

The Romanian - EEA Research Programme

2012 – 2017

Guide for Applicants

The guidelines are based on the Regulation on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2012 – 2014 and especially Annex 12 to this Regulation.

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Further call information, forms and guidelines are available on the MEN and UESISCDI webpages:
<http://www.research.edu.ro/>; www.uefiscdi.gov.ro.

1. Introduction

1.1. Project Promoter and Principal Investigator

For each proposal, project partners designate a leading entity, called “**Project Promoter**” (**PP**). The PP is formally responsible for submitting the proposal (electronically to the Implementing Agency¹), signing the cooperation agreement with the project partners and submitting periodic reports to the Programme Operator².

The Project Promoter may only be a Romanian entity eligible according to the Programme. The appropriateness of the PP to be formally responsible for the administration of the project and successfully lead the project is an element of the evaluation procedure. PPs are advised to submit proposals which are appropriate to their track record and experience.

The “**Principal Investigator**” (**PI**) is the researcher having the scientific lead of the project on a daily basis. She/he is responsible for controlling the technical direction and academic quality of the project and will ensure that the project is carried out in compliance with the terms, conditions of the call as well as those specified in Regulation on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014, and especially Annex 12 to this Regulation.

1.2. Eligibility of applicants

1.2.1 Eligible participants:

The following types of entities based in Romania, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway may receive funding from the Programme:

- Research organisations as defined in the Community Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation (2006/C 323.01) can apply for funding as Project Promoters and partners;
- Small and medium-sized enterprises as defined in the Community Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation (2006/C 323.01) can participate only as partners;
Norwegian SMEs which consider themselves to qualify as Research Organisations are requested to contact the Research Council of Norway to clarify the issue in cooperation with MEN. Icelandic SMEs should contact RANNIS.
- Entities based in third-countries may participate in the projects, but are **not eligible for funding** from the Romanian-EEA Research Programme. Their activities have to be funded from a different source.

¹ IA – Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI)

² PO – Ministry of National Education (MEN)

1.2.2 Eligibility of Project Promoter:

- a) The Project Promoter does not have a seizure on its accounts; it has not made false declarations concerning the information required by the PO/IA; it has not broken the terms of a different contract signed previously with the PO/IA;
- b) The PP agrees to ensure the necessary administrative support, to provide access to all necessary infrastructures, to support the implementation of the Joint Research Project (JRP) in good conditions and to employ the members of the Romanian JRP team, while complying all legal provisions in force, if the JRP is selected for funding.

1.2.3. Eligibility of Romanian Principal Investigator

- a) The Principal Investigator has a doctorate;
- b) The Principal Investigator is employed full time in the Romanian PP, with a permanent position, or with a fixed term contract covering at least the duration of the JRP, or has the agreement of the PP for his or her employment at least for the duration of the contract;
- c) In case of personal constraints and the impossibility to continue the JRP implementation, the Principal Investigator jointly with the PP and project partners will carry out all due diligence for ensuring the proper continuity of the JRP (finding a new PI who must also comply with the eligibility criteria for the PIs, making all the contractual arrangements etc). For this replacement, a written permission shall be obtained from MEN.

Note: The involvement of PI must be significant and sufficient for a proper implementation of the project.

1.3. Eligibility of Project Proposal

The only type of projects eligible under this call is Joint Research Projects (JRPs) undertaken by researcher(s) from Romania and at least one from the EFTA States (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein).

Other entities are allowed to participate in the project on their own funding.

The Project Promoter must be a Romanian entity eligible for funding according to the Programme.

The project (JRP) may last up to 3 years. Note that funding will end on April 30th 2017.

The project proposals must fulfil all of the eligibility criteria. Only eligible proposals will be retained for evaluation.

The following eligibility criteria apply to all proposals submitted under a call:

- receipt of proposal by the PO/IA before the deadline date and time established in the call;
- minimum conditions (such as number of participants, eligible beneficiaries), as referred to in the call for proposals;
- completeness of the proposal, i.e. the presence of all requested administrative forms and the proposal description (the completeness of the information contained in the proposal will be for the experts to evaluate; the eligibility check applies only to the presence of the appropriate parts of the proposal);
- scope of the call: the content of the proposal must relate to the topics and funding scheme set out in the call. A proposal will only be deemed ineligible on grounds of “scope” in clear-cut cases;
- it is forbidden to submit a proposal which seeks to fund activities which had already obtained funding from other sources;
- proposals need to be submitted in English to the online submission system: www.uefiscdi-direct.ro

If it becomes clear before, during or after the evaluation phase that one or more of the eligibility criteria have not been fulfilled, the proposal is declared ineligible by the PO/IA.

Project Promoters which wish to appeal the eligibility results can send their complaints by email to eeagrants@uefiscdi.ro, by fax to 021 3071919, or directly to the PO/IA headquarters, within 3 workdays from the date of publication of the results.

1.4. Ethical issues

The following **Ethical Concerns Table**, structured in accordance with the demands of the European Research Council’s grant proposals, guides you with what is considered as ethical concerns to be addressed in any biomedical research, under the necessity of a precautionary attitude. If any YES answer to the mentioned questions in the Ethical Concerns Table does exist, you must accomplish the following issues:

1. Provide a brief description of the ethical issue involved, including presumptive source of biological material;
2. Shortly inform how the ethical issue will be appropriately dealt with, according to standard rules and norms applicable;
3. Outline the benefit(s) and burden(s) of your research, as well as the effects it may have and how the ethical issues will be managed.

It has to be obvious that these ethical issues will be considered for the whole project not only for the activities executed in the country of a single partner.

Please specify as well any authorisation or permission you already obtained for the proposed work and attach copies (the documents provided in copies have no page limit). Considering all elements mentioned above, a proper ethical screening will be possible if the proposal will be considered for putative funding.

Research on Human Embryo/Foetus	Yes	No
Does the proposed research involve human Embryos?		
Does the proposed research involve human Foetal Tissues/Cells?		
Does the proposed research involve human Embryonic Stem Cells?		
Does the proposed research on human Embryonic Stem Cells involve cells in culture?		
Does the proposed research on Human Embryonic Stem Cells involve the derivation of cells from Embryos?		
DOES ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?		
Research on Humans		
Does the proposed research involve children?		
Does the proposed research involve patients?		
Does the proposed research involve persons not able to give consent or other kinds of vulnerable persons?		
Does the proposed research involve adult healthy volunteers?		
Does the proposed research involve Human genetic material?		
Does the proposed research involve Human biological samples?		
Does the proposed research involve Human data collection?		
DOES ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?		
Privacy		
Does the proposed research involve processing of genetic information or personal, confidential data (e.g. data related to health, sexual lifestyle, ethnicity, political opinion, religious or philosophical conviction)?		
Does the proposed research involve tracking the location or observation of people (improperly informed)?		
DOES ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?		
Research on Animals		
Does the proposed research involve research on animals?		
Are those animals transgenic small laboratory animals?		
Are those animals transgenic farm animals?		
Are those animals cloned farm animals?		
Are those animals non-human primates?		

DOES ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?		
Research Involving Developing Countries		
Does the proposed research involve the use of local resources (genetic, animal, plant, etc)?		
Is the proposed research of benefit to local communities (e.g. capacity building, access to healthcare, education, etc)?		
DOES ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?		
Dual Use		
Does the research have direct military use		
Does the research have the potential for terrorist abuse		
DOES ANY OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL?		
Other Ethical Issues		
Are there OTHER activities that may raise Ethical Concerns?		
If YES please specify introducing new row(s) in the current table:		

The following special issues should be taken into account, if applicable:

Informed consent: When describing issues relating to informed consent, it will be necessary to illustrate an appropriate level of ethical sensitivity, and consider issues of insurance, incidental findings management and the consequences of leaving the study, by an appropriate risk assessment.

Data protection issues: Avoid any unnecessary collection and use of personal data. Carefully identify the source of the data, describing whether it is collected as part of the research or it represents previously collected data to be used in the interest of your research. Consider issues of informed consent for any data being used. Describe how personal identification of the data is protected.

Essentiality of research: When research involves vulnerable people or children argue for the necessity of the research on these kinds of persons.

NB. If supplemental authorisation or permission documents concerning ethical issues will be required for before funding the project, it has to be delivered to the Programme Operator before the contract signature. Moreover, if significant changes in terms of ethical issues will appear during development or periodical evaluation of the funded project, supplemental documents would be necessary and they can be delivered by project director as a personal initiative or requested by the reviewers.

2. Applying to the Programme call

The application procedure consists of one mandatory stage, which is the **Funding Application**.

Proposals will be submitted electronically to the on-line submission system: www.uefiscdi-direct.ro.

Proposals will be submitted no later than 17:00 (Romanian Time) before the relevant submission deadline.

Only the Project Promoter is authorized to submit a proposal, using an ID and password. After the closing date of the call, an acknowledgement of receipt is sent to the Project Promoter by email containing:

- proposal title, acronym and unique proposal identifier (proposal number);
- name of the Programme and call identifier to which the proposal was addressed;
- date and time of receipt (which is set to the time of the call deadline for proposals submitted electronically).

Versions of proposals sent on paper, removable electronic storage medium (e.g. CD-ROM, stick), by email or by fax will not be regarded as having been received by the PO/IA.

The PO/IA could contact the Project Promoter in order to clarify eligibility matters.

2.1. The call Peer Review Process

A detailed description of the review process and the selection criteria can be found in „Guide for Evaluators”. Applicants are recommended to familiarise themselves with this document.

The evaluation process has a number of well-established principles:

- **Excellence** – The selection of the scientific proposals for funding is based strictly on peer-review evaluation with excellence as the sole criterion.
- **Confidentiality** – All proposals and related data, knowledge and documents communicated to MEN/UEFISCDI are treated in confidence. The MEN/UEFISCDI is registered under the Law 677/2001 in the Register of personal data processing under no. 5330.
- **Fairness and impartiality** – Each proposal is evaluated by at least three independent, international experts, drawn from the EU Commissions database of experts and the existing national database of experts . Each proposal is evaluated in accordance with the same selection and award criteria. All proposals will be jointly reviewed by the Programme Committee of the Programme.
- **Efficiency and speed** – Evaluation, award and contract preparation processes will respect time schedule of the Programme.
- **Transparency** – the lists of submitted proposals, eligible proposals, complains and final results will be available on PO/IA websites. The Programme Committee approves a ranking list consisting of proposals evaluated by experts and

recommends the projects for funding to the PO. The PO approves the final list. The PO/IA sends electronically to the applicants (PPs and PIs) letters together with the consensus reports.

- **Ethical and security considerations** – Any proposal which contravenes fundamental ethical principles will be excluded at any time from the process of evaluation, selection and award.

3. Funding Application

The Call of the Romanian - EEA Research Programme proposal application consists of 2 different steps:

Step 1: Filling in the online funding application;

Step 2: Submitting the online funding application.

The funding application for a project – **Annex 1** consists of:

- **Annex 1.1 - The online forms** containing general information about the project, details of the Project Promoter and project partners, key persons list, project plan, budget breakdown;
**** the online form contains a "Preparatory cost" section representing eligible cost for searching partners prior to or during the preparation of a project application*
- **Annex 1.2 - Core funding application form .doc** which should be downloaded from the Programme webpage and should be filled in offline and converted to .pdf before uploading to the submission platform (www.uefiscdi-direct.ro);
- **Annex 1.3 - The statement automatically generated by the system** after the successful submission of the application has to be signed by the PP and PI and sent to the PO/IA on the paper version within 7 days from the date of submission;
- **Annex 1.4 – State Aid Declarations** according to State Aid Scheme (Annex 2) in .doc format which should be downloaded from the Programme webpage and should be filled in offline, signed and scanned in .pdf format before uploading to the submission platform (www.uefiscdi-direct.ro); each Project Promoter and project partner must fill in the corresponding State Aid Declaration according to the following table:

Declaration name	Type of entity that must complete
Declaration on compliance with the definition of research organization	Research Organizations
Declaration on enterprise definition as small, medium and large	Entities other than research organizations

Declaration on a research organization's eligibility	Research Organizations
Declaration on an enterprise's eligibility	Entities which are state aid beneficiaries

- **Annex 1.5 - VAT Declaration** - Each Project Promoter and project partner must declare if they reclaim or not the VAT from the national tax authorities in conformity with national tax regulation.

4. Finance and Budget

4.1. The currency used for the project proposal's budget and settlement of the project costs

The currency used for completing the Project Budget, payments from the PO/IA and settlements between the Project Promoter and project partner(s) will be the Romanian Lei (RON). The European Central Bank's exchange rate from the date of the call launch will be used for calculating all costs related to the project application and implementation.

4.2. Preparatory costs

The Programme foresees the possibility to apply for the reimbursement of the project proposal's preparatory costs both for the Project Promoter and project partners from the Donor States. These are the costs related to the search for partners prior to or during the preparation of a project application, the development of such partnerships and preparation of an application for a partnership project proposal.

Project Promoters will apply for the reimbursement of costs actually incurred by Project Promoters and project partners from the Donor States while applying for a project to be funded under the call for proposals. Up to EUR 5,000 will be reimbursed in the case of the proposals recommended for financing. Up to EUR 2,500 will be reimbursed for the proposals that are not selected for financing but have received a score above a certain threshold within the available budget.

The lump sums will be reimbursed to Project Promoter in Romanian Lei (RON), based on the final ranking list of the proposals and the claim forms of PIs. The European Central Bank's exchange rate from the date of the call launch will be used for calculating all related costs.

4.3. General Rules

The minimum amount of grant assistance to be applied for is EUR 500.000 and the maximum amount is EUR 1.500.000.

Grants from the programme may be up to 100% of total eligible project costs, provided all applicable National and EU rules on State Aid are complied with. Any remaining costs of the project shall be provided or obtained by the Project Promoter and/or project partners, according to their respective shares of the project budget.

The budgetary allocation to partners should reflect the actual contribution made by each party and should be the subject of negotiation between the Project Promoter and the project partners. It is expected that the eligible costs claimed by the Donor States entities participating in the project shall normally not exceed 40% of the total eligible costs of the project.

4.4. Eligibility of expenditures

Eligible expenditures of projects are those actually incurred by the Project Promoter or project partner(s), which meet the following criteria:

- they are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the project contract;
- they are connected with the subject of the project contract and they are indicated in the estimated overall budget of the project;
- they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project;
- they must be used for the sole purpose of achieving the objectives of the project and its expected outcomes, in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular by being recorded in the accounting records of the Project Promoter and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country and according to generally accepted accounting principles;
- they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.

Expenditures are considered to have been incurred when the cost has been invoiced, paid and the subject matter delivered (in case of goods) or performed (in case of services and works). Exceptionally, costs in respect of which an invoice has been issued in the final month of eligibility are also deemed to be incurred within the dates of eligibility if the costs are paid within 30 days of the final date for eligibility. Overheads and depreciation of equipment are considered to have been incurred when they are recorded on the accounts of the Project Promoter and the project partner(s).

The Project Promoter and project partners' internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the expenditures and revenue declared in respect of the project with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

4.5. Budgetary flexibility

Applicants should note that during the course of the project, budgetary flexibility is given in order to allow for appropriate project management. A reallocation of funds among the budget headings does not require the prior approval of the PO/IA and does not result in an addendum to the contract, provided the specific rules of the various budget headings are adhered to (a budget heading is defined as one of the main titles of the budget – e.g.: Personal Cost, Consumables and supplies, Travel costs etc.). Such reallocation shall not exceed 15% of the total budget of the project.

For reallocation above this limit, a written permission shall be obtained from PO/IA by Project Promoter at least 30 calendar days before the date the modification should take place.

This request must be fully substantiated and justified. If the request is deemed unfunded by the PO/IA, the Project Promoter will be advised in writing.

The 15% rule is NOT applicable to the budget heading of indirect costs.

4.6. Direct costs

The eligible direct expenditures for a project are those expenditures which are identified by the Project Promoter and/or the project partners, in accordance with their accounting principles and usual internal rules, as specific expenditures directly linked to the implementation of the project and which can therefore be booked to it directly.

- a) The costs of staff assigned to the project;
- b) Travel and subsistence allowances for staff taking part in the project (according to the national rules);
- c) Equipment;
- d) Purchase of land and real estate;
- e) Consumables and supplies;
- f) Other costs.

All costs budgeted in project (e.g. equipment, consumables and supplies, etc) will be charged to the programme, VAT included. However, VAT is not considered an eligible cost in case the entity can reclaim VAT from the national tax authorities in conformity with national indirect tax regulations.

4.6.1 Personnel Costs

The cost of staff assigned to the project (researchers, technicians and other supporting staff directly involved in the project), comprising actual salaries plus social security charges and other statutory costs included in the remuneration, provided that this corresponds to the

Project Promoters and project partners usual policy on remuneration. For the Romanian Project Promoter and project partners the research teams will be paid according to the provisions of the Governmental Decision no.475/2007 (upper ceiling).

The need for such staff should be justified in the core funding application form.

The PO/IA expects project staff to use timesheets so that their actual time is recorded against a project to form the basis of the costs charged. **If a person is contracted to work 100% of their time on a single project (whether they are working full-time or part-time), timesheets are not necessary as their costs can only be charged to that activity.** In all other cases, timesheets or project time records are required. This includes those who may be contracted to work on two or more projects, since it is essential when charging to have a means of recording and verifying the actual time applied to each activity.

4.6.2 Travel Costs

Travel and accommodation costs and subsistence allowances for staff taking part in the project must be in accordance with the applicable national rules. The Programme will cover the real expenses for travel, accommodation, medical insurances and conference fees. For the subsistence allowances, Project Promoter and project partners shall follow the national rules.

4.6.3 Equipment

Cost of new or second hand equipment, provided that it is depreciated in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the Project Promoter and project partners, and generally accepted for items of the same kind. Only the portion of the depreciation corresponding to the duration of the project and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the project may be taken into account, in compliance with applicable rules on the state aid scheme.

For Romanian partners, the rules of depreciation, according to national legislation, apply only to SMEs. For the research organizations all equipment costs are 100% eligible.

This includes, but is not limited to, laboratory/workshop equipment (including computers and servers), software and installation costs.

Please indicate in the application form, respectively:

- the precise nature of equipment with specific technical requirements;
- its unit cost and number of units;
- its relevance to the project;

- the necessity of the equipment taking into account the equipment currently available in the institution;
- its use by other national or international research groups/institutions (if applicable).

4.6.4 Purchase of land and real estate – according to Regulation art.7.5

This category is not expected to be relevant for JRPs. However, if this category of costs is considered to be necessary for the project, Project Promoter should contact IA before any action in this respect.

4.6.5 Consumables and supplies

The applicant needs to indicate the nature (chemicals, glassware, etc.) of the consumables and justify the estimation of the total costs and requested budget in the “Core Funding Application”. The consumables and supplies must be necessary for the project.

4.6.6 Other costs

Costs entailed by other contracts awarded by a Project Promoter and project partners for the purposes of carrying out the project, provided that the awarding complies with the applicable rules on public procurement and the Regulation; costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the project contract (e.g. dissemination of information, audits, translations), including the costs of any financial services (especially the cost of financial guarantees).

Contracting partners may subcontract specific services (no more than 15% of the total project budget) which are essential for the project but do not represent core elements of the project work which cannot be directly assumed by one of the contracting partners and where this proves necessary for the performance of their work under the project. Thus subcontracting costs may not cover fees for experts (i.e. staff with no work contract with an institution eligible at the Programme Operator) which provide a substantial part of the workforce of the project.

In case the subcontracted service fulfils these criteria, please describe the service, indicate the price (market price) and specify the reason why you resort to a third service in the “Core Funding Application”.

This heading “Other costs” refers also to the direct costs that are not mentioned above. They include, but are not limited to:

- Documentation (not expected in institutional libraries)
- Initial submission costs for the protection of a patent, license, trademark etc.

The nature of the “Other costs” and their relevance to the project has to be explained in detail in the “Core Funding Application”.

4.7. Indirect costs (overheads)

Indirect costs are all eligible costs that cannot be identified by the Project Promoter and/or the project partner as being directly attributed to the project but which can be identified and justified by its accounting system as being incurred in direct relationship with the eligible direct costs attributed to the project. They may not include any eligible direct costs. Indirect costs of the project shall represent a fair apportionment of the overall overheads of the Project Promoter or the project partner.

Project Promoter and project partners, who wish to include indirect cost in their JRP budget, must each identify the appropriate method of calculating the flat rate (%) of overhead from the following alternatives:

a. Entities which have participated in EU FP7 projects:

Project Promoters and/or project partners who have had their legal and financial data, including their Indirect Cost Model (ICM), validated in the Unique Registration Facility (URF) of the European Framework Programme for research, and have received a *Participant Identification Code* (PIC), shall apply the same indirect cost model.

Note: If your institution has taken part in EU FP7 project(s), you will use the same cost model and overhead rate as were used in these projects.

b. Entities with an analytical accounting system (without an FP7 code)

Project Promoters or project partners that have an analytical accounting system which allows them to identify the indirect expenditures of a particular project can use the actual indirect expenditures in their budgets.

c. Entities without analytical accounting systems (without an FP7 code)

1. Research organisations and SMEs: 60% flat rate

Project Promoters and project partners that are research organisations and SMEs which, due to the lack of analytical accounting, are unable to identify with certainty their real indirect expenditures for the project, may opt for a flat rate of 60 % of their total direct eligible expenditures, excluding direct eligible expenditures for subcontracting and the expenditures of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the Project Promoter or project partner.

2. Others: 20% flat rate

Project Promoter and project partners which lack analytical accounting systems may opt for a flat rate of 20 % of their total direct eligible expenditures, excluding its direct eligible expenditures for subcontracting and the expenditures of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the Project Promoter or project partner.

4.8. Excluded costs

The following costs shall not be considered eligible:

- interest on debt, debt service charges and late payment charges;
- charges for financial transactions and other purely financial costs, except costs related to accounts required by the NMFA, the National Focal Point, Programme Operator or the applicable law and costs of financial services imposed by the project contract;
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- recoverable VAT;
- costs that are covered by other sources;
- fines, penalties and costs of litigation;
- excessive or reckless expenditure.

4.9. Period of eligibility of expenditures in projects

Expenditure incurred is eligible for assistance as of the date on which the PO decides to award the project grant.

Expenditures incurred after 30 April 2017 shall not be eligible.

The first and final dates of eligibility of each project shall be stated in the project contract for that project.

4.10. Proof of expenditures

Costs incurred by Project Promoters and project partners shall be supported by receipted invoices, or alternatively by accounting documents of equivalent probative value.

Where activities are implemented in the framework of competitive tendering procedures, payments by Project Promoters and project partners shall be supported by receipted invoices based on the signed contracts. In all other cases, payments by Project Promoters and project partners shall be justified by expenditure actually paid by the entities concerned in implementing the project.

A certificate by an independent and certified auditor, certifying that the claimed costs are incurred in accordance with the national law and accounting practices of the project partner's country, shall be seen as sufficient proof of expenditure incurred by a Project Promoter or a project partner. Project Promoters and project partners may opt for a competent public officer to provide their proof of expenditure (certificate on financial statements) provided that the relevant national authorities have established the legal capacity of that competent public officer to audit that entity and that the independence of that officer, in particular regarding the preparation of the financial statements, can be ensured.

Proof of expenditure shall not be submitted by a Project Promoter or a project partner where the total grant from the programme to the respective Project Promoter or project partner is less than EUR 375,000.

Accounting documents (invoices etc.) shall be stored in the seat of Project Promoter and project partners and will be checked during the inspections at the project's site or on request in case of need of explanation (i.e. when verifying the annual reports, or at any time if deemed necessary by the PO). The ordinary requirement for the Project Promoter will be to attach a statement of expenditures (list of invoices, accounting documents) for the period concerned to the annual reports submitted to the PO.

Overheads identified according to flat rate do not need to be supported by accounting documents.

5. Contracting

5.1. Funding decision

After the recommendations on the final ranking list and on the selection of proposals for financing are being issued by the Programme Committee, the PO approves the list and issues the funding decisions.

Funding decisions specifying the amount awarded are issued for all proposals selected for financing. For the proposals which have not been recommended for financing, the PO issues rejection decisions which are sent to the respective PPs, including with the consensus report. The lists consisting of the approved and rejected projects proposals as a result of the evaluation process will be published on IA/PO websites.

Project Promoters that wish to appeal the funding decisions can send their complains by email to eeagrants@uefiscdi.ro, by fax to 021 3071919, or directly to the PO/IA headquarters, within 5 workdays from the date of receiving the rejection decisions.

Appeals can attack only faults of procedure that the PP considers as non-conforming to the Call Document, Guide for evaluators and present Guide. Appeals cannot attack the scores

and the comments given by the evaluators (peer-review process). The list of received appeals will be published on IA/PO websites.

Final decision about registered appeals will be made by IA/PO within 5 working days, after consulting the Programme Committee members.

5.2. Negotiation and grant agreement

The Project Promoters of proposals for which funding decisions have been issued are invited to begin negotiations. The applicants may receive request for further administrative, legal, technical or financial information necessary for the preparation of the grant agreement. The PO may request changes, possibly including the modifications in the budget, in line with the funding decision. The contract includes the time schedule of the project as well as the estimated budget breakdown and financial contribution per activity and per participant and the amount/rate of the advanced payment.

If it proves impossible to reach an agreement with a Project Promoter within a reasonable deadline, the PO may terminate negotiations and reject proposal from funding. The PO may also terminate negotiations if the Project Promoter proposes to modify the project to the extent that it becomes significantly different from the proposal that has been evaluated. Once the negotiations have been successfully finalised, the grant agreement is signed between the PO and the Project Promoter.

Negotiation of proposals from the reserve list may begin once it is clear that sufficient budget has become available to fund one or more of these projects.

5.3. Partnership agreement

The Project Promoter signs a partnership agreement with the project partners. The partnership agreement should contain the following:

- provisions on the roles and responsibilities of the parties;
- provisions on the financial arrangements between parties, including, but not limited to, which expenditure the project partners can get reimbursed from the project budget;
- provisions on audits on project partners;
- detailed budget, with itemised costs and unit prices; and
- provisions on dispute resolutions.

The partnership agreement should also contain provisions on intellectual property rights, in compliance with Regulation (EC) No 1906/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006.

The partnership agreement should be in English and should be submitted to the PO before the signing of the project contract. The PO verifies if the agreement complies with art 6.8 of the Regulation.

6. Reporting and Payments

6.1. Periodic reporting

During the course of the project, the Project Promoter submits an annual periodic report within 60 days of the end of each reporting period set out in the project contract. The periodic report should comprise:

- an overview, including a publishable summary of the progress of work towards the objectives of the project, including achievements and attainment of any milestones and deliverables identified in the project contract. This report should include the differences between work expected to be carried out in accordance with the project contract and those actually carried out;
- an explanation of the use of the resources; and
- a financial statement from each PP and project partner, together with a summary financial report consolidating the claimed contribution by the Project Promoter and the project partners in an aggregate form;
- an attachment containing a list of invoices of costs incurred for the period concerned.

6.2. Final reporting

At the end of the project the Project Promoter submits a final report, within 60 days after the project end. This final report should comprise:

- a final publishable summary report covering results, conclusions and socio-economic impact of the project,
- a report covering the wider societal implications of the project, in the form of a questionnaire, including gender equality actions, ethical issues, efforts to involve other actors and to spread awareness, as well as the plan for the use and dissemination of results;
- distribution of the financial contribution between the Project Promoter and project partners;
- a full list of submitted and accepted publications relating to the results of the project.

The reports submitted to the PO, in particular their publishable parts should be of suitable quality to enable direct publication without any additional editing.

The reports are transmitted by the Project Promoter to the PO by electronic means. The reports will be subject to verification and approval by the PO staff at administrative level (formal, content-related and financial aspects) in accordance with the provisions of contracts. The PO staff could be assisted in their tasks by external experts for scientific aspects of the projects. If possible, the same external experts will be used as in the initial evaluation process in order to have the best monitoring process and to follow the scientific results in the projects.

On-the-spot verifications will be conducted by the PO on projects selected at least on a sample basis. The PO will conduct annual monitoring of a sample of projects, selected based on risk assessment and including random samples.

The Program Operator and Programme Committee could request additional information related to the projects' reports.

6.3. Reporting on scientific publications

During and after the project, the Project Promoter should provide references and an abstract of all scientific publications relating to foreground at the latest 60 days following the publication.

All publications should include the following statement to indicate that said foreground was generated with the assistance of financial support from the EEA Financial Mechanism:

“The research leading to these results has received funding from the Romanian - EEA Research Programme operated by thePO/IA under the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 and Project Contract No xxx.”

6.4. Payments to the Project Promoter and project partners

The PO ensures timely transfer to the Project Promoter of an advance payment, interim payments on annual basis, and a payment of the final balance. The purpose of the advance payment and the annual interim payments is to ensure that the project partners have a positive cash flow during the project implementation.

Payments to the Project Promoter are made according to the time schedule of the project implementation included in the contract signed with PO. The rate of the advanced payment is set out in the project contract. The PP can request an annual advance payment of up to 90% of the budget for the respective year in the first year and any interim years of the project. The balance of the annual budget shall be paid after the approval of the interim report for the year in question. The advance payment to the PP in the last year of the project shall not exceed

70% of the budget for the respective year. The balance of the annual budget shall be paid after the approval of the final report. The advance payment shall be offset against expenditures reported in the interim or financial reports. The PO may retain at least 30% of the budget for the last year of the project until the final report is approved.

Payments are made by the PO to the Project Promoter within 15 days after the PO's approval of reports and deliverables.

The Project Promoter should ensure that all appropriate payments to the project partners are made without delay, no later than 15 days after the receipt of the payment from the PO.

7. Legal framework

The Romanian-EEA Research Programme is implemented on the basis of the following legal acts:

- Memorandum of Understanding of the Implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 between Iceland, The Principality of Liechtenstein, The Kingdom of Norway and the Government of Romania (in force as of 24 March 2012, amended 18 October 2012);
- Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 adopted by the EEA Financial Mechanism Committee pursuant to Article 8.8 of Protocol 38b to the EEA Agreement on 13 January 2011 and confirmed by the Standing Committee of the EFTA States on 18 January 2011, as amended on 4 January 2012;
- Annex 12 to Regulation – Rules for the establishment and implementation of donor partnership programmes falling under the Programme Areas “Research within Priority sectors” and “Bilateral Research Cooperation”;
- Government Ordinance no 88/12.12.2012 on institutional framework for coordination, implementation and management of financial assistance granted to Romania through the EEA Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism for 2009-2014;
- Government Ordinance no 23/03.04.2013 on financial management of external grants related to EEA Financial Mechanisms for 2009-2014;
- Government Emergency Ordinance no. 96/ 22.12.12, Art. 5, to establish the Ministry of National Education through the reorganization of the former Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports (MECTS), and by taking over the activities and the specialized structures of the National Authority for Scientific Research;
- Governmental Decision no. 185/16.04.2013 on the organization and functioning of the Ministry of National Education;

- Programme Agreement between The Financial mechanism Committee established by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway and the Ministry of European Funds signed on 1st of November 2013 ;
- Programme Implementation Agreement between the Ministry of European Funds, EEA Directorate as National Focal Point and the Ministry of National Education as Programme Operator;
- Delegation Agreement on the implementation of the European Economic Area Financial mechanism 2009-2014, Programme Area “Research within priority Sectors”, between ANCS (Ministry of National Education – MEN) as programme Operator of the EEA Financial mechanism 2009-2014 and the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI) as Implementing Agency of the EEA Financial mechanism 2009-2014 with subsequent changes and additions;
- Decision of the Delegate Minister for Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technological Development no.4370 MD/31.07.2013 approving the State Aid Scheme for financing of Research, Development and Innovation projects according to the Romanian - EEA Research Programme;
- Minister MFE Ordinance no. 1120/15.10.2013 on approving the simplified procedure applied to private beneficiaries in the projects financed from structural instruments.

8. Glossary

- **Donor Programme Partner (DPP)** – institution from a donor country with an advisory role to the programme. DPPs in this programme are RNC, the Research Council of Norway and RANNIS, the Icelandic Centre for Research.
- **Joint Research Project (JRP)** – a common project which enables scientists from Romania, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein, to undertake, in the form of consortia, research activities addressing specific problems in the thematic areas of the Programme;
- **Project Promoter (PP)** – a public or private research organization based in Romania, having the responsibility for initiating, preparing and implementing a JRP in cooperation with partners;
- **Research Organisation** (as defined in the Community Framework for State Aid for RDI (2006/C323/01) – *A research organization is an entity such as an university or research institute, irrespective of its legal status (public or private) or financing, whose primary goal is to conduct fundamental research, industrial research or experimental*

development and to disseminate its results through educational activities, publishing or technology transfer; all profits / proceeds are reinvested in these activities, dissemination or education; enterprises that can exert influence over such organizations as shareholders or members, for example, will not benefit from preferential access to the research capacities of the entities or research results yielded. Financing institutions falling within the definition of research organizations do not constitute state aid and legal provisions on state aid do not apply.

- **Principal Investigator (PI)** – a researcher having a scientific lead of a project submitted under the Romanian-EEA Research Programme, coming from one of the Romanian eligible institutions and constituting a project consortium;
- **Project Partner** - any public or private entity, research organization as defined in the Community Framework for State Aid for RDI (2006/C323/01) or small and medium sized enterprises, which are actively involved in, and effectively contributing to, the implementation of the project;
- **Enterprise** - a legal constituted entity with research and / or technological development as part of its activity and providing economic activities, namely activities consisting in offering goods and / or services on the market;
- **Programme Operator (PO)** – Ministry of National Education (MEN), the responsible for the management and implementation of the Romanian-EEA Research Programme in Romania;
- **Implementing Agency (IA)** - Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI), a public institution under the authority of the Ministry of National Education, that fulfils its tasks under the agreement with the PO in relation to the beneficiaries and in connection with the Programme Area “Research within priority Sectors ” of the EEA Financial mechanism 2009-2014;
- **Programme Committee (PC)** – an advisory body to the Romanian - EEA Research Programme.

9. Questions and queries to the Programme Operator / Implementing Agency

The Programme staff is available via telephone and e-mail on daily basis from 8.00 am to 4.00 pm (CET). The questions and queries concerning the Call should be addressed to the following persons:

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