



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**

CALL FOR PROJECT PROPOSALS
PROJECTS FOR INTERINSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION
MEASURE

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 curricula, 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 people from Roma origin.

- 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

- 3) *Human rights*;

- 4) *Intercultural education*;

- 5) *Social sciences*, with an accent on strengthening economic and social cohesion in particular of Roma.
- 6) *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.
- 7) Other areas and professional fields in higher education and scientific specialties, besides those in 1)-6), 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](http://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:

- The Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS) –
- <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:

Projects for Inter-Institutional Cooperation Measure are designed for Bulgarian HEIs and scientific organizations, which can apply for partnership projects with institutions from the donor states, as well as with Bulgarian organizations. There should be at least one partner institution from the donor state(s).

The projects for inter-institutional cooperation should be aimed at:

- increasing the quality of training and attractiveness of the curricula, which are offered by the HEIs and research organizations;

- developing and reinforcing bilateral and multilateral cooperation between participating institutions;
- enhancing the academic and scientific exchange;
- increasing the European dimension of the higher education and science and promoting innovations.

Single call for project proposals is envisaged under this programme measure. It should be announced in third semester of 2014 and will remain open for two months.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:

Applicants can be accredited HEIs and officially recognized scientific organizations from Bulgaria.

ELIGIBLE PARTNER INSTITUTIONS:

The eligible partner institutions from the donor states are: higher education and research institutions, private sector – enterprises and social partners cooperating with higher education and research institutions, private and public organisations including not-for-profit and non-governmental institutions.

Partners from Bulgaria – optional

The eligible partner institutions from Bulgaria are: higher education and research institutions, private sector enterprises and social partners cooperating with higher education and research institutions, private and public organisations, including not-for-profit and non-governmental institutions, research centres.

A mandatory requirement is the participation of partner organizations from donor states in the projects for inter-institutional cooperation.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES UNDER THE PROJECTS:

The inter-institutional cooperation projects can be targeted towards:

- elaborating joint study modules and curricula, including joint curricula for awarding educational qualification or scientific research degree;
- Implementation of joint research projects;
- raising teachers' and administrative staff qualifications;
- academic/research exchange of teachers/researchers and administrative staff ;

- development of new teaching methods, including using ICT;
- support for cooperation development at a faculty level between HEIs from Bulgaria and the donor states through implementation of joint activities;
- cooperation between HEIs/research organizations and enterprises;
- organization of summer schools, workshops, and conferences;
- preparation of joint publications, etc.

PERIOD FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECTS:

The period for implementation of the project for inter-institutional cooperation under this Call is from 1 February 2015 to 30 September 2016.

TOTAL BUDGET FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEASURE: 750 000 EUR.

TOTAL BUDGET UNDER THIS CALL: 750 000 EUR.

GRANT AMOUNTS:

The amount of the grant is from 50 000 EUR to 250 000 EUR per project, with 10 % institutional co-funding from the applying institution. The grants should not exceed 90 % of the total eligible expenditures of the projects.

PAYMENT MODEL

The Project Promoter 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 advance payment will be used as working capital throughout project implementation. 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 interim financial reports every four months covering three reporting periods in each calendar year. The completion report shall be submitted within 1 month of the completion of eligibility period.

ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES:

The following expenditures are eligible in implementation of inter-institutional cooperation projects:

- travel expenses, hotel accommodation, daily subsistence allowance;
- medical insurance for travelling abroad;
- Expenditures, related to the organization of seminars and conferences;
- Preparation and print-out of materials related to the project implementation;
- Expenditures of the staff working on the project;
- Purchase of technical equipment directly linked to the implementation of teaching and research activities related to the project; may not exceed 20% of the project budget;
- Indirect costs according to Art. 7.4. of the EEA FM Regulation;
- Additional expenditures arising from special needs (disabilities), where applicable.

Hotel accommodation and daily subsistence allowance for Bulgarian citizens, citizens of other member states of the EU, and EEA EFTA citizens are according to applicable rates to the per diems according to EC-funded external aid contracts and in case of missions requiring an overnight stay away from the base of operations, which is specified in

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/per_diems/documents/perdiem_2013_07_corrigendum_3_febr_2014.pdf

DEADLINES:

- **30.11.2014 at 12.00 h Submission of the documents at the Programme Operator**
- **15.01.2015 Announcement of the approved candidates**

ADDRESS OF SUBMISSION

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

METHOD OF DELIVERY

Paper version of application should be submitted in two copies – one written in Bulgarian language and one – in English.

VALID DATE OF POSTAL STAMP: 30.11.2014.

SELECTION CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES:

The selection of project proposals under *Inter-institutional Cooperation Projects* measure is implemented entirely by the Programme Operator and consists of the following 3 stages:

1. *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;
 - ✓ All mandatory annexes are enclosed;
 - ✓ The applicant and the partners respond to the eligibility criteria pointed out in the call for proposals;
 - ✓ The project proposal is signed by the authorized person (Rector of the HEI, President or Director of the research organization).
2. *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);
3. *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 in the table below:

№	Criterion	Points
1.	Quality of the project proposal	
1.1	The project objectives and expected outcomes are clearly stated, realistic and in conformity with the Programme BG09 objectives and the main objectives of the EEA Financial Mechanism. The project outcomes are in	0-5

	line with the professional scope of the project. It is described how the project will refer to the actual needs of participating institutions and target groups. The expected long-term impact of the project is clearly stated and justified. It is explained to what extent the cross – cutting issues (good governance, gender equality, and sustainable development – economic, social and environmental aspect) are respected during project implementation and planned project results.	
1.2	Justification of the expected contribution of the project towards development of bilateral/multilateral cooperation between Bulgaria and the donor states;	0-3
1.3	The project budget is correctly calculated, realistic and justified;	0-5
1.4	Roles and tasks of project participants are distributed according to their experience, professional profile and competence. The distribution of tasks between the project partners is appropriate and clearly determined. The scope of responsibilities of each of them is well described. The involvement of each partner institution during the successive stages of project implementation is clearly described. Project coordination is appropriately planned. The Applicant’s staff (employees, external experts) who will be involved in the project activities possess appropriate qualifications and competence with regards to their functions in the project proposal. Project description and planned work programme presented in the Letter of Agreement is coherent with description presented in the application form.	0-5
1.5	The project work programme covers the entire period of project implementation. The planned activities are coherent with the project objectives and project results. Work programme includes activities of all participating project partners and is in line with their role in the project. The work programme is consistent with the project budget. The project implementation period is adequate and consistent with all the planned activities and allows for achieving the project objectives.	0-5
1.6	The Applicant has described how the project would be managed and how the project group will measure the progress in the course of	0-5

	implementation of the project activities and the results. The planned activities (meetings, seminars, regular correspondence, etc.) should lead to good communication and cooperation at project management team level and at inter-institutional level.	
1.7	Monitoring and evaluation activities are foreseen and are clearly described by the Applicant. The planned evaluation methodology is clearly described and includes such aspects as: analysis of progress and results of activities, level of satisfaction of all participating institutions and individuals, achievement of planned project objectives and their evaluation. The Applicant has pointed out how the evaluation results will be used.	0-5
1.8	Risk management issues have been considered. Potential risks are identified and possible counter measures have been proposed.	0-5
1.9	If the project is considered as innovative, the Applicant has clearly described and justified why.	0-2
Maximum total grade regarding Criterion № 1:		40
2.	Проектното предложение включва дейност/и в приоритетна област за програма BG09	0-5
2.1		
Максимален общ брой точки (сума от точките по отношение на критерий № 1 и критерий № 2):		45

If the Applicant has received a total score of less than 30 points total with respect to Criterion № 1 and Criterion № 2, then the application is proposed for non-funding.

In case of missing and incomplete documentation, 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 the decision 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

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS:

<http://mon.bg/?go=page&pageId=13&subpageId=257>

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>