



THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

Ministry of Education and Science

Programme of the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area

THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME BG09

2ND CALL FOR PROJECT PROPOSALS

MOBILITY PROJECTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION MEASURE

WINTER SEMESTER OF THE ACADEMIC 2014/2015 YEAR

30th September 2014

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Ministry of Education and Science has been appointed as the Programme Operator for the EEA Scholarship Programme BG09 under the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism for the programme period 2009-2014.

The main objective of the Programme is strengthening the cooperation between Bulgaria and the EEA EFTA states (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) in the field of higher education and scientific research, via the allocation of financing for implementation of projects.

The operational objectives of the Programme are the following:

- Increasing the mobility of students and staff in the higher education system between Bulgaria and the donor states;
- Reinforcing the cooperation between HEIs from Bulgaria and the donor states through elaborating joint curricula and study modules;
- Raising the competence level of Bulgarian teachers, researchers and administrative staff in higher education and science;
- Boosting the quality and applicability of the educational programmes, offered by the Bulgarian HEIs.

The activities within the Programme are open to all areas of higher education and all scientific fields, including **priority fields** aimed towards meeting the general goal of 10 % of the EEA FM funds to be utilized in support of the socio-economic inclusion of citizens from Roma origin, as follows:

- 1) *Pedagogical sciences*, incl. courses for continuing training of teachers.

The projects in this field should be with emphasis on the inclusive education, including:

- ✓ training of children and pupils with special educational needs;
- ✓ educational integration in the educational system of pupils from other ethnocultural groups and groups in a disadvantaged position, including from Roma origin;
- ✓ training in a multicultural environment;
- ✓ education in human rights;
- ✓ pedagogical methods and approaches for keeping children at school, for reducing early school leaving, etc.

- 2) *Medicine and dental medicine*, incl. different specialties, with a particular focus on health of ethnical minority groups, including of Roma origin.

- 3) *Social sciences*, with an accent on strengthening social cohesion, in particular of Roma.
- 4) *Agrarian sciences*, with a focus on enhancing economic and social cohesion and integration of people in a disadvantaged social position, in particular from Roma origin through provision of joint training courses in Agriculture.
- 5) Other areas and professional fields in higher education and scientific specialties, besides those in 1)-4), which have impact over the socio-economic inclusion, in particular, of people from Roma origin.

Projects in priority fields should have a direct impact on improving the socio-economic inclusion of people from disadvantaged groups, including of Roma origin, by means of education, training, and research.

Projects in priority fields receive extra points in the process of evaluation under the three measures of the Programme.

It is mandatory for all candidates, prior to their participation in the competition, to have made themselves familiar with the documents and guidelines for participation in the activities of the EEA FM, which are available on www.eeagrants.org, including the EEA FM

Regulation: <http://eeagrants.org/Results-data/Results-overview/Documents/Legal-documents/Regulations-with-annexes/EEA-Grants-2009-2014>

DONOR PROGRAMME PARTNERS:

Norway:

The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU) is the main programme partner of the Programme Operator in Norway. SIU is the National Agency for international programmes and measures related to education. SIU is the main contact point for cooperation with Norwegian institutions and organizations in the fields of education and training.

The Research Council of Norway is the main contact point in Norway in the field of scientific research.

For additional information, please visit:

- The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education:

<http://siu.no>

- **The Research Council of Norway:**

<http://www.rcn.no>

Higher education institutions and scientific organizations, which seek partners from Norway, can register in the following databases:

- Database maintained by SIU:

<http://siu.no/eng/Front-Page/EEA-Partner-search>

- Database maintained by the **Research Council of Norway**:

http://www.forskningsradet.no/no/Artikkel/Partner_search/1253981563289

Iceland:

The Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS) is the programme partner in Iceland. RANNIS is ready to assist, inform and guide interested parties, who seek potential cooperation and other opportunities for research or exchange of experience with partner organizations from Iceland.

For additional information, please visit <http://www.rannis.is>

Liechtenstein:

The Agency for International Education Affairs (AIBA) is the programme partner in Liechtenstein. AIBA is the National Agency of Liechtenstein for the European educational programmes, regional and international projects in the field of education.

For additional information, please visit <http://www.aiba.llv.li/>

DESCRIPTION OF THE CALL:

The Mobility Projects in Higher Education Measure is designed for students in higher education, including post-graduated students and doctoral candidates, academic, research, and administrative staff members from higher education and research institutions from Bulgaria and the donor states wishing to attend an individual mobility exchange.

The present call is open for 2 months.

The overall budget under this Measure during the implementation period of the Programme is € 734 500.

The overall budget under Mobility Projects in Higher Education measure for the present Call is € 144 267 total for the both individual mobility components of the Measure.

The Measure consists of two individual mobility components, namely Mobility of Students component and Mobility of Academic, research and Administrative Staff component.

➤ *MOBILITY OF ACADEMIC, RESEARCH AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF COMPONENT*

TARGET GROUPS:

Mobility of Academic, Research and Administrative Staff component is targeted to citizens of Bulgaria, other member states of the EU, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein who are academic and administrative staff members on a labour contract at higher education or research institutions in Bulgaria, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein. Mobility under this component can be in one of the EEA EFTA countries (for Bulgarian applicants and applicants from other member states of the EU) and in Bulgaria (for EEA applicants and applicants from other member states of the EU excluding Bulgaria). All sending and receiving institutions shall be officially recognized/accredited.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:

- Eligible applicants under this component of the measure are academic, research and administrative staff members with labour contracts with accredited public and private higher education and research institutions in Bulgaria or the donor states. Only for the present call for proposals, eligible applicants are academic and research staff members wishing to spend a mobility period aimed to research. Host institutions in the EEA EFTA countries and Bulgaria should be officially recognized/accredited.

Applicants should apply for mobility under each one of the both components of the Measure by submitting their applications to the institutional coordinators of their home higher education and research institutions.

MOBILITY DURATION AND SCHOLARSHIP GRANT AMOUNT:

Scholarships of 1-3 weeks shall be granted, at a rate of € 1700 for the first week and € 400 for the subsequent weeks. Thus, the minimum amount of the scholarship grant is € 1700, while the maximum is € 2500. The individual scholarship grants may cover travel expenses, accommodation expenses and daily subsistence allowance according to the duration of stay, and travel insurance. In addition, beneficiaries may use up to € 600 for participation fees in seminars, conferences and other public events directly linked to fulfilling the mobility objectives. These € 600 shall be granted upon presentation of a receipt certifying the expenditure.

MOBILITY PURPOSES:

The mobility on Mobility of Academic, Research and Administrative Staff component can be aimed to short-term teaching activities (from one to three weeks), participation in training courses, conferences, seminars and other organised training events, implementation of independent and joint research activities, exchange of experience, work shadowing. Only for the present call for proposals, the mobility objective should be research only.

Beneficiaries under BG0057 project entitled "Development of reliable mobility schemes through scholarships under the EEA Financial Mechanism", which has already been completed, and beneficiaries under the previous call of proposals under Mobility Projects in Higher Education measure can apply again. In case of equal assessment marks, priority shall be given to new applicants.

PERIOD FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECTS:

The period for implementation of projects under this Call is from 15 January 2015 to 31 March 2015, and should be spent for research mobility.

PAYMENT MODEL

The beneficiary can receive an advance payment of up to 80% of grant awarded, which will be made within 30 working days after the Project Contract is signed. The payment of the final balance (up to 20%) will be made no later than 30 days after the approval of the final report.

REPORTING

The beneficiary submits a final report within 2 weeks after the completion of the project.

ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES:

The eligible expenditures can be justified expenditures, necessary and appropriate, directly related to the planned outcomes and long-term effects from the mobility project, as follows:

- travel expenses;
- hotel accommodation;
- daily subsistence allowance;
- medical insurance for travelling abroad;
- eligible fee for right of participation in seminars and conference – up to 600 EUR, based on the real expenditures are reimbursed after submission of the final report, against a cash receipt/invoice/an expense account;
- additional, individual cost resulting from disability (if applicable).

The expenditures shall become eligible as of the date of concluding a Contract between the Programme Operator and the Beneficiary. Deadline for the expenditure eligibility is the contract deadline.

DOCUMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED BY THE CANDIDATES TO THE HOME INSTITUTION

➤ MOBILITY OF ACADEMIC, RESEARCH AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF COMPONENT

1. An application form according to a template for participation in the Call for Proposals for scholarship grants under the EEA Financial mechanism;
2. EUROPASS CV;
3. A copy of personal identity document;
4. A Letter of Motivation (max. 1 page);
5. A copy of a labour contract;
6. A Letter of Recommendation from the candidate's home institution;
7. A List of Research Publications (if any);

8. A Letter of Invitation (in English) from the institution, which organises the mobility or from the host institution in the EEA EFTA state. The invitation should contain the name of the applicant, the name of the host institution, and the mobility period.
9. A declaration stating that the candidate has not received any funding from other EU programmes, the EU Structural funds, EEA EFTA or other academic and scientific exchange programmes for the purposes of the present mobility.
10. A copy of foreign language certificate (English for Iceland and Norway; English or German for Liechtenstein);
11. A recent colourful photo (passport format).

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

Applicants should apply by submitting applications to the institutional coordinators for the EEA Scholarships in the institutions where they study/work. Applications should be submitted within the deadline of the Call. Institutional coordinators collect the applications and organize the selection procedure at institutional level. 14 days after the end of deadline for the applicants the institutions shall complete the selection process at institutional level. Within 5 days after that the institutional coordinators should submit all the selected applications to the PO for further selection, together with the Minutes of the meeting of the Selection Committee established at institutional level and declarations for a lack of conflict of interests, which should be signed by all the members of the institutional Selection Committee.

DEADLINES:

- **01.12.2014 at 12.00 h Submission of applications to the institutional coordinators in the home institutions;**
- **10.12.2014 at 12.00 h Submission of the documents at the Programme Operator**
- **10.01.2015 Announcement of the approved candidates on the web-site of the Programme Operator**

ADDRESS OF SUBMISSION

**European and International Cooperation Directorate
Ministry of Education and Science
2A Kniaz Dondukov blvd
1000 Sofia**

Republic of Bulgaria

METHOD OF DELIVERY

Paper version of application should be submitted, as follows:

- 1) For Bulgarian citizens – in two copies - one written in Bulgarian language and one – in English;**
- 2) For citizens of other member states of the EU and EEA EFTA citizens – in one copy in English language.**

VALID DATE OF POSTAL STAMP: 10.12.2014.

SELECTION CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES:

The selection of project proposals under *Mobility in Higher Education* measure is implemented firstly at home institutional level and then by the Programme Operator and consists of the following 4 stages total:

- 1. Selection of applicants at institutional level*
- 2. Administrative conformity check-up and eligibility check-up*, which should be performed by the Programme Operator's team – criteria for this stage are:
 - ✓ The project proposal is submitted within the deadline;
 - ✓ The correct grant application form is used in accordance with the call;
 - ✓ The project proposal is signed and dated by the applicant;
 - ✓ The date of signing the project proposal is within the deadline;
 - ✓ All mandatory annexes are enclosed;
 - ✓ The applicant's home and host institutions are accredited/officially recognized by the respective authorities.
 - ✓ The applicant's statute is in line with the specific requirements pointed out in the call.
- 3. Independent evaluation*, which should be performed by two independent external expert-evaluators who evaluate the project proposals and put them forward for further evaluation by the Selection Committee;
- 4. Evaluation by a Selection Committee*, which consists of representatives from the Programme Operator, HEIs and scientific organizations. All members of the Selection Committee should

preliminarily sign declarations for a lack of conflict of interests. The Selection Committee prepares the selection decision, which is signed by the Head of Programme Operator.

The evaluation criteria, which will be used during the stages of independent evaluation and evaluation by the Selection Committee are related to the project eligibility and quality and are presented below:

➤ *Under Mobility of Academic, Research and Administrative Staff component:*

№	Criterion	Points
1.	Administrative compliance check-up	Yes/No
1.1	The application is submitted to the Programme Operator within defined deadline.	Yes/No
1.2	The application is submitted using appropriate application forms.	Yes/No
1.3	The application is signed and dated by the applicant.	Yes/No
1.4	All required mandatory annexes are attached.	Yes/No
1.5	The Minutes of the selection committee at institutional level and the Declarations for a lack of conflict of interests of the selection committee members are enclosed.	Yes/No
2.	Eligibility check-up	Yes/No
2.1	The applicant is Bulgarian citizen, citizen of another member state of the EU or a citizen of Norway, Iceland, or Liechtenstein.	Yes/No
2.2	The applicant is university teacher, researcher or administrative staff member appointed by a labour contract at an accredited/officially recognized higher education or research institution in Bulgaria, Norway, Iceland, or Liechtenstein.	Yes/No

2.3	The applicant's home institution is officially recognized higher education or research institution from Bulgaria, Norway, Iceland, or Liechtenstein.	Yes/No
2.4	The applicant's host institution is officially recognized higher education or research institution from Bulgaria, Norway, Iceland, or Liechtenstein.	Yes/No
2.5	The applicant has received an official invitation from the host institution.	Yes/No
2.6	The mobility objectives are in line with the mobility objectives presented in the present Call.	Yes/No
2.7	The Applicant's mobility period falls within the eligibility period of the present Call and is not longer than the maximum eligible stay according to the Call	Yes/No
3.	Quality of the project proposal	0-16
3.1	Overall quality of the application, including justification of mobility aims and expected outcomes and conformity with the objectives of the BG09 programme and the overall objectives of the EEA FM	0-10
3.1.1	The objectives and the expected outcomes of the mobility are clearly stated and justified.	0-1
3.1.2.	The objectives of the visit and the expected outcomes are in line with the Programme BG09 objectives and the main objectives of the EEA Financial Mechanism	0-1
3.1.3	There is a compliance between the Applicant's professional profile, the	0-2

	purpose of the mobility, and the expected outcomes	
3.1.4	Agenda or plan for the activities to be undertaken during the mobility period are presented and are in line with the project objectives. Specific results are foreseen. Benefits are clearly stated and justified.	0-3
3.1.5	Dissemination activities are planned in order to guarantee the optimal use of the mobility outcomes.	0-2
3.1.6	There is compliance between the contents of the official invitation and the application contents.	0-1
3.2	<p>Orientation of the mobility project in one of the following fields:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Medicine or Dental Medicine, including different specialties, with a particular focus on health of ethnical minority groups, including of Roma origin; ▪ Inclusive education and educational integration of children and students with other ethno-cultural background and from disadvantaged groups in the mainstream educational system, including of Roma origin, special needs education, pedagogical methods and approaches for retaining children and students at school, reducing early school leavers; ▪ Human rights; ▪ Social sciences, with a particular focus on ethnical minority groups, including of Roma origin <p>and/or the applicant has stated in “Other motivation” section of the application form that he/she is of Roma origin.</p>	0-2
3.3	Level of mastering the mobility working language	0-2
3.4	Overall performance on the interview	0-2

If the answer of one of the criteria listed below is negative, then the application is rejected, as follows:

- criterion 1.1 – criterion 1.3, both components of the measure;
- criterion 2.1 – criterion 2.6.

If the answer of criterion No 2.7 Mobility of Academic, Research and Administrative Staff component) is “No” then the Programme Operator has the right to request them from the applicant to submit a new Letter of Invitation with a correct mobility period or formally withdraw his/her application.

If the Applicant under Mobility of Academic, Research and Administrative Staff component has received a total score of less than 7 points with respect to Criterion 3, then the application is proposed for non-funding.

If in the process of assessment fully or partially identical applications are discovered, the respective applicants are rejected on this ground.

In case of missing and incomplete documentation (criteria 1.4-1.5), the Programme Operator has the right to request them from the applicant. The applicant should submit the respective documentation within 7-day deadline upon receipt of the official letter.

Possibility of appeal of decision

Applicants whose applications are proposed for rejection on administrative check-up and eligibility check-up stages can submit written objections against their rejection to the Head of Programme Operator within 7-day deadline after the announcement of the list of applicants proposed for rejection on the web site of the Programme Operator.

The Head of Programme Operator proposes experts to conduct a check-up of the justification of objection. These experts are authorized to perform this task by an Order of the Minister of Education and Science. These experts should not be any members of the respective assessing commission that has performed the primary administrative and eligibility check-ups of applications.

After completion of the check-up for solidity of objection the authorised experts prepare written statement with their findings and conclusions and submit it to the Head of Programme Operator.

The Head of Programme Operator concludes on the solidity of each objection. If any objection is solid, the respective application is to be returned back to the stage of assessing administrative compliance/eligibility.

The Head of Programme Operator informs the applicants who have submitted objections about the outcomes of the reconsideration procedure within 7-day deadline after the date when the particular objection has been submitted.

CONTACT PERSON:

For general information about the opportunities for participation in the EEA FM Scholarship Programme BG09, the applicants can contact the institutional coordinators¹ at the respective higher education and research institutions or Ms Mimi Daneva – a contact person of the Programme Operator – tel. +359 2 424 11 07; email: m.daneva@mon.bg.

WEB PAGES IN ENGLISH AND BULGARIAN WITH INFORMATION ON THE CALL:

Web Site of the BG09 programme: <http://mon.bg/?go=page&pageId=13&subpageId=257>

DPPs' web-sites:

- <http://siu.no/eng>
- <http://en.rannis.is/>
- <http://www.lebenslangeslernen.li/>

Embassy of Norway in Sofia: <http://www.norvegia.bg/>

EEA FM Web-site: Eeagrants.org

APPLICATION FORMS CAN BE DOWNLOADED [HERE](#)

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS CAN BE DOWNLOADED [HERE](#)

¹ The list of institutional coordinators from Bulgarian higher education and research institutions is published and is accessible on the website of BG09 programme, at address: <http://mon.bg/?go=page&pageId=13&subpageId=257>