

PA17/RO13 - Promotion of diversity in culture and arts within European cultural heritage

FUND FOR BILATERAL RELATIONS MEASURE B: COLLABORATION AND EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE

APPLICANT GUIDE

CALL FOR PROPOSALS REGARDING PARTNERSHIP ACTIONS 2/2016

Bucharest

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	pag. 3
2. Institutional framework	pag. 4
3. Legal framework	pag. 5
4. About the Programme	pag. 5
5. About the call for proposals	pag. 6
5.1. Eligibility of applicants	pag. 6
5.2. Eligibility of costs	pag. 7
5.3. Submission of applications	pag. 9
5.4. Evaluation of applications	pag. 10
6. Contracting	pag. 12
7. Reporting and payments.....	pag. 12
8. Additional information.....	pag. 13
9. Annexes	pag. 13

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the **PA17/RO13 Promotion of diversity in culture and arts within European cultural heritage** Programme (which is supported by the EEA Grants), hereinafter referred to as the Programme, is to increase cultural dialogue and foster the European identity through understanding of cultural diversity.

The Programme is part of the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014. Through EEA Grants, the Donor States (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities and to the strengthening of bilateral relations with 16 EU countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

Another important objective is to contribute to the strengthening of the bilateral cooperation between cultural operators from Romania and the Donor States.

The EEA Grants contribute to protecting cultural heritage and revitalizing cultural heritage and to promoting cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, fostering minority cultures and cultural exchange by providing more than € 200 million support in 14 beneficiary countries.

In Romania a total of € 20,8 million is provided for support in this area.

The Programme Promotion of Diversity in Culture and Arts within European Cultural Heritage funds projects within two components:

- **Awareness of cultural diversity raised and intercultural dialogue strengthened;**
- **Cultural history documented.**

A total amount of 120.332 euro is available within this Programme to strengthen bilateral relations.

The total allocation for bilateral relations, Measure B, Collaboration and exchange of experience under the present call for proposals is **21,600 Euro**.

The maximum size of the grant is **5.000 Euro per entity**.

The Programme Operator in Romania is the Project Management Unit (PMU), within the Ministry of Culture (Romania), in partnership with Arts Council Norway.

This document presents the procedures and conditions for submitting applications for funding to strengthen bilateral relations' actions under the Programme **Promotion of diversity in culture and arts within European cultural heritage**.

The present call is addressed to potential applicants as described in Chapter 5.1. Eligibility of applicants / partners.

This document does not exempt the applicants from the obligation to comply with legislation in force at national and European level.

For any clarifications please contact the Programme Operator. For the purpose of this call, the Programme Operator has set up a help-desk for potential applicants. Additional information may be requested from the Programme Operator, on the given contact details or on the Programme's email

office@fonduri-diversitate.ro.

Questions will be answered in maximum 3-5 working days. The questions and answers that may be relevant to other potential applicants shall be published on the website of the Programme www.fonduri-diversitate.ro.

2. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The **Ministry of European Funds** acts as the **National Focal Point**. The National Focal Point has the overall responsibility for reaching the objectives of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 as well as for the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 in Romania. The National Focal Point represents Romania in its relations with the Financial Mechanism Committee regarding the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 in Romania.

The **Certifying and Paying Authority** within the Ministry of Public Finance acts as the **Certifying Authority**. The Certifying Authority is responsible for certifying the financial information, the accuracy of the interim reports and final reports for the Programme. The Certifying Authority shall also be responsible for the preparation and submission of irregularities reports.

The **Central Harmonization Unit for Public Internal Audit (CHUPIA)**, within the Ministry of Public Finance, acts as **Audit Authority**. The Audit Authority is responsible for conducting audits of the management and control system at the level of the Programme and individual projects.

The **Project Management Unit (PMU)**, within the Romanian Ministry of Culture acts as the **Programme Operator** and is responsible for preparing and implementing the programme in accordance with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness and in particular for:

- ensuring that projects contribute to the overall objectives of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 and the specific programme outcome(s) and objective(s);
- collecting applications, selecting projects to be funded and signing project contracts for each project;
- verifying the project outputs and that the expenditure declared by the Projects Promoters has actually been incurred and complies with the Regulations for implementing the EEA Financial Mechanism, the programme agreement as well as applicable national and European Union law;
- monitoring the projects' progress and ensuring the quality of the implementation of the projects.

For more information regarding the responsibilities of the Programme Operator, please see Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 article 4.7 which can be accessed using the following website link: <http://eeagrants.org/Results-data/Results-overview/Documents/Legal-documents/Regulations-with-annexes/EEA-Grants-2009-2014>.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This call for proposals is governed by the following laws and regulations:

- a) Memorandum of Understanding for implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 between Iceland, The Principality of Liechtenstein and Kingdom of Norway and the Republic of Romania, signed on 24 of March 2012, amended 18 October 2012;
- b) Regulation on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 approved by the EEA Financial Mechanism Committee in accordance with Art. 8.8. of the Protocol 38b to EEA Agreement on 13 January 2011 and confirmed by the Standing Committee of the EFTA States on 18 January;
- c) Government Emergency Ordinance no. 88/2012 regarding the institutional framework for coordination, implementation and management of financial assistance for Romania through EEA Financial Mechanism for years 2009-2014 between the Iceland, The Principality of Liechtenstein and Kingdom of Norway and the Republic of Romania, approved through Law no. 246 from 17 July 2013;
- d) Government Emergency Ordinance no. 23/2013 regarding the financial management of the non-refundable external funds through EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014, amended 30 June 2015 (OM 475/2015);
- e) Order of the Minister for European Funds no.1055/2014 on the use of lump sums for travel supported under bilateral funds at national and programme level within EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2009-2014;
- f) Emergency Ordinance no. 66/2011 of 29 June 2011 on preventing, finding and sanctioning the irregularities found in accessing and using European funds and/or related public national funds, with further amendments and completions.

4. ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

The Programme shall contribute to the two objectives of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014: reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area and strengthen the bilateral relations between the Donor States and the beneficiary states.

The Programme funds projects within two major components:

- **Awareness of cultural diversity raised and intercultural dialogue strengthened;**
- **Cultural history documented.**

The Fund for bilateral relations is an integral part of the Programme.

The main objectives of the Fund are as follows:

- increasing the cooperation between organizations and institutions from Romania and the Donor States;
- improving mutual knowledge and understanding;

- sharing the results of their activities.

The EEA Financial Mechanism encourages and promotes the strengthening of bilateral relations between Romania and the Donor States, offering an opportunity to exchange experience in the cultural sector.

5. ABOUT THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The present call for proposals falls within **Measure B – Collaboration and exchange of experience** and aims to support collaboration, exchange of experience, transfer of knowledge, technology and good practice in the field of culture. Financial support can be granted to potential applicants in order to establish collaboration through the participation to events, seminars or conferences in the Donor States or the organization of such activities in partnership with entities from the Donor States.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The following activities between entities from Romania and the Donor States will be eligible for financing:

- **Activities for the initiation / development of partnerships with the purpose of collaboration, exchange of experience, transfer of knowledge, technology and good practice in the field of culture;**
- **Participation to conferences, seminars, workshops organized by entities from the Donor States with the purpose of identifying means to develop new projects;**
- **Other activities that encourage the increase of bilateral collaboration and exchange of experience in the field of culture.**

Partnership activities can be implemented in Romania or in any of the Donor States.

IMPORTANT! PA17/RO13 project promoters wishing to apply within this call for proposals should take notice of the following:

The present Call is not intended to fund activities that are already approved within implementing projects or are to be set up as a result of savings or other notifications acknowledged by the PO.

5.1. Eligibility of applicants / partners

Within this call for proposals regarding partnership actions the eligible applicant from Romania and the Donor States are:

a) The eligible applicants from Romania under the present call are:

1) Project promoters within PA17/RO13;

2) Public entities:

- local and national authorities;
- cultural institutions;
- higher education and research institutions.

3) Nongovernmental organizations.

b) The eligible applicants / partners from the Donor States under the present call are:

1) Public entities:

- local and national authorities;
- cultural institutions;
- higher education and research institutions.

2) Nongovernmental organizations.

3) Non-profit organizations.

It is mandatory that applicants and partners are established as legal persons and that they have the capacity of implementing activities in the field addressed by the partnership action.

Additionally, under this call for partnership actions an eligible applicant and partner should meet the following requirements:

- the participation in the envisaged project is justified and reasonable;
- does not draw financial profits from the participation in the envisaged project.

The applicant must fill in and include in the application folder the Applicant's eligibility declaration (Annex 2).

An applicant may submit only one application under this call.

The partner must fill in and include in the application folder the Partnership expression of interest (Annex 3).

IMPORTANT!

The applicant will be excluded from the selection process and the application will be rejected if:

- *the applicant/partner misinformed the PO by providing incorrect information or failed to provide the requested information;*
- *the applicant/partner attempted to obtain confidential information or influence the evaluation experts or the Programme Operator representatives during the selection process.*

5.2. Eligibility of costs

The total allocation for bilateral relations **Measure B – Collaboration and exchange of experience** under the present call for proposals is **21,600 Euro**.

The maximum size of the grant is 5,000 Euro per entity.

Co-financing and eligible costs

The grant may cover up to 100% of the total eligible expenditure of a bilateral partnership action. No co-financing is required. Eligible expenditures under this call are incurred by the applicant involved in the bilateral partnership actions.

The eligible costs for the partnership actions include:

- Travel and subsistence costs in accordance with the order of the Minister for European Funds no.1055/2014 on the use of lump sums for travel supported under bilateral funds at national and programme level within EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2009-2014:
 - Lump sum for travels covering 3 to 4 days (2 to 3 nights accommodation) – 1,600 euro / person;
 - Lump sum for travels covering 5 to 6 days (4 to 5 nights accommodation) – 2,000 euro / person;
- Fees for participation to conferences, seminars and workshops;
- Other expenditures strictly linked to the achievement of partnership action, except expenditures associated with salaries.

Eligible expenditures are those actually incurred by the applicant, which meet the following criteria:

- a) **they are incurred between the first and final dates of the eligibility of a partnership action as specified in the grant contract;**
- b) **they are connected with the subject of the partnership action and they are indicated as such in the estimated overall budget of the partnership action;**
- c) **they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the partnership action;**
- d) **they are used for the sole purpose of achieving the objective(s) of the partnership action and its expected outcome(s), in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;**
- e) **they are identifiable and verifiable;**
- f) **they comply with the requirements of the applicable national legislation.**

IMPORTANT!

Under the present call for *bilateral partnership actions* pre-financing is available only to public entities.

All expenditures incurred by private entities must be disbursed by the beneficiary and they will be reimbursed by the PO based on the final report and supporting documents. The reimbursement will be paid within 30 days after the approval of the payment request and final report.

Launch of the call for proposals

This call for proposals for Bilateral Relations **Measure B – Collaboration and exchange of experience** is launched on **April 1st, 2016**. The deadline for submitting the applications is **June 30th, 2016 or until the depletion of the allocated budget**.

Applications that are submitted will be reviewed continuously, in order of their registration, until the full allocation of funds available for this call has been depleted, on the principle first-come first-served.

All the partnership actions funded under this call must be completed no later than **December 31st 2016**.

5.3. Submission of applications

The application will include:

- **Application Form** (*Annex 1* - form attached to this Guide), filled in English, signed and sealed (if necessary) in original;
- **Applicant statement of eligibility** (*Annex 2* - form attached to this Guide), filled in English, signed and sealed (if necessary) in original;
- **Applicant's documents regarding registration as legal person** (in certified copy) – necessary only for applicants not implementing / not having implemented projects within the Programme PA17/RO13;
- **Applicant's statutory documents** (in certified copy) - necessary only for applicants not implementing / not having implemented projects within the Programme PA17/RO13;
- **Partnership Expression of Interest** (*Annex 3* - form attached to this Guide), filled in English, signed and sealed (if necessary);
- **Documents for attending a specific event** (where applicable), in Romanian or English. If documents are presented in a different language than the afore-mentioned, a translation in either of the two is necessary.

The application file, consisting of all the above documents, will be submitted in:

- **1 original**

and

1 electronic version comprising all application documents. (e.g. CD / USB stick). Documents in electronic version must be in formats compatible with Adobe Acrobat, as well as editable Word, Excel.

Applications shall be submitted in a sealed envelope by registered mail, courier or personal delivery at the address below:

Project Management Unit

Ministry of Culture

Unirii Bld. No. 22, 2nd district, room 503, Bucharest, 5th floor– 030833

The sealed envelope must have the following information marked:

EEA Grants

PA17/RO13 - Promotion of diversity in culture and arts within European cultural heritage Fund for bilateral relations

Call for bilateral relations actions Measure B, round 2/2016

Applicant: <fill in name and address>

Name and nationality of partner – if the case: <fill in name and partner's nationality>

IMPORTANT!

Applications sent by e-mail or fax will NOT be accepted.

The last day for receiving bilateral partnership applications is **June 30th 2016 or until the depletion of the allocated budget.**

It is relevant the date of the courier service or the post stamp, that confirms the submission. Should the available funds be fully allocated by the time the application is received, the applicant will be notified and the application file will be returned.

The personal delivery to the mentioned address is possible until **June 30th, 2016, 16:00 local time.**

5.4. Evaluation of applications

The evaluation and selection process will include the following steps:

1. Registration and opening of Applications files: only the applications submitted in a sealed envelope and within the conditions described above shall be opened and will be further processed;
2. The Programme Operator will verify the **compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria** based on the following evaluation grid:

Administrative and eligibility criteria	YES	NO
The Application file (Application Form and its annexes) is sent in one original copy and one electronic version of all documents, in a sealed envelope mentioning all the requested details		
The Application Form is filled in properly, signed and sealed (if applicable) in original		
The Application file contains the Applicant's documents regarding registration as legal person, in certified copy		
The Application file contains the Applicant's statutory		

documents, in certified copy		
The Applicant's Eligibility Declaration is filled in properly, signed and sealed (if applicable) in original		
The Partnership expression of interest is filled in properly, signed and sealed (if applicable), in certified copy		
The Applicant is eligible for receiving funding according to the requirements described in the Applicant's Guide		
The partner is eligible according to the requirements described in the Applicant's Guide		
The maximum grant amount requested is 5,000 EUR		
Implementation period of the partnership action does not exceed December 31 st 2016		

Only applications that receive "YES" to all entries will qualify for the next stage of the evaluation.

An applicant whose application was rejected can re-submit an application provided that the call is still open at the moment.

In order to verify the fulfilment of the eligibility criteria, the Programme Operator may request additional documentation. Requests shall be made via email (to the address provided in the application form) and the required clarifications must be received in writing, by email, facsimile or mail/courier delivery within 3 working days from the request. The original document shall be sent by mail/courier/personal within 5 working days from the date of the electronic transmission. Failure to provide the requested information within the deadline may result in rejection of the application.

3. **Content evaluation** – each application that complies with the administrative and eligibility criteria will be evaluated by the Programme Operator. The content evaluation of an application is based on the following criteria:

Content evaluation	Maximum score
<p>1. Contribution to the objectives of the Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> relevance of the partnership action for the objectives of the Programme; relevance of the partnership action for strengthening bilateral relations. 	20
<p>2. The motivation for the partnership action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> description of the envisaged (future) project: idea, objectives, expected results; expected outcomes and sustainability of the future partnership action; 	20
<p>3. Description of the partnership action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> description of the applicant organization in correlation with area of collaboration; 	20

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coherence between expertise / experience of the applicant and the potential partner for the proposed roles in the future project; • activities planned for the partnership action (visit plan). 	
<p>4. The budget is balanced and realistic, built in accordance with the proposed activities.</p>	40

For a proposal to be recommended for funding, it must receive at least 70 points.

The score of an eligible application has to include points from each of the four evaluated criteria.

The lack of a minimum positive score for each evaluated criteria evaluation determines the rejection of the application.

Applications will be evaluated on a continuous basis until the full allocation of the funds available for the present call are depleted. Applications registered on the same day meeting the administrative and eligibility criteria will be subject to content evaluation and the ranking will be determined according to the score of the content evaluation.

Each applicant will be informed about the result of the evaluation. The decision of the Programme Operator is final and cannot be appealed.

6. CONTRACTING

The applicants that submitted an application which met all the criteria previously described and were selected for receiving funding will be contacted and will conclude a bilateral actions contract (*Annex 4*) with the Programme Operator. The contract will set out the terms and conditions of grant assistance as well as the roles and responsibilities of the parties, provisions for payments and reimbursement and the reporting templates.

7. REPORTING AND PAYMENTS

At the end of the implementation period, but no later than 90 calendar days after the end of the partnership action, the grant recipients are required to submit to the Programme Operator the following:

- a final report – *Annex 5* (to be submitted also electronically)
- a payment request – *Annex 6* (to be submitted also electronically)
- supporting documents – *Annex 7*
- materials produced during the partnership action, if applicable (ex. published materials, articles, pictures, studies etc.).

All expenditure included in the payment request must be justified with supporting documents according to applicable legislation.

For the **Romanian grant recipients** all payments must be converted into **LEI** using the monthly accounting exchange rate of the European Commission (InforEuro), published on its official website http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm, for the month during which the expenditure was done (e.g., date of payment order).

For the **foreign grant recipients** all payments must be converted into **EUR** using the monthly accounting exchange rate of the European Commission (InforEuro), published on its official website http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm, for the month during which the expenditure was done (e.g., date of payment order).

For the Romanian public authorities and institutions the payment will be done 100% in advance. Private entities can request for an advance payment amounting to maximum 30% of the approved budget. The difference will be reimbursed in one instalment, at the end of the partnership action based on the approval of the final report and the payment request.

8. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Applicants may submit questions regarding this call for proposals by telephone, e-mail or fax to:

Project Management Unit

Ministry of Culture

office@fonduri-diversitate.ro

Phone / fax: 021-2228479, 021-2244512

Also, information about this call for proposals and about the Programme can be found on the Programme's dedicated webpage www.fonduri-diversitate.ro.

9. ANNEXES

Annex 1	Application form
Annex 2	Applicant statement on eligibility
Annex 3	Partnership expression of interest
Annex 4	Grant contract
Annex 5	Final report
Annex 6	Payment request
Annex 7	Documents to be attached to the payment request