Iceland Liechtenstein Norway grants

EEA Grants **Portugal**
Mecanismo Financeiro do Espaço Económico Europeu
European Economic Area Financial Mechanism
Unidade Nacional de Gestão
National Focal Point

National Focal Point
EEA Grants 2021-2028
Portugal

Call #1 – Bilateral Fund

Defence, Security & Foreign Policy

Frequently Asked Questions – FAQ

Index

1. Background and Objectives 4

1. What are the EEA Grants? 4
2. What is the Bilateral Fund? 4
3. What is the objective of Bilateral Fund Open Call #1 at national level? 4
4. What are the deadlines for submitting applications? 4
5. What is meant by a Bilateral Initiative? 4

2. Partnerships 4

6. Who can act as a promoter? 4
7. Entities with the same tax registration number can be promotors in different initiatives? 5
8. What are the obligations of the promoter? 5
9. Are natural persons eligible? 5
10. Is it mandatory to have a partner? 5
11. What is a partner? 5
12. What are the obligations of the partner(s)? 5
13. What is meant by bilateral value? 5
14. How is the partnership formalised? 6
15. Do partners receive funding directly from the NFP? 6
16. What do the different allocations for Norway and Iceland mean? 6

3. Activities 6

17. What activities are eligible? 6
18. What are the expected results of the supported initiatives? 6
19. Where can the activities take place? 7
20. What is the duration of the projects? 7

4. Elegibility and grants 7

21. What is the amount of funding available? 7
22. What is the co-financing rate? 7
23. Is co-financing required? 7

24. Is there a minimum and maximum budget for applications? 7
25. What forms of funding are eligible? 7
26. Can the budget submitted in the application be modified before signing the Acceptance Agreement? 7
27. Can the budget be modified after signing the Acceptance Agreement? 7
28. What costs are eligible? 7
29. Are staff costs eligible? 8
30. Are indirect costs eligible? 8
31. Is VAT eligible? 8
32. Is the purchase of equipment eligible? 8
33. What does “costs per activity” mean? 8
34. What are the start and end dates for eligibility of costs? 8
35. Do partners have a separate budget? 8

5. Application preparation 8

36. Can the application be prepared with the support of external consultants? 8
37. What documents must be attached to the application? 8
38. In which cases is the single/autonomous declaration required? 9
39. Which output and result indicators should be considered? 9

6. Application submission 9

40. How can the application be submitted? 9
41. In which language must the application be submitted? 9
42. Do foreign entities have additional requirements? 9
43. Under Bilateral Fund Open Call #1 at national level, can I submit more than one application? 9

7. Assessment and decision 9

44. How are applications assessed? 9
45. Who decides which applications are approved? 10
46. Can external experts support the assessment of applications? 10
47. What happens if the application is approved with conditions or required changes? 10

8. Post-approval and implementation 10

48. What documents must be submitted after approval of the application? 10
49. What is the Partnership Agreement? 10
50. How is the funding paid? 10
51. What do payments depend on? 11
52. What reports are required? 11
53. Is there monitoring? 11
54. Can the initiatives generate revenue? 11
55. Is the funding subject to State aid rules? 11
56. What documents must be submitted in relation to State aid? 11
57. Do public procurement rules apply? 11

9. Management, support and complaints 11

58. Who manages the Bilateral Fund at national level? 11
59. Can I appeal the decision? 11
60. How can questions be submitted? 11
61. How can a complaint be submitted? 12

1. Background and Objectives

1. What are the EEA Grants?

The EEA Grants are a financial mechanism known as the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism (EEA FM), through which the donor countries – Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein – provide financial support to European Union Member States with GDP per capita below the European average, including Portugal.
The EEA Grants have two main objectives:

- To reduce economic and social disparities within the European Economic Area;
- To strengthen bilateral relations between beneficiary countries and donor countries.

2. What is the Bilateral Fund?

The Bilateral Fund is an instrument of the EEA Grants that finances initiatives aimed at strengthening relations between Portugal and the donor countries, through institutional cooperation, knowledge sharing, and the development of joint initiatives. The National Focal Point (NFP) is responsible for implementing the Bilateral Fund at national level.

3. What is the objective of Bilateral Fund Open Call #1 at national level?

The objective of Bilateral Fund Open Call #1 is to support initiatives in the areas of **defence**, **security** and **foreign policy** that promote bilateral cooperation between Portugal and the donor countries Norway and Iceland.
The call focuses on **topics** such as hybrid threats, critical infrastructure, cybersecurity, maritime security, and the future of European defence cooperation.
It aims to stimulate shared interests, promote joint initiatives with clear bilateral value and tangible results, and foster sustainable cooperation between the entities involved.

4. What are the deadlines for submitting applications?

Bilateral Fund Open Call #1 is available for consultation and clarification of questions from 10 April to 11 May 2026.
The submission of applications will take place between 11 May (09:00 UTC+1) and 15 September 2026 (17:00 UTC+1).

5. What is meant by a Bilateral Initiative?

A Bilateral Initiative is a set of activities developed in partnership between entities from Portugal and the donor countries (Norway and Iceland), ensuring mutual benefits and tangible results.

2. Partnerships

6. Who can act as a promoter?

Promoters may be public or private entities, whether commercial or non-commercial, including civil society organisations, provided that they are legally established as a legal entity in Portugal, Norway or Iceland.

7. Entities with the same tax registration number can be promotors in different initiatives?

Entities that share the same tax registration number but are administratively, financially and/or scientifically independent will be considered separate entities, to be assessed on a case-by-case basis during the administrative eligibility check.
For example, in the case of two applications from two faculties of the same university that share the same tax identification number, the applications shall be considered to have been submitted by separate applicants.

8. What are the obligations of the promoter?

The promoter is responsible for submitting the application and, if selected for funding, for managing the initiative, including the submission of reports and the execution of the budget.

9. Are natural persons eligible?

No.

10. Is it mandatory to have a partner?

Yes.

11. What is a partner?

A partner is an entity that actively participates in the design and implementation of the bilateral initiative. Service providers are not considered partners.
Partners may be public or private entities, whether profit or non-profit, legally established in Portugal, Norway, Iceland, other EEA Grants beneficiary states, or international organisations.
The participation of at least one Portuguese entity and one entity from Norway and/or Iceland is mandatory:

- Portuguese promoters must have at least one partner from Norway or Iceland;
- Norwegian or Icelandic promoters must have at least one partner from Portugal.

The partnership must be agreed between the parties and formalised through a commitment declaration at the application stage and, if approved, through a Partnership Agreement.

12. What are the obligations of the partner(s)?

Partners are responsible for implementing the agreed parts of the initiative, as well as fulfilling the obligations set out in the Partnership Agreement.

13. What is meant by bilateral value?

Bilateral value refers to the effective contribution of an initiative to strengthening relations between the countries involved.
An initiative demonstrates bilateral value when it includes:

- active involvement of partners in both the design and implementation;
- joint definition of objectives and activities;

- clear mutual benefits;
- effective exchange of knowledge or experience;
- potential for continued cooperation.

Partnerships that are merely formal or lack effective collaboration between partners do not demonstrate sufficient bilateral value.

14. How is the partnership formalised?

The partnership is formalised in two stages:

- at the application stage: through a commitment declaration from the partners;
- after approval: through a signed Partnership Agreement.

15. Do partners receive funding directly from the NFP?

No. Funding is transferred in full to the promoter, who is responsible for managing it and for reimbursing the partner's expenses, where applicable, in accordance with the Partnership Agreement.

16. What do the different allocations for Norway and Iceland mean?

The available funding is allocated by donor country, within the overall maximum budget of €500,000 for this call:

- Projects involving Iceland may be supported up to a total of €50,000;
- Projects involving Norway may be supported between €450,000 and €500,000 in total;

Projects involving both Norway and Iceland will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the level of participation of each partner.

3. Activities

17. What activities are eligible?

Examples of eligible activities include, but are not limited to:

- workshops, conferences and technical meetings;
- exchange of experts;
- study visits;
- training activities and internships;
- studies, reports and publications.

18. What are the expected results of the supported initiatives?

The initiatives should strengthen bilateral relations between Portugal and the donor countries Norway and Iceland in the areas of defence, security and foreign policy.
Expected results include concrete outputs such as joint events, technical cooperation, exchanges, training activities, and the production of studies or publications.
Results must demonstrate bilateral value and be measurable, in line with the indicators defined in the call.

19. Where can the activities take place?

Activities must take place in Portugal, Norway or Iceland.

20. What is the duration of the projects?

Projects must have a minimum duration of 6 months and a maximum duration of 24 months.

4. Elegibility and grants

21. What is the amount of funding available?

Minimum: €10,000
Maximum: €50,000

22. What is the co-financing rate?

Up to 90% of eligible costs.

23. Is co-financing required?

Yes, a minimum co-financing rate of 10% is required.

24. Is there a minimum and maximum budget for applications?

The minimum total budget of an application is €11,111.11 (corresponding to a maximum eligible grant of €10,000).
There is no maximum budget for submission; however, only eligible costs up to €50,000 will be financed, in accordance with the applicable funding rate.

25. What forms of funding are eligible?

Depending on the type of expenditure, funding may be provided based on actual costs or simplified cost options (unit costs and lump sums).
More detailed information is available in Annex 3 – Guideline for budget implementation of the call.

26. Can the budget submitted in the application be modified before signing the Acceptance Agreement?

Yes. In the case of a conditional approval, the budget may be revised to better plan and clarify the activities included.

27. Can the budget be modified after signing the Acceptance Agreement?

Yes, provided that a request for modification of the initiative is submitted and approved.

28. What costs are eligible?

Eligible costs are those that are actually incurred, necessary and proportionate to the initiative, directly related to the approved activities, included in the budget, identifiable and verifiable, and in compliance with the applicable legislation.

29. Are staff costs eligible?

No. Staff costs are not eligible.

30. Are indirect costs eligible?

No.

31. Is VAT eligible?

Only if it is non-recoverable.

32. Is the purchase of equipment eligible?

The purchase of equipment may be eligible, provided it is duly justified, necessary for the implementation of the initiative, and in compliance with the rules set out in the Bilateral Fund Manual.

33. What does “costs per activity” mean?

These are costs associated with a specific activity or deliverable (such as a workshop, training activity, or the preparation of a study, among others).
For costs financed through lump sums, the full amount will be considered eligible, provided that the activity or deliverable is implemented as defined.

34. What are the start and end dates for eligibility of costs?

The start date for eligibility corresponds to the date on which the final approval decision is notified by the NFP to the promoter entity via electronic means.
The end date for eligibility of costs is defined at the time of contracting the bilateral initiative. Only costs that are incurred, invoiced, and paid within the defined eligibility period will be considered eligible.

35. Do partners have a separate budget?

No. Costs to be incurred by partners must be included in the overall budget of the application. Their implementation arrangements should be defined in the Acceptance Agreement and in the Partnership Agreement.

5. Application preparation

36. Can the application be prepared with the support of external consultants?

Yes. The application may be prepared with the support of external consultants.
However, any entity or consultant involved in the preparation of the application must be identified and disclosed, in accordance with the provisions set out in the call.

37. What documents must be attached to the application?

The following documents must be submitted with the application:

- letter of intent (Annex 6 of the call);

- declaration of Single Company or Declaration of Autonomous Company (where applicable – Annexes 7 and 8 of the call).

38. In which cases is the single/autonomous declaration required?

This declaration is only required when the applicant is a Portuguese company. The appropriate template should be selected according to the type of company.

39. Which output and result indicators should be considered?

Applications must include appropriate output and result indicators, in line with those defined in Annex 5 – List of Indicators of the call.
These indicators should ensure proper monitoring of progress and of the results achieved.

6. Application submission

40. How can the application be submitted?

Applications must be submitted through the Balcão dos Fundos platform:
https://balcaofundosue.pt

41. In which language must the application be submitted?

The application and all annexes must be submitted in English.

42. Do foreign entities have additional requirements?

Yes. Entities from donor countries, whether acting as promoters or partners, must complete the registration form for the Balcão dos Fundos platform:
https://forms.office.com/e/eNpz9bpCbX?origin=lprLink
After completing the form, entities must wait a few days for the registration to be validated.
For further information, please consult Annex 9 – Instructions for Registration on Balcão dos Fundos and Application Submission.

43. Under Bilateral Fund Open Call #1 at national level, can I submit more than one application?

Each entity may submit only one application as a promoter under this call.
If multiple applications are submitted by the same entity, only the first application registered will be considered for evaluation, and all subsequent applications will be rejected.

7. Assessment and decision

44. How are applications assessed?

Applications are assessed in two stages:

i. administrative and eligibility check;

ii. technical evaluation based on the selection criteria and scoring grid, carried out by the Joint Committee for the Bilateral Fund (JCBF), which may be supported by independent external experts.

45. Who decides which applications are approved?

The decision is taken by the Joint Committee for the Bilateral Fund (JCBF).
The NFP is responsible for notifying the results and for the contracting of the funding.

46. Can external experts support the assessment of applications?

Yes. Given the technical specificity of the areas covered by Bilateral Fund Open Call #1 at national level, the Joint Committee for the Bilateral Fund (JCBF) may be supported by independent external experts in the assessment of applications.

47. What happens if the application is approved with conditions or required changes?

The JCBF may approve an application subject to the introduction of changes or the fulfilment of specific requirements.
In such cases, the promoter entity must accept and incorporate the conditions defined before the contracting of the funding. Failure to do so may result in the Acceptance Agreement not being signed.

8. Post-approval and implementation

48. What documents must be submitted after approval of the application?

Following approval, an Acceptance Agreement must be signed between the NFP and the promoter entity, as well as a Partnership Agreement between the promoter and the partner(s).

49. What is the Partnership Agreement?

The Partnership Agreement is the document that defines the roles and responsibilities, budget, and rules governing the cooperation between the promoter and the partners.

50. How is the funding paid?

Funding is provided through an initial advance payment and may include interim payments and a final payment.
For initiatives up to €20,000 or with a duration of up to one year:

- 60% advance payment;
- final payment of up to 40%, upon approval of the final report.

For initiatives above €20,000 or with a duration of more than one year:

- 40% advance payment;
- interim payment of up to 30%, upon approval of an interim report;
- final payment of up to 30%, upon approval of the final report.

Payments are conditional upon the validation of reports and compliance with the obligations set out in the Acceptance Agreement.

51. What do payments depend on?

Payments are subject to the validation of reports and compliance with the obligations set out in the Acceptance Agreement.

52. What reports are required?

Interim reports (where applicable) and a final report must be submitted, in accordance with the provisions set out in the Bilateral Fund Manual.

53. Is there monitoring?

Yes. Monitoring may include audits and on-the-spot checks.

54. Can the initiatives generate revenue?

As a general rule, initiatives should not generate revenue.
If revenue is generated directly in connection with the initiative, it must be declared and will be deducted from the approved funding amount, in order to avoid overcompensation.

55. Is the funding subject to State aid rules?

Yes. This call is subject to de minimis State aid rules.
In the case of Portuguese companies, the support is limited to a maximum of €300,000 per undertaking over a period of three financial years, in accordance with the applicable rules.

56. What documents must be submitted in relation to State aid?

For Portuguese applicants that are companies, a declaration of single company (Annex 7) or autonomous company (Annex 8) must be submitted, as applicable.
The appropriate declaration depends on whether there are control or ownership relationships with other companies, in accordance with the applicable legislation.

57. Do public procurement rules apply?

Yes. Public procurement rules apply to public entities covered by the Public Contracts Code, and to private entities with the necessary adaptations.

9. Management, support and complaints

58. Who manages the Bilateral Fund at national level?

The National Focal Point is responsible for implementing the Bilateral Fund at national level.

59. Can I appeal the decision?

Yes. An appeal may be submitted within 10 working days after notification of the decision.

60. How can questions be submitted?

Questions may be submitted through:

Linha dos Fundos: https://www.digitalfundos.pt/balcao/LinhaDosFundos
Weekly clarification sessions, held on Thursdays between 11:30 and 12:30 (UTC+1): https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/370970298384959?p=00vytu6SPnwxOdG3gn

61. How can a complaint be submitted?

Complaints should be sent to the following email address: alerta@eeagrants.gov.pt