



The Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy of the Republic of Slovenia, Kotnikova 5, 1000 Ljubljana, represented by Zvonko Črnač, Minister without portfolio responsible for development and EU cohesion policy, on the basis of 106.i. article of the Public Finance Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 11/11 – Official Consolidated Text, 14/13 -pr., 101/13, 55/15 – ZFisP, 96/15 – ZIPRS1617, 13/18 and 195/20 – odl. US), Article 22 of the Decree on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area in the Republic of Slovenia for the period 2014–2021 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 160/20) and Article 219 of the Rules of Procedure for the implementation of the budget of the Republic of Slovenia (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 50/07, 61/08, 99/09 – ZIPRS1011, 3/13 in 81/16) publishes

CALL FOR PROPOSALS
for co-financing of projects under the programme
Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeship and Youth
Entrepreneurship

1. Programme Operator

The Programme Operator for the programme Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeship and Youth Entrepreneurship co-financed by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 and supported by Slovenian national co-financing, is the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy (hereinafter: GODC in the role of the Programme Operator), Kotnikova 5, 1000 Ljubljana.

2. Legal basis for the implementation of the Call for Proposals

The legal basis for the implementation of the Call for Proposals to co-finance projects under the Education, Scholarship, Apprenticeships and Youth Entrepreneurship Programme are:

- The Public Finance Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 11/11 – Official Consolidated Text, 14/13 -pr., 101/13, 55/15 – ZFisP, 96/15 – ZIPRS1617, 13/18 and 195/20 – odl. US),
- Budget of the Republic of Slovenia for the year 2021 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 75/2019 and 174/20),
- Budget of the Republic of Slovenia for the year 2022 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 174/20),
- The Budgets Act of the Republic of Slovenia for the years 2021 and 2022 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No.174/20 and 15/2021 - ZDUOP),
- Decree on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area in the Republic of Slovenia for the period 2014–2021 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 160/20, dated 6. 11. 2020),
- Rules on the Procedures for the Implementation of the Budget of the Republic of Slovenia (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, Nos. 50/2007, 61/2008, 99/2009 – ZIPRS1011, 3/2013 and 81/2016),
- Regulation on the Implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021 of 23. 9. 2016, published on www.norwaygrants.si/en/calls/education,
- Memorandum of understanding on the Implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021 of 17. 4. 2018 and its amendment of 17. 6. 2019, published on www.norwaygrants.si/en/calls/education,

- Agreement for the Programme Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeship and Youth Entrepreneurship of 18. 12. 2019 and its amendment of 16. 3. 2021, published on www.norwaygrants.si/en/calls/education,
- Agreement for the implementation of Programme between National Focal Point and Programme Operator for Education, Scholarship, Apprenticeships and Youth Entrepreneurship Programme of 19. 1. 2021.

The terms used in the document, which refer to persons and are written in masculine grammar form, are used as gender neutral for the feminine or masculine form.

3. Call for Proposals

The Call for Proposals is published by the GODC in the role as the Programme Operator and is applicable for applicants defined in point 7 of this document.

From the date of publication of the Call for Proposals in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, the Call for Proposals documents and its Application Pack shall be available on the following websites www.eeagrants.si and www.norwaygrants.si, accessible at www.norwaygrants.si/en/calls/education.

The Application Pack consists of:

- Guide for Beneficiaries (in several parts);
- template of the Declaration by the Project Promoter;
- template of the Declaration by the Project Partner (in Slovene and English);
- template of the Declaration on the consultants involved in the preparation of the project application;
- sample of the Project Contract;
- sample of the Partnership Agreement (in Slovene and English).

The Programme Operator invites Project Partners from the Republic of Slovenia and the Kingdom of Norway to submit applications in the frame of this Call for Proposals.

4. Subject of the Call for Proposals

The subject of the Call for Proposals is the selection of projects under the Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeships and Youth Entrepreneurship Programme (hereinafter: Education Programme). The selected projects shall be supported by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, and shall receive the matching national co-financing (hereinafter grant) from the Republic of Slovenia. The projects shall pursue the overall objectives of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 (hereafter: Norway Grants) as follows:

- to contribute to reducing economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area, and
- to strengthen bilateral relations between the Republic of Slovenia and the Kingdom of Norway (hereafter: Norway).

In this context, the Education programme aims to enhance human capital and knowledge base. The objective shall be achieved by promoting institutional cooperation at all levels of formal and informal education, by improving the supportive environment for targeted disadvantaged groups and by improving work-life balance.

The programme puts a special emphasis on promoting active cooperation between institutions from the participating countries. It is therefore desired that projects are implemented in partnership with Norwegian institutions.

Funding shall be available to projects selected under the programme areas listed below to achieve outcomes and outputs within each programme area:

Under the terms of this Call for Proposals, a project proposal must refer only to one of the mentioned outcome (I.1 or I.2 or I.3), even in case of a project where some activities might also fall under the other outcome:

- The project relating to outcome I.1 shall contribute to both outputs (I.1.1 and I.1.2);
- The project relating to outcome I.2 shall contribute to only one output (I.2.1 or I.2.2 or I.2.3);
- The project relating to outcome I.3 shall contribute to only one output (I.3.1 or I.3.2).

a) Programme area: EDUCATION, SCHOLARSHIPS, APPRENTICESHIP AND YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP:

- **Outcome I.1: Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of formal and informal education:**
 - *Output I.1.1: New teaching and learning practices for work and life development*
 - *Output I.1.2: Knowledge and good practices shared on advancing skills and competences in education*
- **Outcome I.2: Education and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved**
 - *Output I.2.1: Support services for NEETs (not in employment, education or training) established*
 - *Output I.2.2: Support to youth provided*
 - *Output I.2.3: Support environment for precarious workers provided*

b) Programme area: WORK – LIFE BALANCE

- **Outcome I.3: Improved work-life balance**
 - *Output I.3.1: Local systems established supporting work-life balance*
 - *Output I.3.2: Organisational culture of work-life balance and gender equality generated*

More detailed information on the description of content, individual outcomes and outputs, specific eligibility conditions and requirements for the achievement of indicators is provided in the Guide for Beneficiaries Part 1b, available for download on the websites www.eeagrants.si and www.norwaygrants.si, accessible at www.norwaygrants.si/en/calls/education.

All Project Partners shall actively participate in the project development and project implementation. Implemented projects shall be required to collect, maintain and report data showing their contribution to the overall programme targets.

4.1 Types of projects to be funded

Outcome I.1: Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of formal and informal education:

Institutional cooperation projects shall aim to develop new teaching models, methods and strategies; enhance skills and competences at all levels of education; and training of staff. A special emphasis is placed on the development of skills and competencies for work and life in the 21st century. Additionally, projects should aim to improve the cooperation between various education and other stakeholders at the local, regional and national level.

Outcome I.2: Education and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved

Projects should focus on strengthening the quality of support structures and service providers in addressing and activating specific target groups, and on the development of more dynamic and cohesive communities. Three types of cooperation projects will be supported:

- support to persons not in employment, education or training (NEET)
- support to young people in less dynamic local environments
- support to the environment for precarious workers

Outcome I.3: Improved work-life balance

Projects should focus on improving the balance between professional and private life of individuals by strengthening local services, and by supporting the development of an organisational culture that fosters reconciliation between work and family life and advocates gender equality. Two types of cooperation projects will be supported:

- improving local services to support work – life balance
- developing an organizational culture which support work-life balance and gender equality policies

5. Award of grant and project size

5.1 Grant rate

For projects selected under the Call for Proposals, the grant shall be up to 100 % of the total eligible expenditure, including in the case of projects where the project promoter is an NGO.

The amount of grant under this Call for Proposals shall be reduced in the case of revenue-generating projects or in case of application of State aid rules. The rules on project revenues shall not be applied in case of application of state aid rules.

5.2 Grant amount

The total amount available under this Call for Proposals is **11,299,156.00 EUR**, of which 9,604,283.00 EUR from the Norway Grants, and 1,694,873.00 EUR from the corresponding Slovenian contribution provided by the GODC.

The total available grant on programme outcome level is fixed, whereas the grant amount at the programme output level is indicative. Funds under outcome I.1 are not broken down by outputs, as projects contribute to both outputs. With attention to outcome indicators, output indicators at a programme level, and considering the number of applications received, GODC as the programme operator, reserves the right to reallocate the funds to other outputs within the same outcome.

Table 1: Funding available and the minimum and maximum grant amounts requested for projects under each outcome and output (in EUR)

Programme outcomes and outputs	Available funding	Minimum and maximum grant per project	
		Minimum	Maximum
Outcome: Improved institutional cooperation at all levels of formal and informal education	6.063.862,00	200.000,00	1.000.000,00
<i>Output: New teaching and learning practices for work and life developed</i>			
<i>Output: Knowledge and good practices shared on advancing skills and competences in education</i>			
Outcome: Education and social environment to support disadvantaged groups improved	3.235.294,00	200.000,00	500.000,00
<i>Output: Support services for NEET (Not in, employment, education or training) established</i>			
<i>Output: Support to youth provided</i>			
<i>Output: Support environment for precarious workers provided</i>			
Outcome: Improved work-life balance	2.000.000,00	200.000,00	500.000,00
<i>Output: Local systems established supporting work-life balance</i>			

<i>Output: Organisational culture of work-life balance and gender equality generated</i>	600.000,00 (indicative)		
TOTAL FUNDING AVAILABLE	11.299.156,00		

The selection process of projects for funding is described in section 11. The number of funded projects will depend on available funds. Only projects receiving at least 75 points in quality assessment shall be proposed for funding.

6. Eligible area

The eligible area of implementation of projects is the territory of the Republic of Slovenia. Since one of the objectives of the grant is to strengthen bilateral relations between Norway and the Republic of Slovenia, project activities can also be carried out in Norway when relevant to the project. The implementation of project activities outside these two eligible areas shall be admissible only in specially justified cases and subject to prior approval of the GODC.

Outcomes and the outputs of the projects must be implemented in the Republic of Slovenia.

7. Eligibility of applicants and partners

7.1 Eligibility of applicants

General condition: Any public or private, commercial or non-commercial entity and non-governmental organisation established in the Republic of Slovenia as a legal entity shall be regarded as eligible applicants (i.e. the Project Promoter).

In order to participate in the Call for proposals, the applicant must fulfil the conditions set out in the Declaration by the Project Promoter and the Declaration by the Project Partner. The applicant shall prove the fulfilment of the conditions by signing both of those declarations.

When a project is approved, the applicant takes the role of the Project Promoter, becomes a signatory to the Project Contract and bears responsibility for the entire implementation of the project.

7.2 Eligibility of partners

General condition: Eligible partner in the project (hereinafter: the Project Partner) shall be deemed to be any public or private, commercial or non-commercial entity, as well as a non-governmental organisation established as a legal entity in the Republic of Slovenia or in the donor state, or any international organisation or body or agency within their framework that is actively involved in and contributing effectively to the implementation of the project.

Each Project Partner is obliged to sign the Declaration by the Project Partner which proves that the conditions for participation are met. The document should also be signed by the Project Promoter.

One of the main objectives of the Grant is to strengthen bilateral relations, thus partnerships with Norwegian entities are highly valued and encouraged across all outcomes of this Call for proposals.

8. Project duration

The projects shall last at least twelve (12) months and not longer than twenty-four (24) months. Projects must be completed by 30.04. 2024 at the latest.

Regardless of the project duration period specific conditions set out in the Project Contract (i.e. investment in real estate, purchase of land or real estate, cost of new or second-hand equipment) must

be respected in certain cases, even after the approval of the project completion report. Specific criteria are specified in Part 4 of the Guide for Beneficiaries.

9. Eligibility of expenditures

In accordance with Article 8.2 of the Regulations on implementation of the Norway Grants the eligible expenditures of the projects are those that are actually incurred within the project which meet the following criteria:

- they are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the project contract; exceptionally, expenditures for which an invoice has been issued in the final month of eligibility of a project, are considered eligible if paid within thirty (30) days of the final date of eligibility of a project,
- they are connected with the subject of the project contract and they are indicated in the detailed budget of the project,
- they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project,
- they are used for the sole purpose of achieving the objectives of the project and its expected outcomes, in a manner consistent with the principles of sound financial management (principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness),
- they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular through being recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary, and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the state where the Project Promoter and/or Project Partner is established and the generally accepted accounting principles,
- they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.

Categories of eligible expenditures are:

- costs of staff assigned to the project,
- indirect costs in projects (overheads) – office and administrative costs,
- travel and subsistence allowances for staff taking part in the project as a lump sum,
- costs of consumables and supplies,
- costs of new or second-hand equipment,
- purchase of real estate and land,
- costs entailed by other contracts awarded by a Project Promoter or Project Partners for the purposes of carrying out the project,
- costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the project contract for each project.

The eligibility of expenditure by cost category and the specific criteria applicable to individual categories are described in more detail in Part 4 of the Guide for Beneficiaries.

9.1 Period of eligibility

Expenditure incurred within the project shall be eligible in the project duration period, with the first and final dates of project duration as stated in the Project Contract. This period is valid only after the issue of the project selection decision. The latest eligibility date is 30.04.2024.

10. Deadline and application submission method

Applications may be submitted at any time from the date of publication of this Call for Proposals to the deadline for the submission of applications.

The deadline for submitting applications is 30.09.2021. Any subsequent deadlines for submission of applications, together with any changes, will be published on the www.eeagrants.si and www.norwaygrants.si, accessible at www.norwaygrants.si/en/calls/education, at least two months before the next deadline.

The application shall be submitted by the Project Promoter only through the electronic monitoring system eMS. The application submitted must include all relevant documents, as specified in the Guide for Beneficiaries, to be considered for financing.

The applicant (i.e. the Project Promoter) may submit only one project application but may participate in several projects as a Project Partner. If the applicant submits more than one application within the deadline, only the first application submitted shall be considered for evaluation, all other applications shall be rejected.

Only applications submitted electronically on the following link <https://ems.norwaygrants.si/emsegb> by www.norwaygrants.si until 12.00 (noon) CET shall be considered as submitted in due time.

Applications received by other means (i.e. by post, fax, e-mail or personally delivered applications) or submitted after the deadline on the above-mentioned link shall be rejected.

Submission of an application means that the applicant agrees with the terms and criteria of the Call for Proposals and the Application pack.

11. Selection procedure

The selection of projects is based on the evaluation of the received applications following a standardized procedure according to eMS, which safeguards the principles of transparency and equal treatment. A Selection Committee shall be responsible for evaluation of the Call for Proposals and for selecting the projects.

The applications evaluation shall take place in two phases:

- administrative compliance and eligibility check,
- quality assessment.

Administrative compliance and eligibility check

Each application must meet the criteria of administrative compliance and eligibility which will be reviewed by the Programme Operator.

If the Selection Committee determines the incompleteness of the application in the administrative and eligibility check, the application will be rejected, except in cases where it is possible to complete the application as indicated in the Guide for Beneficiaries. In the event of the possibility of completing the application, the Selection Committee shall invite the notifier via the eMS information system to complete the application. Amendments should be made within five (5) working days of receipt of the request to complete the application. The application, which is not completed electronically and in accordance with the request for amendment, shall be rejected

Quality assessment

Applications that are administratively compliant and eligible shall be assessed on the basis of quality criteria.

The quality of applications shall be assessed against the following criteria:

- Relevance of the project content (30 points)
- Quality of the project work plan design (20 points)
- Sustainability of the project (10 points)
- Quality of the project partnership (15 points)

- Cost effectiveness (20 points)

Bilateral aspect of application: (only after receiving minimum point in quality assessment):

- In Project partnership, partner from Norway is included (10 points)

Only projects receiving at least 75 points in quality assessment shall be proposed for funding. In case if of not enough applications reached the threshold of 75 points the Selection Committee may propose lower threshold. Projects with a project partner from Norway shall additionally receive 10 points after the achieved threshold of 75 points. Maximum points available is thus 95 points for projects without Donor Project Partner and 105 points for projects with Donor Project Partner.

A ranked list of projects qualifying for funding shall be reviewed by the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee will submit their recommendations to the GODC. The number of projects will depend on available funds and number of received applications.

The application evaluation process, including detailed criteria, is further specified in the Part 1.b of the Guide for Beneficiaries.

Results of this public call for proposals are public and shall be published on the following websites: www.eeagrants.si in www.norwaygrants.si, accessible at www.norwaygrants.si/en/calls/education.

12. Notification of selection and appeal procedure

All applicants shall be notified of the outcome of the selection process via the eMS information system.

Successful applicants shall receive the project selection decision.

Applicants whose project applications are found incomplete during the administrative compliance and eligibility check, or the applicants who fail to receive the required score during the quality assessment or the applicants reached the required score during qualifying evaluation but cannot be funded due to lack of grants shall receive a rejection decision.

The applicant may fill an appeal to the GODC within eight (8) days from the date of receiving the decision on rejection. The appellant shall specify in detail the reasons for the appeal. The set criteria for application assessment shall not be the subject of the appeal. The GODC shall issue a decision regarding the appeal within fifteen (15) days.

The selection results should be made public approximately 6 months after the final date for submission of the applications.

13. Language

The Call for proposals is published in Slovene and English language.

In case of discrepancies between the Slovene and the English text of the Call for Proposals and the Guide for Beneficiaries, the Slovene version will be used as a tool for common understanding.

The application must be submitted in Slovene language, in addition a summary of the application, must be submitted in Slovene and English language.

All other documents must be submitted either in Slovene or English language in accordance with the Guide for Beneficiaries.

The applicants must make sure that the wording in Slovene and English language is the same and understandable.

14. Amendments to the Call for Proposals

Should the Call for Proposals or Application pack be amended, a corrigendum will be published in Slovene and in English on the following websites: www.eeagrants.si and www.norwaygrants.si, accessible at www.norwaygrants.si/en/calls/education.

The amendments to this Call for Proposals shall also be published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia.

Applicants are obliged to respect any amendments to the Call for Proposals and Application Pack. in the manner as described above.

15. Other provisions

Applicants should read all the documents related to the Call for Proposals before submitting a project proposal. Additional information on the Call for Proposals can be obtained before the deadline for submission of proposals by sending questions to e-address: nor_egp.svrk@gov.si.

Frequently asked questions and answers shall be published on the websites www.eeagrants.si and www.norwaygrants.si, accessible at www.norwaygrants.si/en/calls/education, and updated once a week. The names of the senders of questions shall not be published.

Any information contained in the received applications shall be public information except the information that is specifically designated by the applicant as a business secret. A piece of information or a part of application may be marked as a business secret but cannot apply to the entire application and/or information required to assess the application according to the criteria of the Call for Proposals.

The results of the Call for Proposals are information of public nature and will be published on the web site www.eeagrants.si and www.norwaygrants.si, accessible at www.norwaygrants.si/en/calls/education after the decision of the Selection Committee and signing the Project Contracts with the selected Project Promoters.