



The Romanian - EEA Research Programme 2014 – 2021 Guide for Applicants

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	General information	3
2.1.	Eligibility of applicants	4
2.2.1	Eligible beneficiaries:	4
2.2.2	Eligibility of Project Promotor (PP) and Project Partners:	4
2.2.3	Eligibility of Principal Investigator (PI):	4
2.2.	Eligibility Check	5
3.	Submission of proposals	5
4.	Evaluation of proposals.....	7
4.1.	Individual evaluation.....	8
4.2.	Consensus assessment.....	9
4.3.	Panel review.....	9
4.4.	Thresholds and the ranking lists	9
5.	Award of project grants	10
6.	Appeals.....	11
7.	Negotiation of proposals	11
8.	Contracting of Projects	12
9.	Finance and Budget	12
9.1.	The currency used for the project proposal and implementation	12
9.2.	The budget	12
9.3.	Eligibility of expenditures	13
9.3.1	Eligible direct expenditures	14
9.3.1.1	Staff Costs	14
9.3.1.2	Travel Costs.....	15
9.3.1.3	Equipment.....	15
9.3.1.4	Consumables and supplies.....	15
9.3.1.5	Other costs.....	15
9.3.2	Indirect costs (overheads).....	16
9.4.	Excluded costs.....	16
9.5.	Budgetary flexibility	16
10.	Reporting and Payments.....	17
10.1.	Annual reporting.....	17
10.2.	Final reporting.....	17
10.3.	Reporting on scientific publications.....	18
10.4.	Payments	19
10.5.	Certificate on financial statement and proof of expenditures	19

1. Introduction

This document specifies in detail the responsibilities of the participants in the call. The Guide for Applicants is based on Guideline for Research Programmes – Rules for the establishment and implementation of programmes falling under the Programme Area “Research” and “Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014-2021” and applies to the evaluation of applications to EEA Grants – Call for Proposals 2018.

The Guide for Applicants complements the Call Document and the Guide for Evaluators. Both applicants and evaluators are kindly asked to familiarize themselves with the procedure described herein.

2. General information

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 Programme Operator (PO), signing the Project Contract with the PO, the cooperation agreement with the Project Partners and submitting periodic reports to the PO.

The Project Promoter shall be a Romanian eligible research organization. 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 according 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 monitoring 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 with those specified in Guideline for Research Programmes – Rules for the establishment and implementation of programmes falling under the Programme Area “Research”.

The Call supports collaborative research projects in basic and applied research and it is open for interdisciplinary projects.¹

The **project proposal** must fall within one thematic area and could cover up to 3 key topics. The main key topic must be under the selected thematic area, the other 2 could be from other thematic areas (if applicable).

¹ According to the State Aid Scheme, the eligible activities are: basic research, industrial research and experimental development.

2.1. Eligibility of applicants

2.2.1. Eligible beneficiaries:

The following types of legal entities located in Romania and in Donor States² (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein) may receive funding from the Programme:

- Research Organizations as defined in the Community Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation (2014/C 198/01), as Project Promoter and Project Partner(s);
- Companies (Small, medium and large sized enterprises) as defined in the Community Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation (2014/C 198/01), as Project Partner(s).

Other eligible partners are Research Organizations from third countries but they cannot receive funding from the project grant.

2.2.2. Eligibility of Project Promotor (PP) and Project Partners:

- a) The Project Promoter and the Project Partners do not have a seizure on its accounts; they have not made false declarations concerning the information required by the PO; they have not broken the terms of a different contract signed previously with the Programme Operator;
- b) The Project Promoter and the Project Partners shall not be, at the time of a grant award procedure, bankrupt or wound up, convicted an offence concerning their professional conduct, not in compliance with their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes, the subject of a judgement for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering or any other illegal activity, subject to a conflict of interests or guilty of misrepresenting information.

2.2.3. Eligibility of Principal Investigator (PI):

- a) The Principal Investigator must have been awarded a PhD in the field of the project;
- b) The Principal Investigator (of any nationality) 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 project, or has the agreement of the PP for his or her employment at least for the duration of the project;
- c) The involvement of Project Investigator must be significant and sufficient for a proper implementation of the project;
- d) A researcher could be Principal Investigator for one single proposal.

² For additional information, the Norwegian companies which consider themselves to qualify as Research Organisations are requested to contact the Research Council of Norway and the Icelandic companies should contact RANNIS.

2.2. Eligibility Check

The type of projects eligible under this call is Collaborative Research Projects undertaken by research entities from Romania and at least one from the Donor States (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein).

The duration of a project could be up to 48 months.

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

- submission of proposal before the deadline date and time established in the call, using the online submission system www.uefiscdi-direct.ro;
- minimum conditions (such as number of participants, proposals written in English language, etc), 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);
- it is forbidden to submit a proposal which seeks to fund activities which had already obtained funding from other sources.

Apart of the eligibility criteria mentioned above, the content of the proposal must relate to the scope of the call/research programme. This request is verified in the later stage by evaluators according to Section 0 from Project Application Form – Part B and Criterion 0 from Evaluation Form. A proposal will be deemed ineligible on grounds of “scope” only in clear-cut cases.

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 and is withdrawn from any further examination.

The PO will publish on its website a list consisting of accepted and ineligible proposals, resulting from the eligibility check.

Project Promoters who wish to appeal may send their complaints by email to eeagrants@uefiscdi.ro, by fax to 021 3071919, or directly to the PO headquarters, within 3 workdays from the date of publication of the eligibility results. The list of received appeals will be published on PO website. Final decision about registered appeals will be made by PO within 5 working days.

3. Submission of proposals

The submission procedure consists of one mandatory stage, which is the **Project Application Form (Annex 1)**.

Proposals, in English language, are submitted electronically to the online submission platform: www.uefiscdi-direct.ro.

Proposals will be submitted no later than 1st October 2018, 4:00 PM (Romanian Time), the submission deadline.

Only the Project Promoter is authorized to submit a proposal, using own credentials (username and password). After submission, 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/or thematic area and call identifier;
- date and time of receipt.

Versions of proposals sent on paper, removable electronic storage medium, by email or by fax will not be regarded as having been received by the PO.

The PO may contact the Project Promoter in order to clarify matters such as eligibility.

The Project Application Form (Annex 1) consists of:

- **Annex 1.1 - The Project Application Form – Part A**, the *online form* containing basic project data, publishable summary of the project, details of the Project Promoter and Project Partners, key persons list, project plan, budget breakdown;
- **Annex 1.2 - The Project Application Form – Part B** in *.doc* format which should be downloaded from the call webpage and should be filled in offline and converted to *.pdf* format before uploading to the submission platform (www.uefiscdi-direct.ro);
- **Annex 1.3 - Ethics issues table (.doc)** - The proposed activities of the project shall comply with ethical principles and relevant national and international legislation, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the European Convention on Human Rights and its Supplementary Protocols. Particular attention shall be paid to the principle of proportionality, the right to privacy, the right to the protection of personal data, the right to the physical and mental integrity of a person, the right to non-discrimination and the need to ensure high levels of human health protection. The Ethics Issues table guides you with what is considered as ethical concerns to be addressed. The proposal which contravenes fundamental ethical principles may be excluded at any time from the process evaluation, selection and award.
- **Annex 1.4 - State Aid Declarations** according to State Aid Scheme³ in *.doc* format which should be downloaded from the call webpage and should be filled in offline, signed and

³ State Aid Scheme for financing the RD projects within the Programme (RO O2) financed through EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 and Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021.

scanned in .pdf format before uploading to the submission platform (www.uefiscdi-direct.ro); Project Promoter and Project Partners 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 company definition as small, medium and large	Entities other than research organizations
Declaration on a research organization's eligibility	Research Organizations
Declaration on an company's eligibility	Entities which are state aid beneficiaries
Declaration to certify the incentive effect for SMEs and large companies	Entities which are state aid beneficiaries

- **Annex 1.5 - VAT Declaration** - Project Promoter and Project Partners must declare if they reclaim or not the VAT from the national tax authorities in conformity with national tax regulation;
- **Declaration** of non-financing from other sources;
- **Declaration** of the PI certifying, on his/her own responsibility, the legality and accuracy of the information contained in the project application form and the information submitted in the online platform.

The Project Promoter may withdraw its proposal during evaluation process but not after the date of publishing the results. In order to do this, the Project Promoter must send a written request to the PO.

4. Evaluation of proposals

A detailed description of the review process and the selection criteria can be found in „Guide for Evaluators”.

The evaluation process rests on a number of well-established principles:

- **Excellence** – The projects selected for funding must demonstrate a high quality in the context of the key topics and criteria set out in the call.
- **Transparency** – the funding decisions must be based on clearly described rules and procedures, and applicants should receive adequate feed-back on the outcome of the evaluation of their proposals;
- **Fairness and impartiality** – All proposals submitted to the call are treated equally. They are evaluated impartially on their merits, irrespective of their origin or the identity of the applicants;

- **Confidentiality** – All proposals and related data, knowledge and documents communicated to PO are treated in confidence;
- **Efficiency and speed** – Evaluation, award and contract preparation should be as rapid as possible, commensurate with maintaining the quality of the evaluation, and respecting the legal framework;
- **Ethical and security considerations** – Any proposal which contravenes fundamental ethical principles may be excluded at any time from the process of evaluation, selection and award.

The proposals are evaluated by international independent experts with a high level of professional experience and a good international visibility in a specific research area. They are invited to evaluate the proposals closely related to their field of expertise. International experts must be resident and working outside of Romania, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

Experts are recruited from the EU Commissions Database of Experts and from national data base of international experts having experience in evaluating project proposals at international level. The PO draws up a list of appropriate experts using as main selection criteria their high level of expertise and their appropriate range of competencies.

For defining the list of experts, the gender balance criterion will also be taken into consideration.

The evaluation process of eligible proposals consists of the following steps: individual evaluation, consensus assessment and panel review.

4.1. Individual evaluation

Each eligible proposal is evaluated by at least three individual experts and is evaluated independently, online, in accordance with the selection and award criteria. After the individual evaluation of a proposal, the expert completes an *Individual Evaluation Report* confirming his/her individual reading and assessment, in accordance with the following criteria:

Criterion 0: Relevance in relation to the objectives and priorities of the call/research programme

– Yes/No

Criterion 1: Scientific and/or technical excellence – max. 5 points

Criterion 2: Quality and efficiency of the implementation and management, including quality and implementation capacity of the applicants and contribution to capacity and competence building – max. 5 points

Criterion 3: Potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of project results – max. 5 points

Experts examine the issues to be considered comprising each evaluation criterion and score these on the scale from 0 to 5. Half point scores may be given.

4.2. Consensus assessment

Once all the experts to whom a proposal has been assigned have completed their individual assessments, the evaluation progresses to a consensus assessment. At this stage, each evaluator has access to the scores and comments of the other evaluators. If they consider it necessary, the experts may adjust their initial scores and consequently the corresponding arguments/comments.

The outcome of the consensus step is the Consensus Report (consolidated report) elaborated by one of the three experts, acting as rapporteur, based on individual evaluations and discussions with the other two experts (through a “forum” type interface available on evaluation web platform).

If during the consensus process it is found to be impossible to bring all the experts to a common point of view on any particular aspect of the proposal, the PO may ask additional expert to examine the proposal.

4.3. Panel review

The panel is the final step involving international experts. It allows them to formulate their recommendations to the Programme Committee having had an overview of the results of the consensus step.

The panels are appointed by the PO for each of the thematic areas. They may comprise international experts involved at the consensus step, new experts or mixture of the two.

The main task of the panels is to examine and compare the consensus reports, to check on the consistency of the scores and comments, where necessary, propose a new set of score or revision of comments. The panels also must resolve cases where a minority view was recorded in the consensus report.

The outcome of the panel review is a Panel Report, consist of:

- Final Report for each proposal (the Final Report could be the Consensus Report, if panel agrees);
- A list of proposals passing all thresholds and the panel recommendations for priority order;
- A list of evaluated proposals having failed one or more thresholds;
- A list of any proposals having been found ineligible during the evaluation;
- A summary of any other recommendations of the panel.

4.4. Thresholds and the ranking lists

A proposal can obtain a total number of 15 points in the evaluation procedure. In order to be considered for funding, a proposal must receive at least a score of 9, and pass all the thresholds according to the following values:

Criterion	Thresholds
<i>Relevance in relation to the objectives and priorities of the call / research programme</i>	YES
<i>Scientific and/or technical excellence</i>	3/5
<i>Quality and efficiency of the implementation and management, including quality and implementation capacity of the applicants and contribution to capacity and competence building</i>	3/5
<i>Potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of project results</i>	3/5

Based on the evaluation results, the PO draws up the 7 preliminary ranking lists (one for each thematic area of the Programme (6) and one for the projects primarily falling under key topic “Roma inclusion and empowerment”).

5. Award of project grants

The PO prepares a preliminary ranking lists, one for each thematic area and one for the projects under the key topic “Roma inclusion and empowerment” with a suggested grant amount for each proposal. The preliminary ranking lists are split out into 3 sections: proposals passing all thresholds; proposals having failed one or more thresholds; proposals having been found ineligible during the evaluation.

Prior to the Programme Committee meeting, the PO will provide access to the Programme Committee members at evaluated proposals, individual reviews, consensus reports and panel reports. The task of the Programme Committee is to decide about the final ranking order of the proposals on the basis of the total consensus scores assigned to the projects and the panel reports.

Within the groups of equally scored proposals for each thematic area, the criteria for ranking are applied in the following order:

- 1) Bilateral cooperation
- 2) Gender balance in the project
- 3) Young researchers (up to 5 years after awarding PhD)

Within the Social sciences and Humanities thematic area there will be an emphasis on gender studies and social inclusion studies.

While making recommendation for funding, the Programme Committee takes into consideration the overall quality of the proposals (final ranking lists), a similar success rate for each thematic area and the total earmarked budget to the call.

In case the final ranking lists, approved by the PC, reveals that a small amount of funding prevents the inclusion of another project into the final list, the PO may, acting on a proposal from

the PC, apply minor budget cuts uniformly across all projects, not exceeding 3% of the requested budget.

The PO issues individual decisions to award a grant to projects based on the final ranking lists approved by the Programme Committee, for those projects for which grants are available.

A number of proposals may be kept in reserve to allow for eventualities such as the failure of negotiations on projects, the withdrawal of proposals, budget savings agreed during the negotiation, or the availability of additional budget from other sources.

The lists of selected projects are published on the PO website.

6. Appeals

The Project Promoters who wish to appeal the final results could send their complains by email to eeagrants@uefiscdi.ro, by fax to 021 3071919, or directly to the PO headquarters, within 3 workdays from the date of publication of the final results. The list of received appeals will be published on PO website.

The comments and scores given by experts and members of panels will not be subject to appeals. Grounds for appeals include conflicts of interest and errors in administrative procedure.

Final decision about registred appeals will made by PO after consulting the Programme Committe members.

7. Negotiation of proposals

The Project Promoters of proposals that have been awarded a grant are invited to begin negotiations.

In addition to any points raised in the Consensus Report and/or Final Report, as applicable, the applicants may receive requests for further administrative, legal, technical and financial information necessary for the preparation of the project contract. The PO may request changes, possibly including adjustments to the budget. The PO will justify all requested changes.

If it proves impossible to reach an agreement with a Project Promoter within a reasonable deadline, the PO may impose, negotiations may be terminated and the proposal rejected by PO decision. 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.

The PO may also terminate negotiations if the Project Promoter proposes to modify the project to the extent that it becomes significantly different form the proposal that has been evaluated.

8. Contracting of Projects

Once the negotiations have been successfully finalised, the PO proceeds to the conclusion of a formal Project Contract between the PO and Project Promoter.

The Project Promoter signs a Partnership Agreement (template provided in Annex 2) 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;
- a detailed budget;
- intellectual property rights;
- provisions on dispute resolutions.

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 7.7 of the Regulation.

Thus, the PP and the Project Partners agree to ensure the necessary administrative support, to provide access to all necessary infrastructures, to support the implementation of the Collaborative Research Project in good conditions and to employ the members of the research teams, while complying all legal provisions in force, if the project is selected for funding.

In case of personal constraints and the impossibility to continue the project implementation, the Principal Investigator jointly with the PP and Project Partners will carry out all due diligence for ensuring the proper continuity of the project (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 PO.

9. Finance and Budget

9.1. The currency used for the project proposal and implementation

The currency to be used for proposal submission is EURO.

The grant contract will be concluded in RON. The value in RON will be determined by using the official EC exchange rate from the date (month) of the contract (Info Euro).

9.2. The budget

The amount of EUR 16.312.500 is made available under this call.

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

Duration of a project could be up to 48 months with the possibility of 12 months extension, without additional funds.

No less than 10% of the total eligible expenditure of the call shall be dedicated to projects falling primarily within the key topic 'Roma inclusion and empowerment'.

Grants from the Programme may be up to 100% of total eligible expenditure of the project. The project grant rate shall in all cases be set at a level that complies with the State Aid rules in force and takes in to account any and all other forms of public support granted to project. The remaining costs of the project shall be provided or obtained by the Project Promoter.

The budgetary allocation to Project 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 DS entities participating in the project shall normally not exceed 40% of the total eligible costs of the project.

9.3. Eligibility of expenditures

Eligible expenditures of projects are those actually incurred within the project, 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 detailed 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 objective(s) of the project and its expected outcome(s), in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular through being recorded in the accounting records of the Project Promoter and/or Project Partner and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the Project Promoter and/or Project Partner is established 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/or the Project Partner.

The Project Promoter's 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.

9.3.1 Eligible direct expenditures

The eligible direct expenditures for a project are those expenditures which are identified by the Project Promoter and/or the Project Partner, 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, as follows:

- a) costs of staff assigned to the project;
- b) Travel and subsistence allowances for staff taking part in the project;
- c) Cost of new or second-hand equipment;
- d) Costs of consumables and supplies;
- e) 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.

9.3.1.1 Staff Costs

The cost of staff assigned to the project (researchers, master and PhD students, technicians and other research supporting staff directly involved in the project, person responsible for administrative and financial management of the project), comprising actual salaries plus social security charges and other statutory costs included in the remuneration, provided that this corresponds to the Project Promoter's and Project Partner's 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.583/2015 (upper ceiling) with subsequent changes and additions.

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

The PO 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.

9.3.1.2 Travel Costs

Travel 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.

9.3.1.3 Equipment

When new or second hand equipment is purchased, 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 considered eligible expenditure, in compliance with applicable rules on the state aid scheme.

For Romanian partners, the rules of depreciation, according to national legislation, apply only to companies. 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.

9.3.1.4 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 Project Application Form.

The consumables and supplies must be necessary for the project.

9.3.1.5 Other costs

Costs entailed by other contracts awarded by a Project Promoter 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 for each project.

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 which provide a substantial part of the workforce of the project.

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, fees for publication/open access, etc.
- Audit costs.

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

9.3.2 Indirect costs (overheads)

Indirect eligible costs shall be determined by applying a flat rate of 25% of the total direct eligible costs, excluding direct eligible costs for subcontracting and the costs of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the beneficiary, as well as financial support to third parties.

The indirect costs could include salaries for administrative staff which are not part of staff costs (financial department representatives, acquisitions responsible, PR officer etc).

9.4. 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 FMC/NMFA, the National Focal Point or the applicable law and costs of financial services imposed by the project contract;
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- exchange losses;
- recoverable VAT;
- costs that are covered by other sources;
- fines, penalties and costs of litigation, except where litigations is an integral and necessary component for achieving the outcomes of the project ;
- excessive or reckless expenditure.

9.5. 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 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.: Staff 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 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, the Project Promoter will be advised in writing.

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

10. Reporting and Payments

The Project Promoter transmits the reports and other deliverables to the PO exclusively by electronic means using the forms and templates provided in the www.uefiscodi-direct.ro platform.

All the financial flows between Program Operator and Project Promoters and between Project Promoter and Romanian Project Partners will be in RON. All the financial flows between Project Promoters and Donor States Project Partners will be in EURO.

The Project Promoter will report to the Program Operator, in RON, all the expenses incurred at its own level and by its Romanian Project Partners.

The Project Promoter will report to the Program Operator, in EURO, all the expenses incurred by the Donor States Partners. Donor States Partners will report to Project Promoter in EURO.

10.1. Annual reporting⁴

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

- A technical report containing :
 - an explanation of the work carried out by the participants;
 - an overview of the progress of work towards the objectives of the project, including milestones and deliverables identified in the project contract. The report must include explanations justifying the differences between work expected to be carried out in accordance with the project contract and that actually carried out;
 - details on the exploitation and dissemination of the results, and – if required in the project contract- an updated plan for the exploitation and dissemination of the results;
 - a summary for publication by the PO.
- Financial Report containing:

⁴ The 1st technical report must contain the progress of the work for at least 6 months of project implementation.

- An individual financial statement from each participant for the reporting period concerned. For the Project Promoter and Romanian Project Partners the financial report will be in RON; for the Donor State Project Partners the financial report will be in EURO.
- An explanation of the use of resources and the information on subcontracting;
- a summary financial statement from PP consolidating the individual financial statement for the reporting period concerned, in RON for PP and Romanian Project Partners and in EURO for Donor State Project Partners.

10.2. Final reporting⁵

The Project Promoter submits a final report within 60 days after the project end. This final report shall comprise:

- A final technical report containing:
 - an overview of the results and their exploitation and dissemination;
 - the conclusion on the project;
 - the socio-economic impact of the project;
 - a summary for publication by the PO.
- A final financial report containing:
- final individual financial statement from each participant for the final reporting period, as defined in the project contract. For the Project Promoter and Romanian Project Partners the financial report will be in RON; for the Donor State Project Partners the financial report will be in EURO.
- a final summary financial statement from PP consolidating the individual financial statement for the all reporting periods and including the request for payment of the balance (final payment claim), in RON for PP and Romanian Project Partners and in EURO for Donor State Project Partners
- distribution of the financial contribution between the Project Promoter and Project Partners;
- An audit certificate on the financial statements for each participant (as applicable).

10.3. Reporting on scientific publications

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

⁵ If the implementation of the projects ends in the first 6 months of the year, then the annual report for the previous year is not requested separately.

As part of the final project report, the Project Promoter will be required to submit a full list of publications relating to the results of the projects.

All publications shall include the following statement to indicate that results of the project were 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 Grants 2014-2021 operated by UEFISCDI, under Project Contract No xxx.”

10.4. Payments

According to the Regulation for the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, payments of the project grant can take the form of advance payment, interim payments and final payment.

The purpose of the advance payment and the annual interim payments is to ensure that the Project Promoters and Project Partners have a positive cash flow during the project implementation and appropriate provisions shall be set in the project contract and the partnership agreement.

- An advance payment of a percentage of the total grant amount shall be made upon signature of the contract between the Programme Operator and the Project Promoter. The value of the advance payment, in all cases, should cover the first year of the implementation of the project.
- Interim payments will ensure positive cash flow for all subsequent reporting periods (year). The interim payments will be granted at the beginning of the subsequent reporting periods and will be calculated based on the cash balance at the end of the previous reporting period.

Payments are made by the PO to the Project Promoter within 15 days after the PO's approval of payment requests. The Project Promoter should ensure that all appropriate payments to the other Project Partners are made without unjustified delay and no later than 15 days after receiving of the payment from the PO.

10.5. Certificate on financial statement and proof of expenditures

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 325,000.

A certificate by an independent auditor qualified to carry statutory audits of accounting documents, certifying that the claimed costs are incurred in accordance with the Guideline for Research programmes, the Regulation, the national law and relevant national accounting practices shall be accepted as sufficient proof of expenditure incurred.

A certificate issued by a competent and independent public officer recognised by relevant national authorities as having a budget and financial control capacity over the entity incurring the costs and who has not been involved in the preparation of the financial statements, certifying that the claimed costs are incurred in accordance with the Guideline for Research programmes, the Regulation, the national law and relevant national accounting practices, shall also be accepted as sufficient proof of expenditure incurred.

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

11. Contact Persons

UEFISCDI:

Monica Cruceru – office: + 40 21 308 05 61

Email address: eeagrants@uefiscdi.ro

IT department (technical support for submission and evaluation platform): support@uefiscdi-direct.ro

DDPPs:

RCN - The Research Council of Norway

Birgit Jacobsen – office: +47 22 03 70 95

Email address: bija@forskningsradet.no

Rannís/Icelandic Research Centre

Viðar Helgason – office: +354 515 5800

Email address: vidar@rannis.is