

# **The Norway Grants CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2019 – Collaborative Research Projects**

## **Call Document**

The Call Document is based on the Guideline for Research Programmes – Rules for the establishment and implementation of programmes falling under the Programme Area “Research” and the “Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021”.

## 1. Scope

The purpose of this Call for proposals is to provide funding through collaborative research projects that aim to enhance research-based knowledge development in Romania.

## 2. Objectives

- To support research cooperation between Romania and Norway (Donor State) through establishing of long-term strategic partnerships between research institutions from both countries;
- To increase the application of research results;
- To increase the research capacity, including through increasing the number of young researchers, encouraging their training in an environment of high scientific quality and supporting the careers of female researchers;
- To enhance the performance of the Romanian research at international level;
- To support an active participation of Romania in the European Research Area, including increasing the potential of Romanian researchers for further applications to EU framework programmes calls and other international funding sources.

## 3. Thematic Areas

The programme will fund research projects within each of the following thematic areas:

- Energy;
- Environment;
- Health;
- Social sciences and humanities, including gender studies and social inclusion studies;
- ICT;
- Biotechnology.

The distribution of grants will be based on scientific and technical quality of the research projects.

The Call supports collaborative research projects in basic and applied research and it is open for interdisciplinary projects<sup>1</sup>.

Applications under each thematic area shall fall within one or more of the following key topics:

---

<sup>1</sup> According to the State Aid Scheme for financing the RD projects within the Programme (RO 02) financed through EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 and Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, the eligible activities are: basic research, industrial research and experimental development.

#### A. Energy:

- Innovative materials and technologies for energy storage;
- Energy efficiency within the process of generation, transmission, smart grids distribution and at the consumer/end user;
- Eco-friendly-environmental technologies for energy production/generation;
- Energy sources – diversification/balance;
- Carbon capture and storage.

#### B. Environment:

- Management of emerging pollutants in aquatic systems (impact, remediation and recycling techniques) to improve ecosystem services of water resources and wetlands;
- Ecosystems monitoring, affected by climate change, management of biodiversity, biosafety, protection and ecological restoration;
- Environmental impact and risk assessment of the modern, new and emerging technologies and products (can include also climate change);
- Resources, technologies and tools for circular economy;
- Research on the climate changes and/or extreme natural phenomenon impact on natural and anthropogenic systems.

#### C. Health:

- Developing patient-centred strategies to fight cancer;
- Translational medicine in regenerative medicine, neurodegenerative and rare diseases;
- Improving public health by implementing evidence-based preventive strategies;
- Roma inclusion and empowerment.

#### D. Social Sciences and humanities, including gender studies and social inclusion studies:

- Migration, mobility, diaspora;
- Participative democracy, social and cultural innovation, economic growth;
- Cosmopolitanism and nationalism;
- Social and economic inclusion of disadvantages groups;
- Digitization and accessibility of the cultural heritage;
- Roma inclusion and empowerment.

#### E. ICT:

- Cyber security, personal data protection, protection of critical infrastructures and services;

- Technologies, instruments and methods for software development – artificial intelligence (AI) & cloud computing;
- Advanced robotics, mechatronics and additive manufacturing technologies (3D printing, bio-printing);
- Technologies and applications of Big Data and/or Internet of things (IoT) for public administration, education, agriculture, health, banking etc.

#### F. Biotechnology:

- Biotechnology for agriculture, aquaculture, forestry and biomass production;
- Industrial and food biotechnology;
- Biotechnology for health, medicine and related industries;
- Integrated environmental biotechnology.

For the key topic „Roma inclusion and empowerment” under „Health” and „Social Sciences and humanities, including gender studies and social inclusion studies”, the projects shall contribute to enhance the understanding of the situation of the Roma population, and include specific research questions relevant for improving the situation of the Roma population. Project applicants shall involve and engage (pro) Roma organisations in formulating relevant research questions to be included in the project applications, and consult such organizations during the project’s implementation.

All thematic areas could contribute to the improvement of the situation of Roma population.

#### 4. Outcome and results

<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Indicator</i>
Enhanced performance of Romanian research internationally	Number of peer-reviewed scientific publications submitted (disaggregated by type of scientific publications)
	Number of joint peer-reviewed scientific publications submitted
	Number of jointly registered applications for intellectual property protection (IPP)
	Number of joint applications for further funding
	Number of jobs created

#### 5. Synergy

The involvement of master students in the research projects is ensured by „Education, Scholarship, Apprenticeships and Youth Entrepreneurship” Programme through scholarships granted based on dedicated call for proposals. Thus, the students going on mobilities will be able to take part in research activities and become part of scientific networks that link Romania and Norway.

It is recommended that the research projects with results related to the needs identified by companies and market demands apply to the „Business development, Innovation and SMEs Programme”<sup>2</sup> in order to speed up their commercialization.

## 6. Eligible applicants

- Project Promoters are Research Organizations as defined in the Community Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation (2014/C 198/01);
- Project Partners are Research Organizations and/or Companies (Small, medium and large sized enterprises as defined in the Community Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation (2014/C 198/01);
- The organizations (as Project Promoters and/or Project Partners) financed under this program have to be located in Romania or Norway<sup>3</sup>;
- Other eligible partners are Research Organizations from third countries but they cannot receive funding from the project grant.

## 7. Project Promoter, Project Partners and Principal Investigator

Proposals for Research Projects shall be submitted by a consortium comprising at least one Romanian and at least one Norwegian entity. For each proposal, the Project Partners shall designate a *Project Promoter (PP)* which has the scientific and administrative responsibility for the project, and shall submit the proposal on their behalf. The Project Promoter shall be a Romanian research organization.

For each research project, the Project Promoter designates a *Principal Investigator (PI)*, a researcher who provides the scientific lead of the research project on a daily basis.

A person who is a Principal Investigator of an on-going project financed under EEA Grants Call 2018 cannot be in the same time a Principal Investigator of a new project within the current call.

## 8. Budget

The amount of EUR 24.687.500 is made available under this call.

The minimum amount of the grant assistance to be applied for is EUR 500.000 and the maximum amount is EUR 1.200.000.

Duration of a project could be up to 36 months with the possibility of 6-9 months extension (requested during the implementation of the project), with no additional funds.

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://eeagrants.org/opencalls/view-1421/RO-INNOVATION>

<sup>3</sup> [The Norwegian research organizations eligible in this call must be included in this list](#). Other Norwegian partners may consult the Research Council of Norway to verify their eligibility status

No less than 10% of the total eligible expenditures of the call shall be dedicated to projects falling primarily within the key topic “Roma inclusion and empowerment”.

## 9. Eligible expenditures

- **Direct expenditures:** staff costs; travel and subsistence allowances; equipment; consumables and supplies; other costs (including subcontracting);
- **Indirect costs (overheads)** – a flat rate of 25% of the total direct eligible costs, excluding direct eligible costs for subcontracting and the costs of resources made available by third parties who are not used on the premises of the beneficiary, as well as financial support to third parties. In case the project grant takes the form of standard scales of unit costs, the flat rate of 25% for indirect costs shall not be applied for the partner in question<sup>4</sup>.

The description of the categories of costs listed above can be found in “Guide for applicants - Call 2019”.

The first and final dates of eligibility expenditures of each project will be stated in the project contract.

## 10. The currency used for the project proposal and implementation

The currency to be used for proposal submission is EURO. The grant contract will be concluded in RON. The value in RON will be determined by using the official EC exchange rate from the date (month) of signing the contract (InforEuro).

## 11. Submission of proposals

Proposals are submitted electronically in English language on the online submission platform: [www.uefiscdi-direct.ro](http://www.uefiscdi-direct.ro). Only the PP is authorized to submit a proposal, using its own credentials (username and password). After submission, an acknowledgement of receipt is sent to the PP.

The proposals must be submitted by the PPs no later than 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2019, 4:00 PM (Romanian time).

Detailed explanation about the application process is given in “Guide for Applicants – Call 2019”.

---

<sup>4</sup> The Norwegian research institutes which report personnel rates to the Research Council of Norway, and have those personnel rates calculated and approved by RCN, may use “Standard scales of unit costs” (ref. Regulation art. 8.4.b). They should use the same rates as in applications to RCN calls. In such cases, no indirect or overheads costs should be included in the budget, as they are already included in the personnel rates. The list is available [here](#).

## **12. Evaluation of proposals**

The selection of scientific proposals for funding is based on peer-review evaluation. The proposals are evaluated by international independent experts with a high level of professional experience and a good international visibility in a specific research area.

Before proceeding to the evaluation, proposals are checked by the Programme Operator against the eligibility criteria applicable to this call. Proposals failing any of the eligibility criteria do not enter the evaluation process.

The evaluation process of the eligible proposals has the following stages: individual evaluation, consensus assessment and panel review.

A proposal can obtain a total number of 15 points in the evaluation procedure. In order to be considered for funding, a proposal must receive at least a score of 9, and pass all the thresholds.

The applicants are encouraged to read “Guide for Evaluators – Call 2019”, which gives detailed information on the evaluation.

## **13. Award of project grants**

Prior to the Programme Committee meeting, the Programme Operator will provide access to the Programme Committee members to evaluated proposals, individual reviews, consensus reports and panel reports.

The Programme Operator prepares a preliminary ranking list of the proposals that passed the evaluation thresholds, one for each thematic area and one for the projects under the key topic “Roma inclusion and empowerment” with a suggested grant amount for each proposal. The task of the Programme Committee is to decide about the final ranking order of these proposals (final ranking list for each thematic area) on the basis of the final reports (comments and scores). Within the groups of equally scored proposals for each thematic area, the ranking is made taking into consideration the score obtained for each evaluation criterion, according to its weight. If, at the end, there are still equally scored proposals, the final ranking is made by Programme Committee having in mind the additional criteria in a following order: Bilateral cooperation; Young researchers; Gender balance in the project.

Within the “Social sciences and Humanities” thematic area, the project proposals which address gender studies and social inclusion studies emphases shall be prioritized among equally scored proposals.

Within the “Energy” thematic area the project proposals which address key topic Carbon Capture and Storage shall be prioritized among equally scored proposals.

The Programme Operator awards individual grants to projects based on the funding recommendation of the Programme Committee. While making recommendation for funding, the Programme Committee applies, at the level of final ranking list of each thematic area, the average success rate of the call (estimated number of the funded projects within the call budget divided to total number of eligible submitted proposals).

#### **14. Appeals**

The Project Promoters who wish to appeal the final results may send their complaints to the PO. The comments and scores given by experts and members of panels will not be subject to appeals. Grounds for appeals include conflicts of interest and errors in the administrative procedure.

#### **15. Negotiation of proposals**

The Project Promoters of proposals that have been awarded a grant are invited to begin negotiations with the Programme Operator.

#### **16. Contracting of Projects**

After successful negotiations, the Programme Operator proceeds to the conclusion of a formal Project Contract between the Programme Operator and the Project Promoter. The Partnership Agreement is signed between the Project Promoter and the Project Partner(s).

#### **17. Reporting**

The Project Promoters shall submit to the Programme Operator, in English, an annual scientific and financial progress report and a final report (upon the completion of the project).

#### **18. Payment system**

According to the Regulation for the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, payments of the project grant can take the form of advance payment, interim payments and final payment.

The purpose of the advance payment and the annual interim payments is to ensure that the Project Promoters and Project Partners have a positive cash flow during the project implementation and appropriate provisions shall be set in the project contract and the partnership agreement.

- An advance payment of a percentage of the total grant amount shall be made upon signature of the contract between the Programme Operator and the Project Promoter.



The value of the advance payment, in all cases, should cover the first year of the implementation of the project.

- Interim payments will ensure positive cash flow for all subsequent reporting periods (year). The interim payments will be granted at the beginning of the subsequent reporting periods and will be calculated based on the cash balance at the end of the previous reporting period.

The Project Promoter should ensure that all appropriate payments to the Project Partners are made without delay and no later than 15 days after the Project Promoter has received the payment from the Programme Operator.

## 19. Timeline of the Call 2019

Action	Date
Launching the call	10 <sup>th</sup> of September 2019
Deadline for submission of applications	16 <sup>th</sup> of December 2019, 4:00 PM (Romanian time)
Evaluation process	January – May 2020
Funding decision / Contracting phase	June 2020

## 20. Call documents

- Guide for Applicants – Call 2019
- Guide for Evaluators - Call 2019

## 21. Legal Acts

- Regulation on the implementation of Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014 -2021;
- Guideline for Research Programmes – Rules for establishment and implementation of programmes falling under the Programme Area “Research”;
- State Aid Scheme for financing the RD projects within the Programme (RO 02) financed through EEA FM 2014-2021 and Norwegian FM 2014-2021.

## 22. Contact Persons

### UEFISCDI:

Monica Cruceru – office: + 40 21 308 05 61

Email address: [eeagrants@uefiscdi.ro](mailto:eeagrants@uefiscdi.ro)

### RCN - The Research Council of Norway

Aleksandra W. Haugstad – mobile: + 47 922 82 462

Email address: [awh@rcn.no](mailto:awh@rcn.no)