**Announcement on the call “Initiatives for intergenerational cooperation – BeFORme”**

**MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT FUNDS AND REGIONAL POLICY, acting as the National Focal Point[[1]](#footnote-2) (hereinafter: NFP), ANNOUNCES CALL for “Initiatives for intergenerational cooperation – BeFORme” as part of the Fund for Bilateral Relations financed by the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021**

The Fund for Bilateral Relations (hereinafter referred to as “the Fund”) was established to enhance cooperation and improve mutual knowledge and understanding between Poland and Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

**Summary**

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| **Launch and closure** | 8 September – 8 November 2023 |
| **Area of support** | The objective of the competition is to strengthen bilateral cooperation between Poland and Norway in the area of building social capital in local communities through increasing the active participation of citizens in the life of the local community and its integration with special focus on strengthening the intergenerational cooperation. |
| **Total allocation** | EUR 1 950 000; the allocation can be modified by Joint Committee for Bilateral Fund (JCBF) if needed |
| **Min/max grant** | Min grant EUR 100 000  Max grant EUR 250 000 |
| **Duration of initiative** | Up to 9 months, but no later than 28 February 2025 |
| **Applicants** | non-governmental organisations from Poland, within the meaning of the Act of 24 April 2003 on public benefit and volunteer work |
| **Partners** | * non-governmental organisations from Poland, within the meaning of the Act of 24 April 2003 on public benefit and volunteer work * non-governmental organisations from Norway |
| **Further conditions** | Partnership between Polish and Norwegian entities is mandatory. The partnership agreement/s is a part of application therefore shall be singed before submission of the application.  Applications shall be submitted in English.  The state aid and de minimis aid is not granted as part of the call. |

* + 1. **Applicants/partners**

**1.1 Eligible applicants:**

1.1.1 Non-governmental organisations from Poland, within the meaning of the Act of 24 April 2003 on public benefit and volunteer work.

**Definition:**

An applicant/partner from Poland may be a non-governmental organisation within the meaning of the Act of 24 April 2003 on public benefit and volunteer work.

Pursuant to the Act of 24 April 2003 on public benefit and volunteer work, non-governmental organisations are:

* entities which do not constitute the public finance sector entity as defined in the Act of 27 August 2009 on public finance, or enterprises, research institutes, banks and commercial law companies which are state or self-government legal persons and,
* which do not operate for profit and,
* are legal persons and organisational entities, which according to separate act have legal capacity, including foundations and associations.

In addition, considering Article 1.6(n) of the Regulations:

* for the purposes of this call religious institutions and political parties are not considered non-governmental organisations;
* an applicant/partner from Poland should be an entity independent of local, regional and central government, public entities, political parties and commercial organisations.

The status of an applicant and a partner from Poland shall be:

* verified on the basis of the applicant's declaration in the application and
* examined based on the National Court Register or another public register, in which the entity is subject to mandatory entry, held by other public entities, to which the NFP has electronic access in accordance with the rules specified in the provisions on computerisation of activities of entities performing public tasks. In the case of registration in a register other than the one specified above, the applicant is obliged to attach to the application copies/printouts from the relevant register in which the applicant/ partner from Poland is registered.

Note: At the stage of formal assessment, the applicant can be requested for additional documents, e.g. statute, and/or information, clarifications, enabling the verification of eligibility of the applicant/partner from Poland. Failure to provide the documents, information, clarifications will result in the rejection of the application.

* 1. **Eligible partners:**
     1. Non-governmental organisations from Poland, within the meaning of the Act of 24 April 2003 on public benefit and volunteer work

**Definition and supplementary explanations as indicated in point 1.1.1.**

* + 1. Non-governmental organisations from Norway.

**Definition:**

A partner from Norway may be a non-governmental organisation within the meaning of Article 1.6(n) of the Regulations[[2]](#footnote-3), i.e. a non-profit voluntary organisation established as a legal entity, having a non-commercial purpose, independent of local, regional and central government, public entities, political parties and commercial organisations. Religious institutions and political parties are not considered NGOs;

The status of a partner from Norway shall be examined on the basis of the applicant’s declaration included in the application form.

**The partnership with non-governmental organization/s from Norway is mandatory.**

**The signed partnership agreement/s shall to be attached to the application.**

**Each applicant can submit one application. Each partner can be a partner in one application. One entity may participate in the call only once – as a beneficiary or as partner.**

* + 1. **Objectives/scopes of initiatives**

**The objective of the call is to strengthen bilateral cooperation between Poland and Norway in the area of building social capital in local communities.**

**The projects that will be selected will aim at increasing the active participation of citizens in local communities with a special focus on strengthening the inter-generational cooperation and integration.**

The aforementioned objective might be achieved through the indicative project activities, inter alia:

a. encourage building bonds and establishment of cooperation/ integration between various groups: e.g. social, age and professional;

b. facilitate functioning in the place of residence, encourage the residents of local communities to act together for the benefit of the community, support social solidarity and/or Polish-Ukrainian solidarity;

c. encourage local leadership and initiative;

d. reduce stereotypes of young and old and improve mutual understanding and trust;

e. challenge social problems cross generationally and contribute to lifelong learning;

f. support local heritage.

The suggested initiatives should respond to identified local challenges, needs and/or problems.

The document covering the analysis on the Norwegian experiences in the area of intergenerational cooperation is enclosed to the announcement on the call (Annex 8 to the Announcement on the call). It can be an inspiration for the potential applicants, nevertheless any other forms of enhancing bilateral cooperation in the area are welcomed.

* + 1. **Value of the initiative. Funding level**

The total amount available in the competition is EUR 1,950,000.

Value of a single initiative: from EUR 100 000 up to EUR 250 000.

Funding level: 100% of the initiative’s eligible costs (no co- financing required).

The call does not provide state aid or *de minimis* aid as part of the competition. Therefore, initiatives implemented under the competition may not include measures which would involve granting state aid or *de minimis* aid neither for the applicant nor partner/s.

Each entity participated in the competition (both applicant and partner/s) shall attach to the application form the state aid test of each entity participated in the competition.

* + 1. Duration of the initiative. Eligibility period

Duration of the initiative: up to 9 months.

Period of eligibility of expenditures:

The starting date of initiative is not earlier than the JCBF decision on financing.

The duration of the initiative may last up to 9 months from the starting date explained above, but no later than 28 February 2025.

It is estimated that JCBF will make a decision on which initiatives will be financed approximately six months after the deadline of the call. The exact duration of the initiative is to be set in the initiative agreement.

* + 1. **Eligible expenditures**

To be eligible, expenditures must be in line with the general principles on the eligibility of expenditures, as set forth in the Chapter 8 of the Regulations and Guidelines concerning the use of funding from the Fund for Bilateral Relations in the framework of European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 and Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021[[3]](#footnote-4) referred to as “NFP Guidelines on the FBR”.

The initiative’s budget is divided into following 4 measures, which relate to the below-mentioned budget categories, which are eligible within the initiative:

5.1 Management costs.

Including: indirect costs and remuneration related to the management of the initiative.

**Where the option of financing indirect costs is used, a method of the calculation is verified in the audit report.** The management costs (including the overheads, if applicable) **may not exceed 10% of eligible costs of the initiative** budget.

* 1. Costs of audit report/s

**An audit report/s is the mandatory proof of all expenditures incurred both by beneficiary and partner/s within the initiative. The costs of the audit report/s are eligible within the eligibility period of the initiative stipulated in the agreement.**

* 1. Content-related costs of the initiative: training, apprenticeship, internship, workshops, seminars, study visits, reports, research, expert opinions, analyses, publications, information and publicity, etc.;

The catalogue is open and other eligible costs can be proposed.

* 1. Material expenses (necessary for the implementation of the initiative) – if any – like IT equipment, equipment, materials.

**The material expenses may not exceed 20% of eligible costs of the initiative budget.**

**Only “soft”/non-investment and non-commercial initiatives shall receive funding. The cost of purchasing materials and equipment shall be eligible in justified cases and only for materials and equipment not booked as fixed assets.**

The costs of the partner are eligible provided that they have been settled by the beneficiary in accordance with the partnership agreement/s.

The above mentioned categories of eligible costs are reflected in the budget of the initiative.

The budget prepared by the applicant as part of the application will be reflected in the subsequent reporting process (Annex 6 to the Announcement on the call – Template Interim Financial Report).

When spending funds, the beneficiary is obliged to apply the rules and procedures for awarding public contracts in accordance with Article 8.15 of the Regulations and the Guidelines of the Minister of Finance, Development Funds and Regional Policy on procurement under the EEA Financial Mechanism for 2014-2021 and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for 2014-2021, referred to as the “NFP Guidelines on procurement”[[4]](#footnote-5).

* + 1. **Proposal of initiative, payment schedule and annexes**
  1. **Preparation of the application**

The proposal of the initiative should be prepared on the attached application form (Annex 2 to the Announcement on the call – Application and payment schedule).

The application shall be submitted in English. The Annexes to the application may be in English or Polish (depending on their availability).

When preparing the application, attention should be paid to the following:

* the application shall be submitted:

1. in an editable electronic form (in .xlsx format), and
2. no electronic signature is required;

* the application form includes instructions as to the content which should appear in its individual fields; the fields are completed by providing the information required from the applicant and/or selecting provided options from drop-down lists, e.g. types of measures, indicators. Part of fields is filled in automatically;
* annexes to the application - in order to meet the formal criteria, the application for financing must be accompanied by the following, mandatory annexes:

1. Completed “State aid test” (a separate “State aid test” shall be submitted for the applicant and for each of the partners receiving funds within the initiative; each of these entities completes the “State aid test” within the scope of its participation in the initiative). In case the “State aid test” concludes that there is a potential occurrence of state aid the initiative will be rejected.
2. Scan/copy of partnership agreement/s **signed** by persons competent to represent the entities concluding the partnership agreement/s.
3. Copy(ies)/printout(s) from the relevant register in which the applicant/partner from Poland is registered – only in the case of registration of the applicant/ partner from Poland in a register other than National Court Register or another public register, in which the entity is subject to mandatory entry, held by other public entities, to which the NFP has electronic access in accordance with the rules specified in the provisions on computerisation of activities of entities performing public tasks.

**If any of the attachments (even one of them) are not provided, the initiative is rejected.**

**Note: The partnership agreement/s should be of a conditional nature, i.e. concluded on the condition that the initiative receives funding. This issue will not be examined by the NFP, however, the use of such a structure of the agreement will secure the interests of its parties in the event that the application does not receive funding in the call.**

**6.2 Indicators of the initiative**

The effects of the initiative implementation should be defined in the form of quantified indicators, corresponding to the specificity of a given initiative. However, it is obligatory to select at least 3 indicators from the following list of standard indicators so that it is possible to aggregate the results at the level of the entire competition.

List of standard indicators (included in the application form):

1. Total number of participants in meetings, workshops and events on intergenerational dialogue up to the completion of the initiative;
2. Overall number of persons covered by the initiative activities;
3. Number of seniors 65+ participating in the initiative;
4. Number of pupils in schools/pupils of educational and nursing institutions participating in the initiative in total;
5. Number of meetings, workshops and training sessions until the end of the initiative;
6. Number of promotional events;
7. Number of Ukraine participants.

Additionally, the applicant may propose and quantify up to 2 indicators, resulting from the specificity of the initiative, not included on the above-mentioned list. The total number of indicators is up to 5 indicators.

1. **Procedure of submitting the application**

The applications shall be submitted by e-mail **only** in electronic version to **beforme@mfipr.gov.pl until 8 November 2023 to 23:59.**

**The applications do not need to sign the application with an electronic signature.**

The submission of the application shall be considered successful if the applicant receives an automatic reply stating “Your application has been correctly registered. Please do not reply to this message.”

**It is not possible to supplement or correct the application after the deadline indicated above.**

If the applicant submit more than one version of the application, only the last one registered by the NFP within the deadline indicated above is subject to assessment, previous applications are left without considering.

1. **Assessment**

The assessment of the initiatives consists of two stages – a formal assessment, based on formal criteria (Annex 3 to the Announcement on the call – Formal assessment sheet) and a content-related assessment, based on the content-related criteria (Annex 4 to the Announcement on the call - Content-related evaluation sheet).

**Only initiatives which meet all formal criteria shall be subject to a content-related assessment. There is no appeal procedure regarding the formal assessment of the initiatives.**

The NFP reserves the right to ask the applicant for additional information, explanations and clarifications required for the further assessment.

The assessment is made on the basis of the content-related evaluation sheet filled out by at least two experts (internal or external) who are members of the pool of experts appointed by the NFP through competitive procedure. A ranking list of initiatives ranked according to the overall score is submitted to the JCBF for granting decision.

The initiatives with an overall score of over 60% and not less than 50% for any individual criterion within the content-related assessment can go further in the process. Initiatives with an overall score below 60% or with a score of less than 50% for any individual criterion are rejected.

1. **Awarding of funding**

The decision on granting or refusing to grant funding are made by the JCBF by consensus. The JCBF may set conditions for granting funding or require modifications to a proposed initiative. When making decisions, the JCBF is not bound by the order of the initiatives following expert evaluation and may take into account other objective factors, such as geographical or thematic diversity of initiatives, capacity of institutions engaged. In justified cases, the JCBF may decide that none of the initiatives will receive funding.

**There is no appeal procedure regarding the decisions of the content-related assessment or the JCBF.**

Initiatives approved for financing will be published on the website www.eog.gov.pl

1. **Signing the agreement for financing the initiative**

On the basis of the JCBF’s decision the NFP concludes the agreements (see Annex 5 to the Announcement on the call - Template of agreement for financing the initiative) with beneficiaries.

**Before the conclusion of the agreement, the NFP applies to the Minister of Finance for information if the applicant/partner/s from Poland is not excluded from the possibility of applying for the funding on the basis of Article 207(4) of the Act of 27 August 2009 on public finance (Journal of Laws of 2022 item 1634, as amended).**

1. **Payment and reporting system**

Payments shall take the form of advance instalment and a payment of the final balance. The advance instalment will be transferred to the project within 30 days from the signature of the initiative agreement and shall not exceed 70% of the initiative budget.

Except for the first advance instalment, the payment to the initiative shall be based on the Interim Financial Report (IFR - see Annex 6 to the Announcement on the call - Template of the Interim Financial Report) approved by the NFP. The beneficiary submit IFR according to the payment schedule attached to the agreement. The IFR is accompanied by the audit report(s) where the eligible expenditures of beneficiary and partner/s are certified. The report(s) is prepared in accordance with the art. 8.12.4 of Regulations. The costs related to the audit are eligible within the eligibility period of expenditures indicated in the agreement.

Payments shall be made in the amount of the EUR equivalent in PLN, calculated using the monthly accounting exchange rate of the European Commission for the month in which the expenditure was booked on the NFP account.

1. **Correspondence**

Correspondence regarding the competition is carried out through means of electronic communication, therefore, the applicant is obliged (in the application) to provide e-mail address.

The applicant is required to notify the NFP of any change in address, including e-mail address. In the event of failure to do so, the provision of information at the current address shall have legal effect.

Any correspondence from the NFP – at the stage of accepting, assessing and selecting an application for financing – shall come from the following e-mail address: beforme@mfipr.gov.pl

**13. Personal data**

Personal data is processed in accordance with the provisions of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC.

The controller of your personal data is the Minister of Development Funds and Regional Policy, ul. Wspólna 2/4, 00-926 Warsaw.

Contact to the Data Protection Officer: ul. Wspólna 2/4, 00-926 Warsaw, e-mail: IOD@mfipr.gov.pl

Detailed information on the processing of personal data in connection with the competition can be found in Annex 7 to the Announcement on the call - Information on the processing of personal data.

**14. Annexes to the announcement of the call:**

Annex 1 – Template of the State aid test

Annex 2 – Application and payment schedule

Annex 3 – Formal Assessment Sheet

Annex 4 – Content-related Assessment Sheet

Annex 5 – Template of agreement for financing the initiative

Annex 6 – Template of the Interim Financial Report

Annex 7 – Information on the processing of personal data

Annex 8 - Review of intergenerational activities in Norway

1. **Legal basis**

The legal basis for the implementation of the FBR competition in Poland:

* 1. The Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism for 2014-2021, and the Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for 2014-2021 (https://www.eog.gov.pl/strony/zapoznaj-sie-z-funduszami/podstawy-prawne/memoranda/#/domyslne=1);
  2. Regulations on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism for 2014-2021 adopted by the EEA Financial Mechanism Committee, in accordance with Article 10.5 of Protocol 38c to the EEA Agreement, on 8 September 2016 and approved by the Standing Committee of the EFTA States on 23 September 2016, and Regulations on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for 2014-2021 adopted by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 23 September 2016 in accordance with Article 10.5 of the Agreement between the Kingdom of Norway and the European Union on the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for 2014-2021 (https://www.eog.gov.pl/strony/zapoznaj-sie-z-funduszami/podstawy-prawne/regulacje/#/domyslne = 1), including the annexes, referred to as “Regulations;”
  3. The Bilateral Guideline of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, (https://www.eog.gov.pl/strony/zapoznaj-sie-z-funduszami/podstawy-prawne/wytyczne-ws-stosunkow-dwustronnych/#/domyslne=1 );
  4. Guidelines concerning the use of funding from the Fund for Bilateral Relations in the framework of European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 and Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, referred to as the “NFP Guidelines on the FBR” (https://www.eog.gov.pl/strony/zapoznaj-sie-z-funduszami/podstawy-prawne/pozostale-wytyczne/wytyczne-w-zakresie-wykorzystania-srodkow-funduszu-wspolpracy-dwustronnej-mechanizmu-finansowego-europejskiego-obszaru-gospodarczego-2014-2021-i-norweskiego-mechanizmu/);
  5. Guidelines of the Minister of Finance, Development Funds and Regional Policy on procurement under the EEA Financial Mechanism for 2014-2021 and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for 2014-2021, referred to as the “NFP Guidelines on procurement” (https://www.eog.gov.pl/strony/zapoznaj-sie-z-funduszami/podstawy-prawne/wytyczne-dotyczace-zamowien-publicznych/#/domyslne=1).

1. **National Focal Point (NFP)** is an institution responsible for supervising the implementation of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism for 2014-2021 and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for 2014-2021; this function is performed by the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, Department of Assistance Programmes. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Regulations on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism for 2014-2021 adopted by the EEA Financial Mechanism Committee, in accordance with Article 10.5 of Protocol 38c to the EEA Agreement, on 8 September 2016 and approved by the Standing Committee of the EFTA States on 23 September 2016, and Regulations on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for 2014-2021 adopted by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 23 September 2016 in accordance with Article 10.5 of the Agreement between the Kingdom of Norway and the European Union on the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for 2014-2021 (https://www.eog.gov.pl/strony/zapoznaj-sie-z-funduszami/podstawy-prawne/regulacje/#/domyslne = 1), including the annexes, referred to as “Regulations”. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Guidelines concerning the use of funding from the Fund for Bilateral Relations in the framework of European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 and Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 approved on 16 April 2019, (https://www.eog.gov.pl/strony/zapoznaj-sie-z-funduszami/podstawy-prawne/pozostale-wytyczne/wytyczne-w-zakresie-wykorzystania-srodkow-funduszu-wspolpracy-dwustronnej-mechanizmu-finansowego-europejskiego-obszaru-gospodarczego-2014-2021-i-norweskiego-mechanizmu/). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Guidelines of the Minister of Finance, Development Funds and Regional Policy on procurement under the EEA Financial Mechanism for 2014-2021 and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for 2014-2021 (https://www.eog.gov.pl/strony/zapoznaj-sie-z-funduszami/podstawy-prawne/wytyczne-dotyczace-zamowien-publicznych/#/domyslne=1). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)