

EEA and Norway Grants 2021 - 2028

Guidance Note on the funds earmarked for projects related to challenges experienced as a result of the invasion of Ukraine

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Introduction

The European Union (EU) and the Donors agreed in Protocol 38D and in the bilateral agreement with Norway that a total of €100 million from the EEA and € 83 million from the Norwegian financial mechanisms shall be made available for projects related to challenges experienced as a result of the invasion of Ukraine. The earmarked funds will hereafter be referred to as the “Ukraine allocation”.

This guidance describes how the Ukraine allocation shall be operationalized in line with the Protocol, the Regulations, and the Blue Book, and what the reporting requirements shall be. Annexed is a non-exhaustive, non-binding list of examples of topics and activities that could be funded through national programmes.

Aim and approach

Geopolitical tension and conflicts are impacting Europe. Enhancing the resilience in the Beneficiary States to meet the challenges experienced as a result of the invasion in Ukraine is an important political objective. The Beneficiary States have been impacted differently and are therefore best positioned to assess the needs and decide upon relevant projects and initiatives within the parameters mentioned below.

The Ukraine allocation will follow the general rules of the Grants and should be integrated as part of relevant programmes and funds agreed in the MOUs as an earmarked allocation.

If possible, the MoUs should point to the relevant programmes for this earmarked allocation. The Concept Notes should if possible, where relevant, identify the use of the Ukraine allocation, including choice of modality (calls vs. predefined projects, bilateral funds). Where relevant, the Programme Agreements will indicate the modalities that will be used to realise the Ukraine allocation.

The Blue Book provides the thematic frame and guides funding channelled through the programme areas and the three funds. Accordingly, hard measures (infrastructure and equipment) shall be allowed in line with the Regulations and requirements in the relevant programme areas in the Blue Book.

The Protocol and bilateral agreement state that all programme and activities shall be consistent with respect to the common values and principles and abstain from supporting operations that may fail to do so.

Bilateral funds used for this allocation are not limited to the Blue Book but do need to respect the common values and principles. According to the Regulations there are limited possibilities to support hard measures through the bilateral funds. It is also required that bilateral funds used to address challenges experienced as a result of the invasion in Ukraine include a donor partner.

Fund Allocation

The Ukraine allocation will in line with the Regulation be distributed across the EEA and Norway Grants financial mechanisms according to the pro rata distribution of the country allocations and the three funds managed by the Donor States (the civil society fund, the international partner organisations fund, and the fund for social dialogue and decent work).

€160.21 million (€ 88 million for the EEA Financial Mechanism and € 72.21 million for the Norwegian Mechanism) will be divided between the Beneficiary States according to their shares of the country specific allocations and reflected in the MOUs, while the rest will be distributed to the Civil Society Fund, the IPO Fund and the Fund for Social Dialogue and Decent Work (Norway Grants only).

Key Stakeholders

National and local authorities, civil society organisations, the private sector and donor partners are key stakeholders.

Collaboration with Ukrainian institutions and partners could enhance capacity and ensure mutual benefits but is not a requirement. Beneficiary states bordering Ukraine could in line with the Regulation fund cross-border initiatives.

Monitoring and Reporting

Existing systems will be used to track progress, financial allocations, and programme outcomes. For programmes where the Ukraine allocation forms a substantial part of a programme, progress shall be reported through the annual country report and could be discussed in the annual meetings.

There will also be a system of reporting at the project level for all programmes. The programme operators and fund operators will be responsible for inserting information in the project level information (PLIs) in Grace as follows: Tick off a policy marker that employs a traffic light system to indicate the extent to which projects have activities related to the Ukraine allocation, with the three options 'Fundamental' (i.e. direct, main purpose), 'Relevant' (i.e. indirect, secondary purpose) and 'Not relevant'. This should be done at the latest in the final programme report.

Annex:

Examples of topics for support through national programmes

Some of the current challenges experienced in the Beneficiary States as a result of the invasion in Ukraine are likely to remain for years to come, and present potential areas of support for the Grants. Below are *examples* of topics for projects/activities that could be developed and implemented with the earmarked funds, grouped under four thematic categories and aiming to foster resilience, integration, and sustainable development, adhering to the Grants' core values.

1. Addressing the Social and Economic Impact of the War in the Beneficiary States

Examples of relevant Programme Areas:

- ***Green Business and Innovation***
- ***Green Transition***
- ***Research and Innovation***
- ***Local Development, Good Governance, and Inclusion***

Examples of initiatives:

- Incentives for businesses adopting low-carbon technologies.
- Green skills training for refugees, including Ukrainian refugees, and host communities to boost employment.
- Research calls on Ukraine-related topics, support for Ukrainian researchers and scholarships (e.g., socio-political, economic, cultural impacts of the war, migration, children and education, trauma, rehabilitation, environmental issues) with or without Ukrainian partners.
- Trilateral cooperation in different fields between Donor, Ukraine, and Beneficiary States authorities in all Blue Book areas.
- Efforts to enhance energy security and infrastructure in Beneficiary States, including investment in renewable energy.

Potential Beneficiaries: Economically disadvantaged communities, research institutions, local businesses.

2. Supporting Information Integrity

Examples of relevant Programme Areas:

- ***Green Transition***
- ***Research and Innovation***
- ***Education and training***
- ***Culture***
- ***Local development, good governance and inclusion***
- ***Disaster Prevention and Preparedness***
- ***Serious and organised crime***
- ***Asylum, migration and integration***

- ***Institutional Cooperation and Capacity Building***

Examples of initiatives:

- Support measures to combat climate mis/disinformation, promote resilience, and foster informed climate dialogue.
- Strengthening governance mechanisms to build resilience against disinformation at the local level.
- Research calls on relevant topics such as information integrity and disinformation.
- Engaging citizens in science as to promote critical thinking and supporting an enhanced understanding of the process behind scientific findings to build trust in evidence-based information and facts.
- Supporting fact-checking platforms.
- Media literacy projects and campaigns, including in schools.
- Promoting cultural projects that enhance public awareness of the impact of disinformation.
- Addressing “cyber security” and “hybrid threats” which often include disinformation campaigns.
- Strengthening public emergency and crisis information management at different levels.
- Projects to strengthen capacity of public institutions to promote access to reliable and accurate information sources and building resilience against information manipulation and misinformation.
- Projects to strengthen independent media’s capacity to effectively manage information pollution including algorithms, content created with generative artificial intelligence, and digitally manipulated information.
- Projects increasing awareness and resilience to information pollution of the general public.
- Development of evidence-based, proportionate, and human rights-based information integrity policies.

Potential Beneficiaries: Civil society organizations, independent media, and the general public.

3. Capacity Building in Relevant Key Areas

Examples of relevant Programme Areas:

- ***Green business and innovation***
- ***Education, Training, and Youth Employment***
- ***Research and Innovation***
- ***Culture***
- ***Disaster Prevention and Preparedness***

Examples of initiatives:

- Lessons learnt/sharing experiences on the impacts and consequences of the war on society, economy, health, education, cultural heritage and environment in the Beneficiary State and/or in Ukraine.
- Participation of Ukrainian researchers in Grants’ projects.

- Capacity building in research administration (e.g., a pre-defined project on cooperation between the research councils of Ukraine, Donor states, and Poland/Romania).
- “Grants for grants” schemes to allow researchers in Poland and/or Romania to write applications for Horizon Europe funding.
- Support to inter-institutional partnerships between Poland/Romania (Donor) and Ukrainian universities.
- Providing placements for Ukrainian academics and students in Beneficiary states (support to Beneficiary State universities).
- Training for first responders on cross-border disaster coordination.
- Community-based disaster resilience projects.
- Digitalisation of public services to improve efficiency and access to information, including for persons in vulnerable situations.
- Building national and regional capacity to manage future crises, including the possibility of further waves of refugees, economic disruptions, or military escalation, is critical for long-term preparedness.
- Providing financial support, training in resilience-building to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and access to digital tools to help SMEs weather the economic turbulence resulting from the war.

Potential Beneficiaries: Educational institutions, research bodies, and local communities.

4. Services Needed for Refugees to Live Safely and Securely in Host Countries

Examples of relevant Programme Areas:

- ***Asylum, Migration, and Integration***
- ***Local Development, Good Governance, and Inclusion***
- ***Public Health***
- ***Education, Training, and Youth Employment***
- ***Public Health***
- ***Domestic and Gender-Based Violence***
- ***Organised Crime***

Examples of Initiatives:

- Improving capacity of national institutions, public bodies, and NGOs working in the field of asylum, migration, and integration.
- Projects addressing gaps and needs in asylum systems, including the temporary protection regime.
- Projects related to inclusion and integration (including Ukrainian refugees - benefitting also local communities), focusing on housing, health, education, and employment. This could be interpretation services, language courses, training for teachers, afterschool activities for refugee children, psychological support in schools, and tailored support for Ukrainian students.
- Action addressing human trafficking, and support for victims, especially women and girls, and as victims of sexual violence.
- Measures facilitating voluntary return to Ukraine - in due time.

Potential Beneficiaries: Refugees, host communities, public institutions.