



REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
Ministry of Education and Science

THE EEA FINANCIAL MECHANISM PROGRAMME

EEA SCHOLARSHIP FUND

FIRST CALL FOR PROPOSALS

MOBILITY PROJECTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH MEASURE

2013-2014 ACADEMIC YEAR

30 DECEMBER 2013

The Ministry of Education and Science is a Programme Operator for implementation of programme BG09 „EEA Scholarships Fund“ under the EEA Grants programme during 2009-2014 programme period.

The overall objective of the BG09 programme is to strengthen cooperation between the Republic of Bulgaria and the EEA EFTA states (Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein) in the field of higher education and research through project grants provision aimed to development and

extend cooperation between Bulgarian higher education and research institutions and their partners from the donor countries, in particular by provision of scholarships for students, post-graduated students and doctoral candidates, university teachers, researchers and administrative staff from Bulgarian higher education and research institutions aimed to learning mobility, delivering lectures, exchange of experience, and research activities in the EEA EFTA countries.

The activities of the Programme are open to all higher education and research fields.

MEASURE “MOBILITY PROJECTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH” IS ONE OF THE MEASURES, WHICH ARE IMPLEMENTED UNDER THE BG09 PROGRAMME.

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 and Research measure for the present Call is €219 500 total for the both individual mobility components of the Measure.

The Measure consists of two individual mobility components, as follows:

1. STUDENT MOBILITY COMPONENT

TARGET GROUPS:

The Component is focused on both Bulgarian higher education students, post-graduated students and doctoral candidates who would like to spend a learning mobility period in one of the EEA EFTA countries, as well as higher education students, post-graduated students and doctoral candidates from Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein who are interested in mobility in Bulgarian higher education and research institutions, supported by scholarship grants under the Programme.

MOBILITY DURATION AND GRANT AMOUNT:

The overall budget for the present Call under **Mobility of Students component** amounts to € 49 470 total. The average duration of the mobility period is one academic semester. The individual scholarship grant covers up to € 500 for travel expenses, accommodation expenses and daily subsistence allowance according to the duration of stay, and travel insurance. The minimum amount of the scholarship grant is € 1700, while the maximum is € 5300.

MOBILITY PURPOSES:

The mobility on this component can include training of students, pos-doctoral students and tdoctoral candidates at higher education and research institutions in the host countries. It can also include attending intensive foreign language courses, and summer schools.

2. MOBILITY OF ACADEMIC, RESEARCH AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF COMPONENT

TARGET GROUPS:

Mobility of Academic, Research and Administrative Staff component is targeted to academic and administrative staff members at higher education institutions, and research and administrative staff members at research institutions in the Republic of Bulgaria, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. Mobility under this component can be in one of the EEA EFTA countries (for Bulgarian applicants) and in Bulgaria (for EEA applicants). All sending and receiving institutions shall be officially recognized/accredited.

MOBILITY DURATION AND GRANT AMOUNT:

The overall budget for the present Call under **Mobility of Academic, Research and Administrative Staff component** amounts to € 170 030 total. The mobility period for this component can vary from one to three weeks. The individual grant amounts from € 1700 for the first week and at € 400 for each of the next weeks. The maximum grant size amounts to € 2500. The individual scholarship grants cover travel expenses, accommodation expenses and daily subsistence allowance according to the duration of stay, and travel insurance. Participation fee up to € 600 for attending conferences, seminars, and other public events related to the purpose of mobility can be added to the amount of the scholarship grant, based on a document certifying the real expenses with this regard.

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.

SCHOLARSHIPS ARE GRANTED TO THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES OF BENEFICIARIES:

Under Student Mobility component:

- Students, post-graduate students and doctoral candidates who study at accredited public and private higher education and research institutions in Bulgaria and apply for individual

mobility scholarship grants for training at officially recognized/accredited host institution in the EEA EFTA countries;

- Students, post-graduated students and doctoral candidates who study at accredited public and private higher education and research institutions in the EEA EFTA countries and apply for individual mobility scholarship grants for training at officially recognized/accredited host institution – a higher education or a research institution in Bulgaria.

- Beneficiaries under BG0057 project entitled "Development of reliable mobility schemes through scholarships under the EEA Financial Mechanism", which has already been completed, can apply again. In case of equal assessment marks, priority shall be given to new applicants.

Under Mobility of Academic, Research and Administrative Staff component:

- Academic, research and administrative staff members at accredited public and private higher education and research institutions in Bulgaria. Host institutions in the EEA EFTA countries should be officially recognized/accredited.

- Beneficiaries under BG0057 project entitled "Development of reliable mobility schemes through scholarships under the EEA Financial Mechanism", which has already been completed, can apply again. In case of equal assessment marks, priority shall be given to new applicants.

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

FINDING A HOST INSTITUTION:

The respective EEA EFTA institutions and organizations would be glad to support the implementation of activities under the EEA Scholarships BG 09 programme.

Norway:

The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU) is the main donor programme partner of the Programme Operator for BG09 programme. SIU is the main contact point for cooperation with Norwegian institutions and organisation in the field of education and training. SIU is the Norwegian National Agency for the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP), the Erasmus Mundus Programme, and the E-Learning Programme.

The Research Council of Norway is the main point of contact in the areas of research, including energy, resources, and environment fields and innovations.

Interested parties may contact these two institutions for guidance and assistance in starting up and/or carrying out activities within the framework of the EEA Scholarship Fund, including finding relevant cooperation partners and hosting conferences and seminars.

For further information, please visit:

- Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education:
<http://siu.no>
- Research Council of Norway:
<http://www.rcn.no>

Higher education and research institutions, which are looking for partners from Norway, you may register in the following databases:

- Database, supported by the SIU:
<http://siu.no/eng/Front-Page/EEA-Partner-search>
- Database, supported by the Research Council of Norway:
http://www.forskningsradet.no/no/Artikkel/Partner_search/1253981563289

Iceland:

The Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS) is a donor programme partner of the Programme Operator for BG09 programme. RANNIS is designated as a national contact point ready for cooperation, information and guidance of stakeholders, which are looking for potential cooperation and other possibilities for research and exchange of experience with Icelandic partner institutions.

For further information, please visit:

- The Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS) – <http://www.rannis.is>

Liechtenstein:

The Agency for International Educational Affairs (AIBA) is a donor programme partner from Liechtenstein of the BG09 Programme Operator. The Agency acts as a National Agency of Liechtenstein for the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission, and other regional and international educational programmes.

For further information, please visit:

- The Agency for International Educational Affairs (AIBA) – <http://www.aiba.lv.li>

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENT CALL:

The present Call for Proposals is published under the EEA Scholarship Fund BG09 Programme. The call is open for 2 months. The grant amount under the present call is € 275 000.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE APPLICANTS:

1. Student Mobility Component

- The applicant should be a Bulgarian citizen, a citizen of another EU member state, or an EEA EFTA state.
- Applicants – students should be enrolled in full-time study at accredited Bulgarian or EEA EFTA higher educational institution.
- Applicants – post-graduated students should be enrolled at accredited Bulgarian or EEA EFTA higher educational institution;
- Applicants – doctoral candidates should be enrolled in a full-time doctoral programme at accredited Bulgarian or EEA EFTA higher educational institution or research institution/organization that have received a programme accreditation of the educational and scientific degree of a Doctor (Ph. D.).
- The students must have successfully passed all the exams that are foreseen in the sending higher education institution by the time of application.
- By the time of application the applicants should be students studying neither at first semester (applicable for Bachelor degree only) nor last semester of the study.
- A bilateral agreement for exchange of students must be signed between the sending and the host institution. The agreement must guarantee a transfer and recognition of ECTS credits. **Higher education institutions with active bilateral agreements on the Erasmus Plus programme can organize mobility under the EEA Scholarship Fund on the grounds of these agreements.**

2. Mobility of Academic, Research and Administrative Staff Component

- The applicant should be a Bulgarian citizen, a citizen of another EU member state, or an EEA EFTA state.

- The applicant should be a teacher at accredited higher education institution, a researcher in a research organization in Bulgaria or an administrative staff member of an accredited higher education institution or a scientific organization in Bulgaria.
- The applicant has received an official invitation from the host institution in Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein.

Prior participation in this Call all applicants must become familiar with the key documents for participation in the activities of the EEA Financial Mechanism, which are available on www.eeagrants.org.

DOCUMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED BY THE CANDIDATES TO THE HOME INSTITUTION

1. Student Mobility Component

- An application form according to a template for participation in the Call for Proposals for scholarship grants under the EEA Financial mechanism;
- EUROPASS CV;
- A copy of personal identity document;
- A Letter of Motivation (max. 1 page);
- Transcript of records for the last academic year (students only);
- Admission Order in a post-graduated/doctoral programme (for post-graduated students and doctoral candidates);
- A copy of foreign language certificate (English for Iceland and Norway; English or German for Liechtenstein);
- A Letter of Recommendation from the student/post-doctoral students/doctoral candidate's home institution;
- A Letter of Confirmation (in English) from the host institution confirming the admission of the student/post-doctoral students/doctoral candidate in the educational programme. The confirmation must include: **name of the applicant, name of the receiving university or name of the department/name of the receiving research organization,**

the name of the educational programme, and the mobility period. In case the confirmation is not received within the application deadline, it can be further submitted to the Programme Operator, but no later than 31.03.2014. In this case the applicant should submit a declaration, proving that he/she has applied for mobility training in the respective higher educational institution/research organization in EEA EFTA country and should enclose any supporting document, and should provide the confirmation when available.

- A document certifying that the applicant's training at the home higher education/research institution is financed by a Roma supporting programme or initiative (if applicable);
- 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.
- A recent colourful photo (passport format)

2. Mobility of Academic, Research and Administrative Staff Component

- An application form according to a template for participation in the Call for Proposals for scholarship grants under the EEA Financial mechanism;
- EUROPASS CV;
- A copy of personal identity document;
- A Letter of Motivation (max. 1 page);
- A copy of a labour contract;
- A Letter of Recommendation from the candidate's home institution;
- A List of Research Publications (if any);
- 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.
- 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.
- A copy of foreign language certificate (English for Iceland and Norway; English or German for Liechtenstein);
- A recent colourful photo (passport format).

PROCEDURE FOR SELECTION OF CANDIDATES

The selection procedure is organized by the Programme operator in cooperation with Bulgarian higher education institutions/scientific organizations. It is based on a 2-stage model. **The first stage** is carried out by the home institution, which could be a Bulgarian higher education or research institution. Applicants submit their applications to their home institution, which is responsible to arrange the selection of applicants, including administrative check-up, eligibility assessment and quality assessment. The home institution selects their academic, research and administrative staff members using the selection criteria given below and submit the applications, which are approved at this stage, to the Programme Operator within the deadline mentioned below.

The second stage is carried out by the Programme Operator for BG09 Programme, which organizes the further assessment (by documents and interview) of the candidates in two steps: 1) assessment from independent external experts and 2) assessment by the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee makes proposals for approval of candidates before the Minister of Education and Science who approves the candidates and their scholarship grants.

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.

PO ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE AND CRITERIA:

The assessment of applicants by the PO shall be performed in the following 3 steps:

- 1) administrative check-up, which shall be performed by the PO staff;
- 2) independent assessment, which shall be performed by independent experts who shall assess and propose applicants for selection by the Selection Committee;
- 3) assessment at a Selection Committee, which consists of experts from the PO staff and experts – university teachers and researchers from Bulgarian higher education and research institutions, which have been nominated by the institutions themselves. All of

them should have declared a lack of conflict of interests. The Selection Committee assesses the applications and conducts personal interviews with the applicants as a final stage of selection. After the session of the Selection Committee, the selected applications to be funded are submitted to the Minister of Education and Science for a formal approval of applicants and their individual scholarships.

The PO selection process should be completed within 3 weeks after the deadline for institutional coordinators to submit the applications to the PO.

For overall information about the opportunities for participation in the EEA FM Scholarship Fund, the applicants may contact the institutional coordinators at the respective higher education and research institutions or Mrs. Mimi Daneva – contact person from the Programme Operator – tel. 02 424 11 07; email: m.daneva@mon.bg

SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Student Mobility Component

- Motivation (Letter of Motivation, a personal interview);
- Average grade score from the study not lower than Very Good 4.5; rewards;
- Significance of the Ph. D. dissertation thesis and the results obtained so far (for doctoral candidates);
- Expected outcomes from the mobility with regards to future professional realization of the candidate and the institutional cooperation; conformity of expected outcomes with the programme objectives and the overall objectives of EEA FM.
- The student/post-graduated student/doctoral candidate studies in a higher education programme within the professional/research field of Education, and whose training profile is related to training children and students with special education needs, 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 (if applicable);
- The student/post-graduated student/doctoral candidate studies in a higher education programme within the professional/research field of Medicine or Dental Medicine (if applicable);

- The student/post-graduated student/doctoral candidate studies in a higher education programme within the professional/research field of Economics, with a focus on strengthening the economic and social cohesion (if applicable);
- Student/post-graduated student/doctoral candidate's training in the home institution is financed by a Roma supporting programme or initiative;
- Level of mastering the working language – English for Iceland and Norway; English and/or German for Liechtenstein (a diploma/certificate, performance on the interview).

The overall scale of assessment to be used concerning the Mobility of Students Component is, as follows:

№	Criterion	Points
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	4
2.	Orientation of the mobility project in one of the following fields: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Medicine or Dental Medicine; ▪ 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; ▪ Integration of minorities; ▪ Promoting economic and social cohesion. 	2
3.	Level of mastering the mobility working language	2
4.	Overall performance on the interview	2
	Total mark:	10

2. Mobility of Academic, Research and Administrative Staff Component

- Motivation (Letter of Motivation, a personal interview);
- Qualifications;

- Professional experience;
- Teaching experience, recommendations, rewards;
- Research experience and results obtained so far (List of Research Publications, recommendations, if any);
- Orientation of the individual mobility project in the field of training children and students with special education needs, 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, pedagogical methods and approaches for retaining children and students at school, reduction of early school leaving (if such orientation exists);
- Expected outcomes from the mobility concerning the professional development of the candidate, the development of the home institution and of the institutional cooperation; conformity of expected outcomes with the programme objectives and the overall objectives of EEA FM.
- Relevance of the research topics and the research contribution to the development of the European Research Area;
- Level of mastering the working language – English for Iceland and Norway; English and/or German for Liechtenstein (a diploma/certificate, performance on the interview);

The overall scale of assessment marks to be used concerning the Mobility of Academic, research and Administrative Staff Component is, as follows:

№	Criterion	Points
1.	Overall quality of the application, including justification of mobility aims and expected outcomes and their contribution to meeting the objectives of the BG09 programme and the overall objectives of the EEA FM	4
2.	Orientation of the mobility project in the field of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ medicine or dental medicine; ▪ inclusive education and educational integration of children and students with other ethno-cultural background and from disadvantaged groups in the mainstream educational system, 	2

	including of Roma origin, special needs education, pedagogical methods and approaches for retaining children and students at school, reducing early school leavers; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ human rights; ▪ integration of minorities; ▪ promoting economic and social cohesion; ▪ agriculture, with a focus on promoting economic and social cohesion and integration of citizens with lower social and economic background, including Roma 	
3.	Level of mastering the mobility working language	2
4.	Overall performance on the interview	2
	Total mark:	10

Beneficiaries under BG0057 project entitled "Development of reliable mobility schemes through scholarships under the EEA Financial Mechanism" can apply again. In case of equal number of assessing marks awarded to new applicants and applicants who have benefitted from BG0057 project, priority should be given to new applicants.

DEADLINES:

01.03.2014: Submission of applications to the home institution

20.03.2014: Submission of applications of the candidates, which are selected by the home institution to the Programme Operator