

PROJECT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND METHODOLOGY

Generic document for all programmes operated by Innovation Norway within EEA & NORWAY GRANTS 2014-2021

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1. Assessment methodology

This document presents information about the assessment process that will be conducted by Innovation Norway as the Fund Operator. Project applications will be assessed by the Fund Operator who bears the responsibility for the handling of the applications and the project selection. The assessment will be based on a combination of appraisal methods as presented in section 2 of these Project Assessment Criteria.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND ELIGIBILITY CHECK

The Fund Operator will check the fulfilment of administrative conformity and eligibility criteria based on the information included in the Application Form and in the attachments to the Application Form, as they were requested in these Calls for Proposals.

If any shortcomings are found related to criteria included in the section called ADMINISTRATIVE CHECK, the Fund Operator will revert to the Applicant to verify if there is any misunderstanding in the provided information. The Applicant will be given 10 working days from the Fund Operator's notification to submit missing information/complete documentation. Applications filled in a language other than English language will be automatically rejected.

All applications meeting the administrative criteria and the eligibility criteria, will be subject to full assessment organised by the Fund Operator. A "no" assessment corresponding to any of the criteria will disqualify the project application from further assessment and will lead to the rejection of the application. A letter to the Applicant will indicate the main reason for rejection. The rejection decision is final and will be communicated to the Applicant via e-mail, using the e-mail address indicated in the Application Form under the section "Contact person".

TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

Applications which fulfil administrative and eligibility criteria will be further assessed by two experts from the Fund Operator. The experts shall evaluate the projects against the selection criteria contained in present Calls for proposals. If necessary, the Fund Operator may use external expertise on a case by case basis.

The financial and technical assessment criteria presented below will be scored in a rating from 0 (zero) to 6 (six) points, where 0 is the lowest (a criterion is not fulfilled at all, but the project could still be considered for funding) and 6 is the highest score. The scoring will constitute a basis for an assessment profile and will be used to rank the projects. Each of the assessment criteria may be a critical success factor, a factor that can jeopardize the whole project.

The result of the experts' assessment shall be a ranked list that forms the basis of the Fund Operator's Selection Committee's discussion. The Selection Committee will make the decision to reject or approve the applications and decide on the ranking of approved applications. Prior to the Fund Operator's final decision, FMO, the Programme Partner(s) and the National Focal Point will be provided with the ranked list and reasonable time to give their input to the Fund Operator.

In case of decision to approve the application, the Applicant will first be informed about the decision via e-mail. Thereafter, the Applicant will receive a Project Contract containing the Grant Offer Letter, contractual conditions, approved project budget, maximum grant rate and amount, expected outcomes from the implemented project, Project Implementation Plan and Disbursement Plan. Specific issues may be subject to further formalisation in the Special Conditions of the Grant Offer Letter.

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

For each criterion that will be assessed, the Fund Operator will check information included in the sections from the electronic Application Form and in the mandatory documentation attached to the Application Form. Please note that specific attachments like "Business Plan" or "Project Document" will be mandatory for submission by the Applicant if they are listed in these Calls for Proposals. During the assessment process, the Fund Operator reserves the right to request clarifications and further documentary evidence as may be necessary.

2. Project Assessment Criteria

	CRITERION	DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE	APPRAISAL METHOD
	ADMINISTRATIVE CHECK		
1	The Application Form has been filled in according to the instructions given in these Calls for Proposals, in the Electronic Application Form, the Application Form Guidelines and all mandatory documentation is attached to the application.	Application Form and Attachments	Yes/No
2	The application and requested supporting documents are submitted and presented in English;(the certificates issued by the national authorities in the Beneficiary State and the	Application Form and Attachments	Yes/No

	certified financial annual accounts issued in the national language can be submitted and presented in the national language; for the rest of the documents, non-certified translation in English is required).		
3	The appropriate electronic Application Form has been used (corresponding to the type of Programme and type of the Applicant).	Application Form	Yes/No
ELIGIBILITY CHECK		DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE	APPRAISAL METHOD
Applicant (and Partner(s))			
1	The Applicant is registered as legal person in the Beneficiary State and the entity fits in one of the categories of eligible applicants for the relevant grant scheme (Individual Project Scheme or Small Grants Scheme), as listed in these present Calls.	<i>Application Form:</i> "Applicant details", "Contact person" <i>Attachments:</i> Relevant registration documents listed in these Calls for Proposals	Yes/No
2	The Applicant has been established for at least the period of time set out in these Calls, section 1.1 .1. Eligible applicants and partners.	<i>Application Form:</i> "Applicant details", "Activity of the Applicant" <i>Attachments:</i> Certified accounts, Relevant registration documents listed in these Calls for Proposals	Yes/No
3	The Partner(s) is established as legal entity in the Beneficiary State or in the eligible Donor States.	<i>Application Form:</i> "Partnership" <i>Attachments:</i> Relevant registration documents listed in these Calls for Proposals	Yes/No
4	The Partner(s)' main activity is closely related to the activities in which its contribution is proposed.	<i>Application Form:</i> "Partnership" <i>Attachments:</i> Relevant registration documents listed in these Calls for Project Proposals	Yes/No

5	If the case of a Partnership Project, a draft Partnership Agreement has been attached to the Application Form.	<i>Application Form:</i> "Partnership" <i>Attachment:</i> Partnership Agreement	Yes/No
6	The Applicant and the legal representative signing the Application have clean criminal and tax record.	<i>Attachments:</i> Self-declarations regarding clean criminal and tax record	Yes/No
7	The Partner(s) and the legal representative signing the Partnership Agreement have clean criminal and tax record.	<i>Attachments:</i> Self-declarations regarding clean criminal and tax record	Yes/No
8	The Applicant is not an undertaking in difficulty	<i>Attachment:</i> Self-declaration regarding undertaking in difficulty	Yes/No
Project			
9	The proposed project fits into the focus area for these Calls and is within the eligible activities defined in these Calls for Proposals.	<i>Application Form:</i> "Project Information", "Outcomes" <i>Attachments:</i> Expected outcomes of the implementation of the project	Yes/No
10	Grant maximum and minimum amounts and co-financing rates are complied with.	<i>Application Form:</i> "Project Information", "Financing plan"	Yes/No
11	The project implementation period is no longer than the deadline for cost eligibility mentioned in these Calls for Proposals.	<i>Application Form:</i> "Activities and schedule", "Project Implementation Plan"	Yes/No

12	No overlapping/double funding arises from the applications for a similar project from EU/EEA/International Financial Institution/Bilateral or other sources.	<i>Application Form:</i> “Legal/other issues relevant to the project”	Yes/No
13	The project is in compliance with both EU and national legislation of the Beneficiary State (in particular state aid, public procurement and environment requirements).	<i>Application Form:</i> “Legal/other issues relevant to the project”	Yes/No
14	Compliance with plans - the project is in compliance with national, regional and local policies, strategies, plans and programmes in the Beneficiary State.	<i>Application Form:</i> “Project information”, “Legal/other issues relevant to the project”	Yes/No
15	Incentive effect – work on the project did not start before the submission of the current application for grant.	<i>Application Form:</i> “Activities and schedule”	Yes/No

	TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT	DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE	APPRAISAL METHOD	WEIGHTING
1	Relevance - the extent to which the project meets the Programme expected outcome and the eligible activities set out in these Calls for Proposals.	<i>Application Form:</i> “Project Information”, “Outcomes”, <i>Attachments:</i> “Expected outcomes of the implementation of the project”, “Project Implementation Plan”, “Business Plan” or “Project Document”	Scoring 0-6	
2	Technical viability and feasibility - the extent to which the project is mature, i.e. technically viable and feasible in terms of technical solution meets the project objectives and specific outcomes, the Applicant has the technical capacity to implement the project, time schedule.	<i>Application Form:</i> “Project Information”, “Outcomes” <i>Attachments:</i> “Business Plan” or “Project Document”, “Procurement plan” and other documentary evidences	Scoring 0-6	

3	<p>Innovation level - the extent to which the project includes innovation, either on enterprise level, sector level, national level or international level</p>	<p><i>Application Form:</i> “Project Information”, “Project Implementation Plan” <i>Attachment:</i> “Business Plan”</p>	Scoring 0-6	30%
4	<p>Releasing effect - the extent to which the project would not be executed without a grant; Grants shall not be greater than what is necessary for the execution of the project. In all cases, an economic reasoning about the grading of the support shall be based on the relationship between expected profitability and risk, both in relation to state aid rules and in relation to the amount of support needed to trigger the project.</p>	<p><i>Application Form:</i> “Project information” <i>Attachment:</i> “Business Plan” or “Project Document”</p>	Scoring 0-6	
5	<p>Internal factors - the extent to which the Applicant (and Partner(s)) have the necessary resources to implement the project; internal factors are the factors over which the Applicant may influence with strategic choices (key resources, core activities, production).</p>	<p><i>Application form:</i> “Internal factors” <i>Attachment:</i> Business plan or Project Document, CVs of the project team</p>	Scoring 0-6	
6	<p>Financial capacity and operating risk - the extent to which the Applicant (and possible Partners) have the necessary co-financing and financial capacity to implement the project and support its costs. Operating risk – the assessment of Applicant’s financial situation and debt service capabilities.</p>	<p><i>Application Form:</i> “Expense Budget”, “Financing Plan”, “Financial Statement” <i>Attachments:</i> “Applicant’s Certified Accounts”, “Letter of Commitment”, Other sources: Credit reports purchased by the Fund Operator</p>	Scoring 0-6	
7	<p>Costs estimates and funding - the extent to which the project have clear and well documented cost estimates and a financing plan. The budget is correctly elaborated and correlated with project activities, allocated and estimated resources.</p>	<p><i>Application form:</i> “Financial Plan”, “Expense Budget” <i>Attachments:</i> Business Plan or Project Document, Project Budget Activity Based, Project Implementation Plan, Procurement Plan</p>	Scoring 0-6	25%

8	IPR status (Intellectual Property Rights) - immaterial resources available for the proposed project.	<i>Application Form:</i> "Project Information" <i>Attachments:</i> "Partnership Agreement", "Business Plan"	Scoring 0-6	
9	Market potential and competitiveness - quality of market analysis, under the balance of demand and offer of products and services; ability to sell products/services that meet demand requirements (price, quality, quantity) and, at the same time, ensure profits over time; Note: A qualitative market analysis contains competition identification, strengths and weaknesses, the competitive advantage of the Applicant, in terms of marketing, operational and organizational information.	<i>Application Form:</i> "External factors" <i>Attachment:</i> "Business Plan"	Scoring 0-6	
10	Project profitability - the extent to which the project has potential for profitability; The projects profitability will be based on the ratios NPV (Net Present Value) and IRR (Internal Rate of Return).	<i>Application Form:</i> "Project value creation and risk" <i>Attachment:</i> "Business Plan"	Scoring 0-6	
11	Good business practice - The extent to which the Applicant (and Partner(s)) adhere to Good Business Practice as defined by the OECD guidelines and UN Guiding Principles on business and human right, including zero-tolerance towards corruption (initiatives on Applicant level);	<i>Application Form:</i> "Activity of the Applicant", "Project Information", "Cross cutting issues"	Scoring 0-6	
12	Project risks - the extent to which the project is adequately supported by a risk management plan; The Applicant should have identified and assessed the relevant risk factors that may affect the achievement of the project expected outcome and described how they intend to mitigate the risks. There may be different types of risks, i.e. financial risk, technical/ technological risk, market risk, HR risk, time schedule, environmental and more.	<i>Application Form:</i> "Project value creation and risk", <i>Attachment:</i> "Business Plan" or "Project Document"	Scoring 0-6	20%
13	Sustainability - the project incorporates clear sustainability measures, i.e. the durability of the project after the implementation deadline.	<i>Application Form:</i> "Project information" <i>Attachment:</i> "Business Plan" or "Project Document"	Scoring 0-6	

14	Overall objectives - the extent to which the project contributes to the overall objectives of EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 (reduction of economic and social disparities in the EEA Area and strengthening the bilateral relations between the Beneficiary State and Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and/or Norway).	<i>Application Form:</i> “Project Information”, “Outcomes”, <i>Attachments:</i> Partnership Agreement	Scoring 0-6	15%
15	Bilateral partnership’s quality (if applicable) - the extent to which the Partnership Agreement include clear division of roles, tasks, responsibilities and cash flow; assessment of Partner(s) involvement in the preparation, implementation and sharing the project results; each partner has a significant contribution to the project activities.	<i>Application Form:</i> “Partnership” <i>Attachment:</i> “Partnership Agreement”	Scoring 0-6	
16	Cross-cutting issues - the extent to which the project complies with relevant cross-cutting issues identified in the Application Form: good governance and good business practice, sustainable development and gender equality.	<i>Application Form:</i> “Cross-cutting issues”	Scoring 0-6	10%
17	Socio-economic impact - the extent to which the project has added value, i.e. the socio-economic profitability; This may involve recruitment of unemployed labour, settlement in a region, improved environment, development of a local business environment/technological environment, competence development of individuals and companies, level and consequences of innovation, etc.	<i>Application Form:</i> “Project Information”, “Project value creation and risk”, “Cross-cutting issues” <i>Attachment:</i> “Business Plan” or “Project Document”	Scoring 0-6	