

Rules for the Preparation, Selection, Approval and Implementation of the V4EaP Flagship Projects Financed by the International Visegrad Fund

Under Articles 2 and 20 of the Statute of the International Visegrad Fund (hereinafter the “Fund”), the Council of Ambassadors (hereinafter the “Council”) is issuing these conditions to outline the rules of procedure for the preparation, selection, approval and implementation of the V4EaP Flagship Projects (hereinafter “Flagship Projects”) in the areas determined by the Statute.

Chapter I—Aims of the Flagship Projects

Article 1

The main aim of the V4EaP Flagship Projects is to support the implementation of long-term projects of strategic character focusing on providing access to the Visegrad Group (hereinafter “V4”) countries’ democratic transformation and integration as well as regional cooperation experience. V4EaP Flagship projects will aim to support the reform processes, political association and economic integration with the EU, strengthen the institutional capacity, civil society building and transformation of the Eastern Partnership (hereinafter “EaP”) countries.

Chapter II—Project Eligibility and Preparation

Article 2

Any legal entity or natural person primarily from EaP countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) and V4 countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia) is eligible for support, provided that the nature of the submitted project fulfills Flagship Projects aims. Preference is given to projects organized by non-profit and non-governmental organizations, public educational, cultural and research institutions and municipalities or local governments.

Article 3

Applicants can apply for Flagship Projects provided that their project involves entities from all four V4 countries and at least two EaP countries (including the applicant, if relevant).

Article 4

Applicants shall prepare each project according to the Rules and the on-line application form for the Flagship Projects available on the website of the Fund (www.visegradfund.org). If necessary, additional information about the project can be enclosed with the hard-copy version of the application form and delivered to the Fund within the deadline.

Article 5

The criteria for project selection are as follows:

- topic and content of the project, its originality and adherence to the Aims of the Flagship Projects (Chapter I) or priorities for the given year available on the website of the Fund
- development of civil society and regional cooperation
- transfer of know-how of the Visegrad cooperation
- quality, relevance and contribution of project partners
- multiplicative effect
- sustainability of the project
- transparency and accuracy of the budget

- previous experience with the applicant (where applicable)
- previous applicant’s experience with the activities in the EaP countries/region will be also taken into consideration during the selection procedure
- proposed media coverage and public relations, networking effect

Article 6

An applicant, who obtained funding for a Flagship Project in the past, can reapply, provided that the previous Flagship Project was completed and the Final Report was duly approved by the Fund. Flagship Projects can be, however, implemented simultaneously with other grant programs of the Fund.

Chapter III—Application Form/Project Proposal

Article 7

The application form shall be filled out in the on-line application system in English. All formal communication with the Fund must be conducted in English.

Article 8

The application form must be submitted both on-line and in a hard-copy version together with all compulsory annexes within the given deadline to the following address: International Visegrad Fund, Kráľovské údolie 8, 811 02 Bratislava, Slovak Republic.

Article 9

Calls for proposals are announced once a year, unless otherwise stipulated on the Fund’s website.

Article 10

Applicants will be sent a written confirmation (via e-mail) of the receipt of their on-line applications.

Chapter IV—Project Selection and Approval

Article 11

The evaluation procedure may last up to 60 working days after the deadline. Applicants shall take this fact into account when preparing the project implementation and its time frame. The Fund cannot consider or support projects that start before their due approval.

Article 12

The Fund shall review application forms according to their compliance with the Fund’s formal requirements and has the right to verify any data provided by the applicant or to request additional information, if necessary.

Article 13

The Executive Director of the Fund (hereinafter “the Executive Director”)—in cooperation with the Selection Committee comprising the Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director, the respective Program Manager, Program Coordinator and respective Honorary Trustees prepares a written statement of projects recommended for approval and documentation of all submitted projects to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of V4 countries and then to the Council.

Article 14

At its session the Council shall either accept or reject projects. The Council can also accept a project with reservations, in which case the applicant shall make the necessary changes. Decisions made by the Council are final and shall present no grounds for any form of appeal and require no detailed reasoning.

Article 15

The Fund informs all applicants of results in writing. The Fund is under no obligation to justify any decision, nor is it obliged to return application forms or any of their parts to respective applicants.

Article 16

The Executive Director is authorized to sign a contract once a project is approved by the Council.

Chapter V—Contractual Terms

Article 17

A grantee has an obligation to specify a bank account for the purposes of the grant disbursements realized by the Fund. The grantee is obliged to submit its account number via the online system within 20 working days of project approval by the Council.

Article 18

The grantee shall set up a website or a separate sub-site within an existing website dedicated to the project; such project website can be set up as part of a social networking website (hereinafter “Project Website”), unless stipulated otherwise in the contract. Each project website shall have its own URL, shall visibly contain the Fund’s logo with a direct link to www.visegradfund.org and contain direct links to the websites of each of the project partners, where applicable. The grantee shall submit the URL of the Project Website via the on-line system within 20 working days of project approval by the Council.

Article 19

Contracts are made available to grantees via the on-line system. The grantee is obliged to check all data in the contract and approve it via the on-line system within 40 working days of its posting in the on-line system.

Article 20

The contractual period starts on the day the contract—approved by the grantee—is signed by the Executive Director. The Fund shall inform the grantee of the signing in writing (via e-mail) and subsequently shall prepare the contract and send it to the grantee by post. The grantee is obliged to return the signed contract to the Fund within 20 working days of its delivery.

Article 21

Failing to fulfill the conditions stipulated in Articles 17, 18, 19 and 20 may result in financial penalty in the amount of 20% of the approved budget or in termination of the grant. The decision shall be made by the Executive Director and approved by the nearest Council.

Chapter VI—Project Implementation

Article 22

The grantee is obliged to implement the approved project in compliance with the time frame and financial conditions stipulated in the contract. The project shall be financed by the Fund at up to 80% of its total cost. The time frame for the implementation of Flagship Project shall be between 12 and 36 months.

Article 23

The grantee and the project partners are obliged to acknowledge the Fund's support of the project (1) on all premises where events take place as part of the project (in the form of a banner or flag), (2) in all printed materials distributed as part of the project and (3) on all websites connected with the project, including the grantee's and project partners' websites (see Article 19). All acknowledgements must carry the visible logo of the Fund and, if on-line, must be directly linked to www.visegradfund.org. Acknowledgements in event venues must be present for the duration of the events; acknowledgements on-line must remain active for the whole contractual period of the Flagship Project, at minimum.

Article 24

The grantee shall issue a press release or public invitation regarding the Project, if possible, for every public event that takes place as part of the Flagship Project. A maximum of three events may be covered through a single press release. Each press release or public invitation must be uploaded onto the on-line system at least 48 hours prior to the event and disseminated to relevant media. Each press release must contain acknowledgement of the Fund's support of the project.

Article 25

The grantee is obliged to maintain an up-to-date calendar of events that occur as part of the Flagship Project. Any change in the dates, venues or types and names of events originally stipulated in the application form must be updated in the on-line system at least 10 working days prior to the planned date.

Article 26

The grantee shall immediately notify the Fund of any changes in contractual conditions (e.g. changes of the budget, project partners, contractual period or project name) in a letter signed by the grantee's statutory representative accompanied with a copy of relevant documents declaring the changes. The Executive Director decides on such changes and, if necessary, submits them for approval to the Council. All changes are possible only within the contractual period.

Article 27

The Fund reserves the right to carry out monitoring visits of projects and, if necessary, to request additional documentation regarding each project. The grantee is obliged to allow visits from the staff of the Fund or from personnel authorized to do so by the Fund and to provide any materials related to the project upon request.

Article 28

Failure to fulfill the conditions stipulated in Articles 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 27 may result in financial penalty in the amount of 20% of the approved budget or in termination of the grant. The decision shall be made by the Executive Director and approved by the nearest Council.

Chapter VII—Project Disbursement

Article 29

Grants shall be disbursed in two or three tranches. The number and amount of the tranches shall be specified in the contract. The first tranche shall be transferred within 15 working days of the Fund's receipt of the signed contract. The second tranche—if not final—can be disbursed upon the approval of the Interim Report. The final tranche shall be set to 20% of the approved sum and can be disbursed upon the approval of the Final Report.

Article 30

The grantee shall conduct bank transfer (non-cash) transactions, where possible. Cash operations shall be limited to 20% of the approved sum.

Article 31

Up to 15% of the approved sum may be used to cover project overhead costs (indirect costs linked to the project implementation).

Article 32

All financial documents (receipts, bills, contracts and invoices) related to a project must be kept for period of at least 10 years and copies thereof delivered to the Fund upon request.

Article 33

The grantee shall deliver to the Fund an Interim and Financial Report (if applicable); Final Report and Financial Report accompanied by an Audit Report. All reports related to the grant implementation must be separately signed by the grantee's statutory representative.

Article 34

Failure to fulfill the conditions stipulated in Articles 30, 31, 32, and 33 may result in financial penalty in the amount of 20% of the approved budget or in termination of the grant. The decision shall be made by the Executive Director and approved by the nearest Council.

Article 35

Requirements for the preparation of the Interim, Final Report, Financial and Audit Report, all additional instructions, as well as relevant forms are available on the Fund's website.

Article 36

All disputes that may occur during the implementation of granted projects shall be submitted to consultation between the Executive Director and the grantee.

Article 37

These Rules shall enter into force on the day of their approval by the Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.