

## **ADDENDUM**

to

**EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021  
Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021**

### **PROGRAMME AGREEMENT**

for the financing of the Programme “Research”  
hereinafter referred to as the “Programme Agreement”

between

The Financial Mechanism Committee and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
hereinafter referred to as the “Donors”

and

The General Directorate for European Non-reimbursable Financial Mechanisms and  
Instruments,  
hereinafter referred to as the “Focal Point”,  
representing Romania,  
hereinafter referred to as the “Beneficiary State”  
together hereinafter referred to as the “Parties”

Article 1

1. The Annexes to the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms Programme Agreement for the financing of the Programme “Research” are replaced by the Annexes sent with this addendum.

2. The modifications contained in the new versions of Annex I and Annex II to the Programme Agreement entered into force on 30 August 2019.

Article 2

1. This addendum and the Annexes accompanying it constitute an integral part of the Programme Agreement. Except from the modifications stated above, the Programme Agreement remains unchanged.

Signed in Brussels on..... *30/8 2019*

Signed in *Budapest* on..... *11.09.2019*

For the Donors

For the Focal Point



.....  
Henning Stirø  
Director  
Financial Mechanism Office



.....  
Mihaela Terchila  
Director General  
Ministry of European Funds

**Annex I to the Programme Agreement**

<b>Programme Operator and Partners</b>	
Programme Operator:	Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI)
Donor Programme Partners:	Research Council of Norway (RCN) Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS)
IP0:	N/A
Other Programme Partners(s):	N/A

<b>Programme Objective</b>		Enhanced research-based knowledge development						
PA#	Expected programme results	Indicator	Unit of measurement	Source of verification	Frequency of reporting	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target values
PA02	Outcome 1 Enhanced performance of Romanian research internationally	Number of peer-reviewed scientific publications submitted (disaggregated by type of scientific publication) <sup>1</sup> Number of joint, peer reviewed scientific publications submitted (disaggregated by type of scientific publication) <sup>2</sup> Number of jointly registered applications for Intellectual Property Protection <sup>2</sup>	Number  Number	Submission confirmation from editorial board  Submission confirmation from editorial board Proof of submission and register number from IP office	Annual (APR)  Annual (APR) Annual (APR)	0  0 0	N/A  N/A N/A	60  30 5

<sup>1</sup> Gold Open Access, pending Open Access, other

<sup>2</sup> Gold Open Access, pending Open Access, other

			Number of joint applications for further funding <sup>2</sup>	Number	Proof of applications submission from the funding body	Annual (APR)	0	N/A	5
			Number of jobs created	Number	Project records	Semi-annual (APR and IFR)	0	N/A	40
			Number of bilateral institutional partnerships between Donor States and Romanian entities <sup>2</sup>	Number	Copies of partnership agreements	Semi-annual (APR and IFR)	0	N/A	60
			Number of Donor States research groups involved in projects <sup>2</sup>	Number	Project Promoters' records	Semi-annual (APR and IFR)	0	N/A	30
			Number of European Research Council (ERC) applications sent by candidates supported by the small grants scheme	Number	Proof of applications submission from the funding body	Semi-annual (APR and IFR)	0	N/A	40
			Number of researchers supported (disaggregated by gender)	Number	Project Promoters' records	Semi-annual (APR and IFR)	0	N/A	220
			Number of (pro) Roma organisations involved in projects	Number	Project Promoters' records	Semi-annual (APR and IFR)	0	N/A	4
			Number of signed collaborative links <sup>3</sup> between research organisations and companies involved in the programme	Number	Copies of agreements	Semi-annual (APR and IFR)	0	N/A	80
			Level of satisfaction with the partnership	Scale 1-7	Survey results	Survey at the start and end of each project. (FMO to conduct survey)	TBD	2018	6 <sup>4</sup>
			Level of trust between cooperating entities in Beneficiary state and Donor states	Scale 1-7	Survey results	Survey at the start and end of each project. (FMO to	TBD	2018	6 <sup>4</sup>
PA02	Output 1.1	Production of new research facilitated							
PA02	Output 1.2	Links between research institutions and companies developed							
Bilateral	Bilateral	Enhanced collaboration between Beneficiary and Donor State entities involved in the programme							

<sup>3</sup> Collaborative links are described in more detail here: <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/rectdoc/rep/2/2005/EN/2-2005-725-FN-1-0.Pdf> p 27

<sup>4</sup> And an increase on the baseline

	Bilateral output 1	Cooperation between beneficiary and donor state entities supported	Share of cooperating organisations that apply the knowledge acquired from the bilateral partnership  Number of projects involving the cooperation of a donor project partner (disaggregated by Donor State)	Percentage  Number	Survey results Copies of contracts concluded with Project Promoters, Partnership agreements between Project Promoters and project partners	conduct survey) Survey at the end of each project. (FMO to conduct survey)	N/A 2018	0 NA	25 80% <sup>4</sup>
--	--------------------	--	---	--------------------------	---	---	-------------	---------	------------------------

## Conditions

### General

The NFP shall ensure that the Programme Operator ensures that synergies with the programmes 'Business Development, Innovation and SME's', 'Education, Scholarship, Apprenticeships and Youth Entrepreneurship', 'Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Energy Security' and 'Local Development and Poverty Reduction, Enhanced Roma Inclusion' are further elaborated and opened up for in the calls for proposals, during implementation of the programmes, and in the dissemination phase of results of the Research programme.

### Pre-eligibility

Not Applicable

### Pre-payment

Not Applicable

### Pre-completion

Not Applicable

### Post-completion

Not Applicable

<b>Eligibility of costs - period</b>			
Eligibility of costs	First date	14/10/2016	31/12/2024

<b>Grant rate and co-financing</b>	
Programme eligible expenditure (€)	€ 47,058,824
Programme grant rate (%)	85%
Maximum amount of Programme grant - EEA Financial Mechanism (€)	€ 15,000,000
Maximum amount of Programme grant - Norwegian Financial Mechanism (€)	€ 25,000,000
Maximum amount of Programme grant - Total (€)	€ 40,000,000

Maximum eligible costs (€) and Advance payment amount (€)									
PA	Budget heading	EEA Grants	Norway Grants	Total grant	Programme grant rate	Programme co-financing	Programme eligible expenditure	Advance payment	
PM	Programme management	€ 1,134,375	€ 1,890,625	€ 3,025,000	85%	€ 533,824	€ 3,558,824	€ 302,500	
PA2	Enhanced performance of Romanian research internationally (EEA)	€ 13,865,625	-	€ 13,865,625	85%	€ 2,446,875	€ 16,312,500	€ 0	
PA2	Enhanced performance of Romanian research internationally (Norway)	-	€ 23,109,375	€ 23,109,375	85%	€ 4,078,125	€ 27,187,500	€ 0	
	Total	€ 15,000,000	€ 25,000,000	€ 40,000,000	85%	€ 7,058,824	€ 47,058,824	€ 302,500	

Retention of management costs	
Retention of management costs - percentage of the management costs	10 %
Retention of management costs - planned Euro value	€ 355,882

## Annex II - Operational Rules

### 1. Programme summary

This Annex sets out the operational rules for the programme. The programme agreement is based on the MoU, the concept note and comments made by the Donors. Commitments, statements and guarantees, explicit as well as implicit, made in the concept note, are binding for the National Focal Point and the Programme Operator unless otherwise explicitly stipulated in the annexes to this programme agreement.

The Programme Operator is the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI). The Research Council of Norway (RCN) and the Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS) are the Donor Programme Partners (DPPs).

The programme shall support the outcome “enhanced performance of Romanian research internationally,” by way of two calls for proposals and one small grant scheme (SGS).

One call for proposals shall be launched under the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 and a separate call for proposals shall be launched under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021.

The following shall apply to both calls for proposals:

- Both calls shall support collaborative research projects in basic and applied research (hereafter ‘research projects’).
- Research projects within each of the following thematic areas shall receive grants: energy; environment; health; social sciences and humanities, including gender studies and social inclusion studies; ICT; biotechnology.

In accordance with the Guideline for Research Programmes, the programme shall follow the principles and practice of the European framework programmes (i.e. Horizon 2020 and to Horizon Europe) and the international best practice for research and innovation. The programme will pay particular attention to the implementation of principles and provisions on Open Science.

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

#### **A. Energy:**

1. Innovative materials and technologies for energy storage;
2. Energy efficiency within the process of generation, transmission, smart grids distribution and at the consumer/end user;
3. Eco-friendly-environmental technologies for energy production/generation;
4. Energy sources – diversification/balance;
5. Carbon capture and storage (mandatory key topic under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism call for proposals for research projects. The Programme Operator may, further to a recommendation of the Programme Committee, include this key topic within the EEA Financial Mechanism call for proposals for research projects).

#### **B. Environment:**



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

**C. Health:**

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

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

1. Migration, mobility, diaspora;
2. Participative democracy, social and cultural innovation, economic growth;
3. Cosmopolitanism and nationalism;
4. Social and economic inclusion of disadvantages groups;
5. Digitization and accessibility of the cultural heritage;
6. Roma inclusion and empowerment.

**E. ICT:**

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

**F. Biotechnology:**

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

Further to a recommendation of the Programme Committee, the Programme Operator may add additional key topics in the call for proposals.

- The Programme Committee and the Programme Operator shall ensure that in selecting projects to be funded under the key topic ‘Social Sciences and humanities, including gender studies and social inclusion studies’, gender studies and social inclusion studies are reflected in the final list of projects receiving funding.

- No less than 10% of the total eligible expenditure of the programme shall be dedicated to projects falling primarily within the key topic ‘Roma inclusion and empowerment’. Projects shall be considered as falling primarily under the key topic ‘Roma inclusion and empowerment’ when the project’s focus is on understanding and improving the situation of the Roma population and the project includes specific

research questions relevant for improving the situation of the Roma population. Project applicants shall be required to involve and engage (pro) Roma organisations in formulating relevant research questions to be included in the project application and to consult such organisations during the project’s implementation.

- Research projects shall include dedicated action exploring the potential for further joint applications between partners from Romania and the Donor State(s) to EU framework programme calls and other international funding sources. The final project report shall describe the results of this action and, where relevant, present a plan for the further planning and preparation of joint applications.

The SGS shall be launched under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 and shall provide support to Romanian candidates and their Romanian institutions who have received a favourable rating from the European Research Council (ERC) evaluation (score B in the first or second stage) but have not succeeded in obtaining a grant. The support will target the necessary improvement of applications allowing them to be resubmitted. This shall be achieved, *inter alia*, through study visits with relevant ERC grantees. Funding for measures to support the candidate’s institution in promoting information about the application process in order to increase the number of applicants from Romania shall also be provided.

## 2. Eligibility

### 2.1 Eligible applicants:

The provisions of Chapter 8 of the Guideline for Research Programmes contain the rules on eligibility of applicants and project partners. The following limitations to these provisions shall be placed:

	Eligible applicants (Project Promoters)	Eligible partners
Norwegian Financial Mechanism call for proposals for research projects	Research organisations, as defined in the EU Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2014/C 198/01), established in Romania	Research organisations, as defined in the EU Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2014/C 198/01) and companies established in Romania and Norway. Research organisations from third countries are eligible partners, but cannot receive funding from the project grant
EEA Financial Mechanism call for proposals for research projects		Research organisations, as defined in the EU Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2014/C 198/01) and companies established in Romania, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. Research organisations from third countries are eligible partners, but cannot receive funding from the project grant
Small Grant Scheme:	Romanian institutions representing Romanian candidates who have received a favourable rating from a previous ERC evaluation (minimum score	N/A

	B in the first or second stage) but have not succeeded in obtaining an ERC grant.	
--	---	--

Partnership with entities from the relevant Donor State(s) is mandatory within all research projects selected under the two calls for proposals.

### 2.2 *Special rules on eligibility of costs:*

Chapter 8 of the Regulation contains the rules on eligibility of costs. The following exceptions are made:

- The purchase of real estate and/or land shall not be eligible.
- Article 10.8 of the Guideline for Research Programmes concerning indirect costs shall apply in the case of research projects. Alternatively, Norwegian entities classified as ‘Research Institutes’ may use standard scales of unit costs in accordance with Article 8.4.1 (b) of the Regulation. According to the Research Council of Norway’s procedure for ‘Payroll and indirect costs’, the Norwegian entities classed as ‘Research Institutes’ calculate the payroll and indirect costs together, as hourly rates for the staff participating in a project. The RCN will facilitate the verification of conformity of standard scales of unit costs used by the project participants.
- Only costs incurred by project promoters and project partners from Romania and/or the relevant Donor State(s) shall be eligible.

### 3. **Bilateral relations**

The programme shall strengthen bilateral relations through collaborative research projects between entities in Romania and the Donor State(s).

The Programme Operator shall facilitate the search for partners at project level and the development of partnerships prior to or during the preparation of a project application for a research project. Measures shall include the organisation of an info-day, the financing of preparatory visits, participation in contact/matchmaking seminars, participation in pre-projects meetings and other activities that clearly demonstrate a contribution to strengthened bilateral relations.

The Programme Operator shall organise up to four training sessions addressed to ERC candidates supported under the SGS and new potential candidates for ERC calls with their host institution in Romania, with participation of ERC grantees from the Donor States.

Subject to the availability of funds, the Programme Operator shall:

Organise up to six study visits (networking and exchange activities aimed at strengthening cooperation and exchanging experience and best practices between the Programme Operator and the DPPs).

Organise up to six workshops of common interest on thematic areas aiming to share results of the research projects and transfer knowledge, technology and best practice, and to increase capacity building in research.

The use of the funds for bilateral relations allocated to the programme shall be agreed with the Research Council of Norway and, in respect of the EEA Financial Mechanism, the Icelandic Centre for Research.

The Programme Operator may apply for funds from the Joint Committee for Bilateral Funds to support the activities listed above, provided that such activities are eligible under the fund for bilateral relations.

#### 4. Selection of projects and financial parameters

##### 4.1 Open calls and availability of funds (including number of calls, duration of calls, and estimated size):

	Call timing	Total available amount (minimum)	Maximum / Minimum grant applied for
EEA Financial Mechanism call for proposals for research projects	2018	€ 16,312,500	€ 1,500,000 / € 500,000
Norwegian Financial Mechanism call for proposals for research projects	2019	€ 24,687,500	€ 1,200,000 / € 500,000
Norwegian Financial Mechanism Small Grant Scheme	Once in 2019 Once in 2020	€ 2,500,000	€ 50,000 / € 5,000

##### 4.2 Selection procedures:

Applications submitted under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism call for proposals for research projects and the EEA Financial Mechanism call for proposals for research projects shall follow the selection procedure described in the Guideline for Research Programmes.

Proposals for research projects shall be selected and grants awarded on the basis of the following selection criteria, and any additional criteria specified in the calls for proposal:

- a) Scientific and/or technical excellence;
- b) Relevance in relation to the objective and priorities of the research programme;
- c) Quality and efficiency of the implementation and management, including quality and implementation capacity of the applicants and contribution to capacity and competence building;
- d) The potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of project results.

Project applications submitted under thematic area ‘Energy’, key topic ‘Carbon capture and storage’ shall be prioritised under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism call for proposals for research projects. The selection criteria and the procedure for the award of grants in respect of applications submitted under the thematic area ‘Health’ and the thematic area ‘Social Sciences and humanities, including gender studies and social inclusion studies’ shall be designed so as to ensure that no less than 10% of the eligible expenditure of the programme is dedicated to projects falling within the key topic ‘Roma inclusion and empowerment.’

The selection criteria and the procedure for the award of grants in respect of applications submitted under the thematic area ‘Social Sciences and humanities, including gender studies and social inclusion

studies' shall be designed so as to ensure that gender studies and social inclusion studies are reflected in the final list of projects receiving funding.

Applications submitted under the Small Grant Scheme shall be assessed as follows:

The selection process will be based on the potential of the applicant in reworking and resubmitting an improved ERC application. The ERC application and the ERC evaluation of the application will make up the core of the application, accompanied by motivation letter and an acceptance letter of the ERC grantee institution submitted by the applicant.

The selection process consists of:

(1) Eligibility check of the application, carried out by the Programme Operator. This shall, *inter alia*, confirm the eligibility of the applicant and the performance of the candidate in a previous ERC call (minimum score B in the first or second stage). Applicants whose applications are rejected at this stage shall be informed and given a reasonable time to appeal that decision.

(2) Quality appraisal of the application by the Programme Committee. Each application that passed the eligibility check shall be reviewed by the Programme Committee. The Programme Committee shall assess each proposal on the basis of the candidate's scientific performance, and his or her potential to improve the subsequent ERC application, and the candidate's institution's proposal to promote information about the ERC application process in order to increase the number of applicants from Romania. A final list consisting of projects recommended for funding within the available budget of the SGS call, will be drawn up by the Programme Committee.

(3) Final decision on the award of grants by the Programme Operator. The Programme Operator shall make the final decision on the basis of the final list of applications recommended for funding by the Programme Committee.

After the selection procedure is complete, information of the results and the decision on the award of grants will be communicated to all applicants and published online.

#### 4.3 *Project grant rate:*

Grants to all projects from the programme may be up to 100% of total eligible expenditure of the project. The project grant rate shall in all cases be set at a level that complies with the State Aid rules in force and takes into account any and all other forms of public support granted to projects. The remaining costs of the project shall be provided or obtained by the Project Promoter.

## 5. **Additional mechanisms within the Programme**

### 5.1 *Pre-defined projects*

Not applicable

### 5.2 *Financial Instruments*

Not applicable

## **6. Programme Management**

### *6.1 Payment flows*

The Programme Operator shall ensure that funds are available for payments to projects in a timely manner. Payments of the project grant shall take the form of advance payments, interim payments and final payments.

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 rate of the advance payment and the frequency of submission of interim payment requests shall in all cases ensure positive cash flow and appropriate provisions shall be set in the project contract and the partnership agreement.

The number of interim payments will depend on the project duration and the pre-defined reporting periods. Interim payments shall be paid after the approval of Project Interim Reports.

The first advance payment shall be paid to the projects within 15 calendar days following the Project promoter request after the signature of the contract. Interim payments shall be paid within 15 calendar days after the Programme Operator's approval. Upon approval of the final project report a final payment shall be made within 15 calendar days.

All relevant rules on financial reporting, payment flows and proof of expenditure contained in the Regulation and the Guideline for Research Programmes shall be complied with.

### *6.2 Verification of payment claims*

Project Promoters shall submit annual and final reports containing information on payment request and incurred expenditure. The Programme Operator will control the eligibility of expenditure under payment claim verification procedures following chapter 8 of the Regulation and Guideline for Research Programmes.

The Programme Operator's verification of payment claims comprises administrative verifications (desk checks) and on the spot verifications. As part of payment claim verification, the Programme Operator shall carry out on-the-spot checks to account for reported incurred expenditure in Projects. During the on the spot verifications proof of expenditure shall be verified.

The procedure for verification of proof of expenditure in SGS shall be based on sampling methods.

The detailed procedure for verification of payment claims, periodicity of reporting periods, and deadlines for reporting will further be detailed in the description of the Programme Operator's management and control systems.

Requirements for the submission of proof of expenditure contained in the Regulation and the Guideline for Research Programmes shall be complied with. Where proof of expenditure is required, this shall be submitted with the final project report referred to in Article 10.3. (Guideline for Research Programmes).

Proof of expenditure shall not be submitted by a Project Promoter or a project partner in research projects, where the total grant from the programme to the respective Project Promoter or project partner is less than €325,000.

In line with Guideline for Research Programmes, a certificate by an independent auditor qualified to carry out statutory audits of accounting documents, certifying that the claimed costs are incurred in accordance with this guideline, the Regulation, the national law and relevant national accounting practices, shall be accepted as sufficient proof of expenditure incurred. A certificate issued by a competent and independent public officer recognised by the relevant national authorities as having a budget and financial control capacity over the entity incurring the costs and who has not been involved in the preparation of the financial statements, certifying that the claimed costs are incurred in accordance with this guideline, this Regulation, the relevant law and national accounting practices, shall also be accepted as sufficient proof of expenditure incurred.

Requirements for the submission of proof of expenditure shall be set in the project contract and the partnership agreement.

The interim financial reports of the Programme Operator are verified and approved by the Certifying Authority

### *6.3 Monitoring and reporting*

The Programme Operator shall monitor, record and report on projects' progress towards the Programme's outcomes in accordance with the provisions contained in the legal framework. The reporting shall include number of projects supported (by thematic area and key topic) and number of partners active in projects. The Programme Operator shall ensure that suitable and sufficient monitoring and reporting arrangements are made with the project promoters in order to enable the Programme Operator and the NFP to meet its obligations to the Donor States.

When reporting on progress achieved in Annual and Final Programme Reports, the Programme Operator shall disaggregate results achieved by, inter alia, gender, age and participation of Roma population, as appropriate and in accordance with instructions and templates received from the FMO. Data on the indicators "number of researchers supported" should be collected separately for these types of categories: PhDs, Postdocs and senior researchers.

### *6.4 Programme administrative structures*

Not applicable

## **7. Communication**

### *7.1 Communication*

The Programme Operator shall comply with Article 3.3 of the Regulation, the Information and Communication Requirements in Annex 3 of the Regulation and the Communication plan for the programme.

## **8. Miscellaneous**

Not applicable

