

# Fund for Bilateral Relations

## FBR Open Call #2

### Portugal & Norway – Partnerships for Innovation

#### V.01

The European Economic Area Financial Mechanism (EEA Grants) supports initiatives aiming at strengthening bilateral relations between Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway (Donor States) and Portugal through the **FUND FOR BILATERAL RELATIONS**, a fund operated by the National Management Unit (UNG)<sup>1</sup> that acts as National Focal Point.

Through the Joint Committee of Bilateral Funds (JCBF) the Donor States and Portugal jointly establish the bilateral ambitions and identify priority areas for bilateral cooperation and discuss how these can be best addressed with the support of the Fund for Bilateral Relations (FBR).

**AIM:**

The FBR Open Call # 2 aims to support innovative bilateral initiatives between Portuguese and Norwegian entities.

Specific objectives of the FBR Open Call #2 are:

- To stimulate bilateral initiatives that bring innovative approaches to any area where bilateral interest exists;
- To promote joint initiatives with clear bilateral value and concrete results;
- To foster cooperation through the support of impactful bilateral Initiatives.

Funding is made available to bilateral initiatives that demonstrate an innovative approach with a clear bilateral aim in any area of mutual interest.

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<sup>1</sup> Established by the Council of Ministers Resolution (RCM) no. 39/2017, of March 10<sup>th</sup>, rectified by the Rectification Declaration no. 14/2017 of April 24<sup>th</sup>.

New solutions to existing societal problems or new approaches to existing solutions that can bring added value and different results, developed in close partnership and cooperation between entities from Portugal and from Norway.

All bilateral initiatives funded by MFEEE 2014-2021 should follow a Results Based Management approach that implies the definition of objectives, of measures to achieve the objectives and the measurement of progress to achieve the desired results.

The expected results of the supported bilateral initiatives should be translated into tangible products/activities (outputs) that promote cooperation between national entities and entities of the donor countries (outcome), thus contributing to the reinforcement of bilateral relations (impact).

#### **FUND AVAILABILITY:**

A total allocation of € 200.000 made available for granting support to selected Bilateral Initiatives under the FBR Open Call #2.

The FBR Open Call #2 will remain open until the 26<sup>th</sup> May 2023 or until the allocated funds are depleted.

Upon depletion of the initial allocation before the 26<sup>th</sup> May 2023 additional funds may be made available by decision of the JCBF.

#### **MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNT:**

Minimum: 5.000€ (Five thousand Euros) and Maximum: 15.000€ (Fifteen thousand Euros)

#### **ELEGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS:**

##### **Bilateral Initiative Promoters**

Any entity, public or private, commercial or non-commercial, including any civil society organization such as non-governmental organizations, established as a legal person in Portugal, are considered eligible bilateral activity promoters.

##### **Bilateral Initiative Partners**

Any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, as well as any civil society organization such as non-governmental organizations, established as a legal person either in the Donor States or in Portugal, or in any Beneficiary States or any international organization or body or agency thereof, actively involved in, and effectively contributing to, the implementation of the bilateral initiative, are considered eligible partners.

**Only applications with one or more partner entities from Norway will be accepted.**

Natural persons are not eligible under the FBR Open Call #2.

Applicants can apply for support with more than one application for clearly distinctive and autonomous Bilateral Initiatives under the FBR Open Call #1 and FBR #2 and can be granted

with more than one funding decision with no other limitation than the merit of the application. No limitation on eligible partners in different applications also applies.

### **ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES**

The range of activities eligible for support under the FBR is broad involving cooperation, networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practices between Norwegian and Portuguese Entities.

Activities that can be supported by the FBR Open Call #2 could be, as examples: matchmaking events; technical cooperation and exchange of experts; short-term internships; training actions; workshops and seminars on topics of common interest; study and field visits; collection of data, reports, studies and publications, campaigns and exhibitions, etc.

The Bilateral Initiatives may take place in Portugal and/or in Norway or in any other territory that from a bilateral perspective may have interest to both Portuguese and Norwegian partners within the EEA.

Funding will be made available only to Bilateral Initiatives that clearly demonstrate innovative approaches and/or solutions with a clear bilateral aim and with tangible bilateral results.

### **DURATION OF THE BILATERAL INITIATIVES**

The conclusion of the Bilateral Initiatives shall be achieved before December 2024 and the final date of eligibility of expenditures shall be, at the latest, the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

### **ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES**

The allocation of funding and the eligibility of expenditure is subject to the existence of a clear bilateral profile of the activities to be financed that serve the tangible purpose of strengthening bilateral relations between Norway and Portugal.

Eligible expenditures are those actually incurred within the activity, which meet the following criteria:

- a) they are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of the approved Bilateral Initiative as specified in the Acceptance Agreement signed by the Promoter;
- b) they are connected with the subject of the approved Bilateral Initiative and they are indicated in the detailed budget in the Acceptance Agreement;
- c) they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the approved activity;
- d) they must be used for the sole purpose of achieving the objectives of the approved Bilateral Initiative and the expected outcomes, in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- e) they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular through being recorded in the accounting records of the Bilateral Initiative Promoter and/or Partner and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the Bilateral Initiative Promoter

- and/or Partner is established and according to generally accepted accounting principles;  
and  
f) they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.

Indirect costs and costs of staff will not as a rule be considered eligible, except in exceptional and duly substantiated cases approved by the JCBF.

Travel costs including daily subsistence allowances (*per diem*) can be calculated as simplified costs taking into account the principles of proportionality, in the terms set out in the FBR Manual or in the terms determined by the JCBF and set in Acceptance Agreement.

#### **GRANT RATE:**

The grant rate will be set up to a maximum of 90% of the total eligible costs.

The grant rate will be recommended by the JCBF in order to ensure the commitment of the promoter of the Bilateral Initiative and taking into account any economic benefits (cost savings or increased profit) which is a result from receiving the financial contribution and the applicable State Aid rules.

#### **APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

Applications can be submitted any time between 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 until the 26<sup>th</sup> May 2023, 12:00:00 (Lisbon time).

Evaluation of applications will be done in a sequential manner following the order of receipt and granting decisions will be delivered after every six months' periods following the initial date of the FBR Open Call #1.

The cut-off periods for decision are: 1<sup>st</sup> cut-off 26.11.2021; 2<sup>nd</sup> cut-off 27.05.2022; 3<sup>rd</sup> cut-off 25.11.2022 and 4<sup>th</sup> cut-off 26.05.2023.

The applications shall be submitted electronically to [bilateralrelations@eeagrants.gov.pt](mailto:bilateralrelations@eeagrants.gov.pt) using the application forms available on the website [www.eeagrants.gov.pt](http://www.eeagrants.gov.pt), in English.

**Applications must be submitted with the English application form completed.**

Translations of administrative and original documents in Portuguese are not demanded.

The involvement of the Norwegian Partners shall be made evident by mandatory signed letters of commitment of the entity.

#### **SELECTION PROCESS AND DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE**

After the receipt of the original documents, the UNG will carry out a formal assessment of the applications. If, following the formal assessment of the applications any elements indicated in the application form are missing or incomplete, the UNG will notify the entities to correct the detected deficiency within 10 working days, under penalty of immediate exclusion.

Upon completion of the formal assessment, the eligible applications received will be evaluated by the JCBF based on the following selection criteria and proportional relevance:

<b>Selection Criteria</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1. Overall merit of the bilateral activity</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2. Innovative Bilateral Results</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>3. Tangible Innovative Results</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>4. Bilateral Involvement</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>5. Cost Efficiency Ratio</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

The criteria will be assessed based on the following factors:

<b>1. Overall merit of the Bilateral Initiative (BI)</b>	1.1 The BI presents a clear bilateral scope?
	1.2 The scope of BI is relevant and meaningful ?
	1.3 The proposed activities are interesting and coherent with the scope of the BI ?
<b>2. Innovative Bilateral Results</b>	2.1 The application clearly explains how the proposed results represent new solutions or new approaches ?
	2.2 The application clearly explains how the results from the BI can be relevant in the respective area of intervention?
	2.3 The application clearly explains how the results can be disseminated/scaled up?
<b>3. Tangible Bilateral Results</b>	3.1 The objectives are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Realistic and Time-bound)?
	3.2 The BI proposes tangible bilateral results?
	3.3 The proposed outputs (activities/products) are coherent with the proposed results ?
<b>4. Bilateral Involvement</b>	4.1. The proposed BI demonstrate a clear mutual interest on the proposed innovative bilateral outcome ?
	4.2 The activities assigned to each partner are clear?
	4.3 The contribution from each partner entity to achieve the proposed results of the BI is evident?
<b>5. Cost Efficiency Ratio</b>	5.1 The budget is reasonable, proportionate, necessary and coherent with the planned results?
	5.2 The budget presents suitable justifications for the proposed expenditures in line with the FBR Manual ?
	5.3 The proposed timeline is proportionate, necessary and coherent with the expected results of the BI ?

The JCBF will recommend the applications and their allocations for funding to be contracted by the UNG and the rejection of applications with insufficient evaluation profile. When recommending

an application for funding the JCBF may set conditions or require modifications subject to confirmation from the applicant.

The entities will be notified by the UNG of the final decision on the application. In the case of the entities whose applications are not approved, they will be given by the UNG the deadline of 10 working days to comment, in accordance with the Code of Administrative Procedure.

The approved Bilateral Initiatives will be published in the website [www.eeagrants.gov.pt](http://www.eeagrants.gov.pt).

The UNG will send to the beneficiaries of the approved applications an Acceptance Agreement for financial support which shall state the funding conditions and the obligations of the beneficiary.

The Acceptance Agreement shall be signed by legal representative of the Bilateral Initiative Promoter and the signed original shall be sent to the UNG within 10 working days together with a signed copy of the Partnership Agreement.

## **PAYMENTS AND CONTROLS**

Payments will only be done after the reception of the signed Acceptance Agreement by the Bilateral Initiative Promoter, the fulfilment of conditions set thereto and the reception of a signed Partnership Agreement between the Bilateral Initiative Promoter and the respective partners.

The payments flows shall be set on the Acceptance Agreement and can take the form of advance payments and/or reimbursement of incurred expenditures (interim payments and payments of the final balance).

Interim and final payments shall be made after the approval of the declaration of expenditures and respective reports on the Bilateral Initiative.

In order to ensure the verification of the expenditure documents related to expenses of entities based outside Portugal, eligible costs incurred and paid by these entities can be justified by a report by a statutory auditor, in accordance with Article 8.12 of Regulation of the EEA Financial Mechanism. The costs with this certification are eligible within the grant.

Without prejudice to any other control and audits that the funding is subject under the legal framework of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, the Bilateral Initiatives are subject to administrative and on-the-spot verifications actions by the UNG.

After the conclusion of the Bilateral Initiative, all the documents shall remain filled and available for auditing until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2028.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON CALL NOTICE AND AMENDMENTS**

This call for applications and other relevant information, including the FBR Manual and the application forms are available on the website [www.eeagrants.gov.pt](http://www.eeagrants.gov.pt).

Any amendments to the terms and conditions set forth in this notice shall also be published in the above mentioned website, with a minimum of three working days prior to the date of its entry into force.

Questions related with the present Open Call notice can be forwarded to [bilateralrelations@eeagrants.gov.pt](mailto:bilateralrelations@eeagrants.gov.pt) and will be replied by 10 working days.

## **COMMUNICATION REQUIRMENTS**

The Bilateral Activity Promoter shall describe the measures enabling communication and online dissemination of the initiative, mainly activities, deliverables, promoter contacts, images and other relevant contents.

All the communication materials and results of the Bilateral Initiative must include the logos of the EEA Grants and comply with the “Manual de Comunicação e de Normas Gráficas – EEA Grants Portugal 2014-2021”.

All the initiatives funded by the FBR are advertised on the EEA Grants Portugal website, whereby the UNG reserves the right to use all or part of these contents in its communication actions.

## **REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

[Application Form \(EN\)](#)

[FBR MANUAL](#)

[Bilateral Guideline](#)

[Regulation on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021](#)

[Manual de Comunicação e de Normas Gráficas – EEA Grants Portugal 2014-2021](#)

[Guideline: Public Procurement](#)

## **CONTACTS:**

[bilateralrelations@eeagrants.gov.pt](mailto:bilateralrelations@eeagrants.gov.pt)

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a green, competitive  
and inclusive Europe.**