**GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS**

**Call for predefined** **initiatives under the fund for bilateral relations, Home Affairs Programme,   
Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021**

**I. Introduction**

The objectives of these initiatives are to enhance the cooperation and improve the mutual relations between Bulgaria and Norway. The relations between Bulgaria and Norway shall also be strengthened through the implementation of activities aiming at increasing the strategic cooperation, networking and exchange of knowledge between entities in Norway and Bulgaria, and through other joint initiatives beyond the programmes.

According to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Kingdom of Norway, 100 000 EUR are allocated from the Homme Affairs Programme to the fund for bilateral relations. Additional 100 000 EUR are allocated by the National Focal Point to the fund for bilateral relations within the Home Affairs Programme.

Since 28th of February 2024, amendments to the Implementation Memorandum under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 have been approved, related to the reallocation of funds in the amount of EUR 428 040 from the Home Affairs Programme to the Fund for Bilateral Relations at programme level.

So far the Programme Operator under the Home Affairs Programme has signed 5 grant agreements with beneficiaries for financing 3 bilateral initiatives with a total amount 199 083.94 EUR as follows:

* “Joint sports activities in Sofia” with a beneficiary State Agency for refugees in partnership with the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI);
* “Working together for a Europe free from violence – Ensuring Roma and Traveller women’s access to justice to assert their rights to be free from violence” with a beneficiary Foundation “European institute” in partnership with Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security;
* “Video surveillance training seminar for exchange of best practices and knowledge regarding the use of video surveillance for increasing security in public space” with a beneficiary General Directorate National Police – MoI in partnership Innlandet Police District, Norway;
* “Stepping up efforts to prevent and combat violence against Roma women and women from minority groups facing discrimination, marginalisation and exclusion”. The eligible applicant is Foundation European Institute in partnership with Ministry of Justice and Public Security Norway. Other stakeholders (not project partners) are: Bulgarian Police; Council of Europe; Roma NGOs and the FMO; Kilden;
* “Hate crime workshop in Oslo”. The eligible applicant is National Police General Directorate within the Ministry of Interior in partnership with the Oslo Police District.

**II. Eligibility of the applicants and partners.**

The Cooperation Committee under the Home Affairs Programme has approved on the 18th of April 2024 three bilateral initiatives, as follows:

- “Mapping of the system for interpreters in asylum and migration cases in Bulgaria, designing a topical project proposal concept for future funding”. The eligible candidate is Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) in partnership with the State Agency for Refugees and Ministry of Interior (Migration Directorate and Border Police);

- “Combating trafficking in human beings as cross-border organized crime through enhanced strategic and operational cooperation between Bulgaria and Norway”. The eligible candidate is General Directorate Combating Organized Crime (GDBOP) in partnership with the National Crime Investigation Service (Kripos);

- “Combating organised crime through enhanced strategic and operational cooperation between Bulgaria and Norway”. The eligible candidate is General Directorate Combating Organized Crime (GDBOP) in partnership with the Oslo Police District.

**III. Grant amount:**

The total eligible budget under this guideline for applicants is 428 040 EUR and is distributed as follows:

1. “Mapping of the system for interpreters in asylum and migration cases in Bulgaria, designing a topical project proposal concept for future funding”. The eligible candidate is Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) in partnership with the State Agency for Refugees and Ministry of Interior (Migration Directorate and Border Police) – 191 512 EUR;

2.1. “Combating trafficking in human beings as cross-border organized crime through enhanced strategic and operational cooperation between Bulgaria and Norway”. The eligible candidate is General Directorate Combating Organized Crime (GDBOP) in partnership with the National Crime Investigation Service (Kripos) – 236 528 EUR;

2.2. “Combating trafficking in human beings as cross-border organized crime through enhanced strategic and operational cooperation between Bulgaria and Norway”. The eligible candidate is General Directorate Combating Organized Crime (GDBOP) in partnership with the National Crime Investigation Service (Kripos) – It is eligible a second bilateral initiative with a total amount higher than 236 528 EUR to be submitted;

3. “Combating organised crime through enhanced strategic and operational cooperation between Bulgaria and Norway”. The eligible candidate is General Directorate Combating Organized Crime (GDBOP) in partnership with the Oslo Police District– 204 970 EUR.

**NOTE!**

The grant awarding contract under points 2.2. and 3 will be signed after the additional financial resource is provided under the Fund for Bilateral relations.

The final date for eligibility for support under the Fund for Bilateral relations shall be 30th of April 2025. All expenditures for the implementation of the bilateral initiatives should be made no later than 31st of March 2025.

**IV. Eligible expenditures and activities under the fund for bilateral relations**

1. Expenditures related to the following activities are eligible for the fund referred to in Article 4.6 of the Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 (Regulation) as per Art. 8.8 of the Regulation:

- activities aiming at strengthening bilateral relations between Bulgaria and Norway;

- the search for partners for donor partnership projects prior to or during the preparation of a project application, the development of such partnerships and the preparation of an application for a donor partnership project;

- networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experiences and best practices between entities in Bulgaria and entities in Norway, and/or international organizations;

- activities aiming at strengthening cooperation and exchanging experiences and best practices between the Programme Operators and similar entities within the Bulgaria and Norway, as well as international organizations, provided at least one entity within Norway is involved in the activity.

**V. Indicative timeline**

Deadline for submission of bilateral initiatives: 27.05.2024

Beginning of the assessment process: 28.05.2024

End of the assessment process: 03.06.2024

Signing of the contract: 14.06.2024

**VI. Submission of the application form.**

The applicant should submit the Application form (Annex 5.10.1) in English. The Application forms for bilateral initiatives should be submitted via the following email: dmp@mvr.bg. The Application form may be signed by any of the parties (either the applicant or the partner). Attached to the application forms the applicant should submit a letter of intention, e-mail correspondence or other document/ correspondence proving that the applicant has established a contact with a potential project partner.

**VII. Selection procedure:**

All bilateral initiatives received within the deadline will be assessed based on the criteria for administrative and eligibility compliance and technical and financial assessment.

Applications not fulfilling all the formal criteria and all the eligibility criteria will be rejected.

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|  | CHART FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND ELIGIBILITY COMPLIANCE; TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT | Yes/No | Comments |
|  | The applicant is eligible. |  |  |
|  | The potential project partner/entity is eligible. |  |  |
|  | The application form is received within the deadline. |  |  |
|  | The correct template – Application form (Annex 5.10.1) is used; The application form is in English. |  |  |
|  | A letter of intention, e-mail correspondence or other document/ correspondence proving that the applicant has established a contact with a potential partner is submitted; the submitted documents are in English. |  |  |
|  | The envisaged activities are eligible. |  |  |
|  | The expenditures are eligible. |  |  |
|  | The initiative contributes to the objectives of the Fund for bilateral relations, the overall objective of the Home Affairs Programme. |  |  |
|  | There is a correlation between the activities and the expenditures. |  |  |
|  | There is a detailed justification of the budget/budget lines. |  |  |

**VIII. Supporting documents before signing the contract:**

1.Before the signing of the contract the applicant and the partner should sign a partnership agreement (Annex 5.10.3), which describes in details the distribution of activities and financial commitments between the parties. In case no financial relations arise between the parties on the initiative, it is not necessary to sign a partnership agreement. In this case, the parties sign a letter of intention;

2. Financial identification;

3. Declaration for bank account;

4. Declaration for VAT circumstances;

5. Declaration on the lack of double funding;