteria include the following:

### A) General Criteria

- Applicants must submit the bilateral application form and the budget form (incl. the annexes) according to the corresponding templates available on the FO's website
- Applications must be submitted both in Greek & English.
- All requested supporting documents must be submitted, accompanying the application and budget's documents.
- Donor States' entities must submit all requested documents in English.
- The involvement of a donor state entity (either as applicant or as partner) **is a pre-requisite** for the application to be accepted.

### B) Specific Criteria

The following supporting documents should be uploaded together with the application and budget template in Greek or translated in English in case of any other language for an application to be eligible for evaluation:

- Latest consolidated version of the Statutes of the Organization, as registered in the General Registry- and a General Certificate (including Statutes changes) issued no more than 30 days prior to the last application date.
- Valid tax statement and social insurance statement.
- Pending legal issues - if any, signed solemn declaration by the legal representative, stating that the lead applicant and potential partners have no legal backlog.
- A partnership agreement. A draft partnership agreement or alternatively a letter of intent must be submitted to the Fund Operator in English together with the application, clearly defining the objective of the partnership and activities undertaken by each entity. A partnership agreement, based on a template provided by the FO, shall be submitted to the FO prior to the signature of the project contract. The eligibility of expenditures incurred by a bilateral initiatives Partner is subject to the same limitations as would apply if the expenditures were incurred by the Project Promoter.
- Tax declarations of the last two years; Balance sheets of the last two years if the organization is audited by Chartered Accountants, the last reference & budgets and accounts of the last two years Fund Operator reserves the right to ask additional documents during the contracting phase with the project promoters pre-selected.

In case where one or more documents are missing, the applicant must submit a signed solemn declaration, mentioning any missing documents and the justification for not submitting them. The Fund Operator shall decide whether the justification is adequate and respond to the applicant with a new deadline to submit missing documents, within 5 working days after the initial online submission.

## 1.2 Eligibility Criteria

**Eligibility Criteria** are conditions to assess whether the applicant/partner and the application are qualified for funding. The eligibility criteria shall be assessed only if the application has fulfilled the administrative criteria. Eligibility criteria include the following:

- Eligible applicants are any public or private legal entity registered and established in Greece or in the donor states (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway). Eligible NGOs in Greece fall within the following definition: *“A non-profit voluntary organization established as a legal entity, having a non-commercial or commercial purpose, independent of local, regional and central government, public entities, political parties. Religious institutions and Political parties and are not considered NGOs”*;
- Any international organization or body or agency thereof, actively involved in, and effectively contributing to the implementation of the project.
- All Partners must share a common goal and actively contribute towards achieving the objective(s) of the initiative, as defined in the application. The role and specific obligations undertaken by each Partner, must be clearly defined and justified in the application.
- Each entity, either Applicant or Partner can receive funding for up to two Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives.
- At least one entity from the Donor States, relevant to achieving the cooperation objectives, must be involved in any initiative.
- Partners must be eligible.
- Project’s activities must be eligible.
- Project’s expenditures must be eligible.
- The requested grant amount is within the permissible limits provided in the Call.
- The proposed implementation period is within the permissible limits provided in the Call. No more applications should be submitted by one project promoter or project partner than these explicitly authorized in the main text of the call for proposals.

The following entities are eligible also to be bilateral initiative partner(s): Social and Solidarity Economy Organizations (Law 4430/2013 and prior Law 4019/2011) are to promote social entrepreneurship, have a statutory commercial property, distribute profits to members, while members can be public entities. Funded activities of faith-based organizations must not directly or indirectly promote a religious doctrine, mission or proselytism related to the beliefs of a particular faith (beyond basic religious / cultural awareness raising).

## 1.3 Right to appeal

Only complete applications will be considered for evaluation and selection purposes. The applicants will have five (5) working days to submit any missing documents following a relevant request by the Fund Operator.

Candidates whose applications are rejected for not complying with the administrative and eligibility criteria will be informed directly by email and have the right to appeal within five (5) working days. The

right to appeal may be exercised only once. The complaint must be fully justified and submitted electronically via email to the FO at: [appeals@localdevelopment-eeagrants.gr](mailto:appeals@localdevelopment-eeagrants.gr) end of business local time, on the fifth day. The appeal will be considered after receipt of justification for the non-compliance decision from the Fund Operator. Applicants will be informed within ten (10) working days after the appeal's submission. The decision on the appeal is irrevocable.

## 2. Expected results

All Proposed initiatives should enhance cooperation and improve mutual knowledge and understanding. Furthermore, it should add value to the objective/outcomes of Programme I, Local Development & Poverty Reduction". The Programme objective is 'Strengthened social and economic cohesion', supporting the following areas:

- *Social and economic development in specific geographic areas*
- *Anti-discriminatory activities focusing on groups vulnerable to social and economic exclusion*
- *Interventions to increase job prospects*
- *Interventions to increase job capacity, especially among the most vulnerable*
- *Quality of and access to social/welfare services*
- *Networking and policy exchanges between municipalities*

## 3. Eligible Expenses

### 3.1 General Principles

Eligible expenses expenditures are those actually incurred by the bilateral initiative Promoter or Partner, which meet the following criteria:

- 1) they are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a bilateral initiative as specified in the bilateral initiative contract
- 2) they are related to the subject of the bilateral initiative contract, and they are indicated in the estimated overall budget of the initiative
- 3) they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the bilateral initiative
- 4) they must be used for the sole purpose of achieving the objective(s) of the bilateral initiative and its expected outcome(s), in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness

5) they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular through being recorded in the accounting records of the promoter and determined according to the applicable accounting standards and generally accepted accounting principles.

**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 of eligibility.**

The project Promoter's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the expenditures and revenue declared in respect of the project with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents. Exceptionally, with reference to expenditures incurred by bilateral initiatives partners whose primary location is in one of the donor states or project partners that are international organisations or bodies or agencies thereof, the proof of expenditure may take a form of a report by an independent auditor, qualified to carry out statutory audits of accounting documents, certifying that the reported costs are incurred in accordance with the rules of the Programme. The annually audited financial statement of an entity cannot replace the specific auditor's certificate confirming that the claimed costs are incurred in accordance with the rules of the Programme, the relevant law and national accounting practices;

Having regard to the principle of proportionality, travel costs, including subsistence allowance, may be calculated as a lump sum, on the basis of defined rules approved by the appropriate entity. The expenditures declared under Travel Costs may include transportation costs and per diem as lump sums to cover accommodation and subsistence costs for participating staff of the Promoter and eligible Partner(s), provided they are in line with the usual practices and policies of each entity, and do not exceed the limits set in Chapter 10 of the present document.

## 4. Monitoring, Reporting and Payments

### 4.1 Monitoring and Reporting

The FO shall contract and monitor bilateral initiatives during their implementation. The Project Promoters will submit to the FO a final report on the bilateral initiative's progress and results as well as evidence of these actions (event invitations, attendee lists, meeting agendas, support materials for training, videos, other deliveries, etc.) following the completion of the bilateral initiative, using a template that the FO will provide. The Promoter shall submit this report within 60 days after the initiative is completed. The report will include a progress report and a financial report. Project promoters will also submit, without delay, reports for any problem, failure or deviation in the bilateral initiative. The FO will publish such activities on its web site and inform FMO accordingly.

A proof of expenditure for costs incurred shall be available. It should document that the travel actually took place and was directly linked to the project (e.g. invoice of travel agent, plane tickets, e-tickets, boarding pass, meal receipts, list of participants, minutes, agenda etc.);

In order to ensure the understanding of the documents related to the expenses of Donor States' entities, eligible costs incurred and paid by these entities shall be justified by expenditure documents

certified in English by a statutory auditor or by who in the country of origin, has equivalent powers to do so. In alternative, English translations of the expenditure documents may also be accepted. For both alternatives, relevant instructions and templates shall be provided by the Fund Operator following the contract signature. The costs related to this certification are eligible under the project grant.

The reporting must be both in Greek & English.

## 4.2 Payments

The payment is made in one single transfer, as reimbursement of expenses actually incurred, up to 15 working days upon acceptance of the narrative and financial report.

The beneficiaries, if deemed necessary, can apply for an advance payment of up to 50% of the total amount. In such a case, the amount of the final payment will be equal to the difference between the final expenses incurred – as reported and approved by the FO - and the advance payment settled. In exceptional cases, the FO shall apply more flexible payment schemes to ensure the liquidity of Project Promoters.

## 5. Communication requirements

Communication requirements include (non-exhaustive list):

- use of logos of Donor Countries, FMO and the FO and a specific reference to the Programme and the bilateral activity to all communication materials (samples of reference will be given by the FO).
- reference of the Bilateral activity at the Project Promoter website
- at least one communication activity (such as a Press Release)
- regular communication of their experience through online (incl. social media posts) and offline communication tools is expected
- Coordination with FO (and NFP) for further publicity

## 6. Selection Process for proposed Initiatives

### 6.1 Selection Procedure

Initiatives shall be evaluated and selected by the FO. The FO shall contract the beneficiaries selected and shall request funds to cover the cost of activities financed from the fund for bilateral relations from the National Focal Point.

Each application that meets the administrative and eligibility criteria shall be evaluated and scored by two members of FO.

The average score of the two FO evaluators is taken into account. If the difference between the two evaluators is greater than 30% (of the highest score awarded), then a third member will be appointed by FO to evaluate the application independently and the average of the two highest scores will be taken into account.

### Final selection of Initiatives

For the purposes of final selection, only the applications that are awarded an overall average score equal to or greater than 60 points shall be considered for funding. The decisions are communicated individually to the respective applicants, and information on approved initiatives will be published on the FO's website. The Fund Operator (FO) will appoint the Selection Committee with the participation of the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) & will provide Selection Committee's the final decision to FMO for approval.

The decision on the selection will be irrevocable.

## 6.2 Scoring Criteria

The evaluation and scoring of the proposed initiative(s) shall be based upon the following criteria and weights:

Criteria	Max Score
Merit of the Initiative and contribution/relevance to Objective/Outcome(s) of Programme I, Local Development & Poverty Reduction	30
Strengthening of bilateral relations of entities involved in the initiative	30
Participation of state and non-state entities and broad regional profile of initiatives	10
Contribution to sustainability	10
Value for money	20
<b>Total maximum score</b>	<b>100</b>

## 7. Bilateral Initiatives Contracts

For each approved initiative, a bilateral initiative contract shall be concluded and signed between the FO and the selected Project Promoter.

The FO shall facilitate contacts and co-operation initiatives between the eligible legal entities in Greece and the Donor states. A partnership database (<https://ngonorway.org/partners/>) has been established by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee in order to facilitate the search for potential partners. Potential applicants are advised to register and add a brief description about their organization and search for potential partners among interested Norwegian institutions, NGOs, municipalities, companies and other bodies.

## 8. Clarification questions and FAQ

FO will be available to answer the queries from potential applicants regarding the Programmes and the application process received by email within 3 days.

Questions related to the present call, must be sent by email to the address below:

Fund Operator Email address: [info@localdevelopment-eeagrants.gr](mailto:info@localdevelopment-eeagrants.gr)

Subject: Questions - Bilateral Initiatives

Answers to specific questions related to the application process for the Programme's call will be uploaded on the Programme's website (FAQ section) to be available for all interested applicants and will be updated by the FO on a regular basis. No questions will be answered individually. It is therefore advisable to consult the website regularly.

## 9. Submission process

Applicants will be requested to fill in and submit the Application form and the budget form available in the Programme website, in accordance with the requirements of the present document. The application form in word format and the budget template in excel format is available to download here:

<https://www.asylumandmigration-eeagrants.gr/bilateral-cooperation-en/>

Submission of applications is made electronically, via a link provided in FO's website, under the Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives section. After verification of the applicants' email, the applicants shall upload all required documents.

Applicants must fill in the Application and Budget Form as provided and submit it together with all supporting documents. Supporting official legal documentation should be sent along with the application. In addition, physical copies stamped by the relevant authorities should be submitted to the FO only by the successful applicants.

The application should be submitted both in Greek and English together with all the supporting documentation in Greek or translated in English in case of any other language.

**Attention:** Only completed applications will be considered for evaluation and selection purposes.

## 10. RATES FOR TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION EXPENSES AND DAILY SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE

This chapter sets the rates (upper limits in case of using ex post reimbursement on the actual costs incurred) for the travel, accommodation expenses and daily subsistence allowance.

Travel costs, including subsistence allowance per day, for Greek public sector are ruled by national provisions, valid also for EEA Grants. Having regard to the principle of proportionality (recommended by the Bilateral Guideline of EEA Grants), travel costs, including subsistence allowance, for all other cases than Greek public sector may be eligible up to 50% above national provisions thresholds (example:



where daily allowance for public sector is €80 for non-public sector may be up to €120). Above this limit expenditure may be eligible, upon a justified documentation. Salary/experts or other costs related to work deliverables on the traveling days are not calculated in the subsistence allowance.

National provisions laying down travelling specifications:

- 1) Official Government Gazette 94 N. 4336/15 Sub-paragraph D9 .9: COSTS OF MOVING INSIDE AND OUT OF THE TERRITORY (page 967)
- 2) Ministerial Decision Number 2/56533/0022 (1) Determination of mileage allowance of employees for service with privately owned means of transport

Travel and subsistence allowances for personnel taking part in the project as lump sums are considered eligible provided that they are in line with the project promoter's and project partner's usual practices on travel costs and do not exceed the limits.

- 1) Accommodation expenses include the accommodation cost for staying at a hotel.
- 2) The daily subsistence allowance includes the cost of meals and local transport.
- 3) Travel and accommodation expenses and the daily subsistence allowance that cover participation to events within the prefecture or county or similar administrative division, where the bilateral initiative Promoter or its Partner are established, are not eligible expenses. The same applies for entities from the Donor states.
- 4) The necessary proof documents for travel expenses include invoices and receipts for the issuance of tickets, boarding passes, the minutes from meetings and other supporting documents that prove the aim of the trip.
- 5) The necessary proof documents for accommodation expenses and daily subsistence allowance include invoices and receipts issued for accommodation (by hotels), meals (by restaurants) and local transport.

The rates of foreign currencies to euro are determined in accordance with the Foreign Exchange Reference Rates on the day the expense was incurred, as provided by:

The Bank of Greece, or alternatively by ECB in the case of Icelandic krona which is not included in the reports of BoG:

[https://www.bankofgreece.gr/Pages/el/Markets/Isotimies/deltia.aspx?Filter\\_By=15](https://www.bankofgreece.gr/Pages/el/Markets/Isotimies/deltia.aspx?Filter_By=15)