Norway grants

Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy

Note on the use of this document: This template is provided further to Article 7.3.1 of the Regulation. As specified in the Regulation, the template "shall be used as a basis for the development of the call for proposals text". This means that divergences from the structure and the text proposed below need to be justified. The text below can also be adapted in accordance with specific requirements contained in the Programme Agreement.

Call for proposals

Smart City Call

1.2

Local Development Programme
Norway Grants 2021-2028 Poland

The purpose of this call

The purpose of this call is to identify and support initiatives that implement the Smart City 4.0 concept in Polish cities understood as an urban development model that uses modern information and communication technologies, engages residents in decision-making, and contributes to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (at least Goal 11). It also seeks to strengthen local government competences in developing and managing smart cities while addressing cities' current challenges.

Basic information

Programme Operator	Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy (PO, MDFRP)
Announcement of call	5th October 2026
Start date for submission of applications	23rd October 2026
Deadline for submission of applications	22nd January 2027
Eligible applicants	European metropolis, national metropolises, supra-regional metropolises and national urban agglomerations in accordance with the *Recommendations for planning regional policy interventions in development strategies*[1] adopted by the Minister of Development Funds and Regional Policy on July 2, 2026 (32 cities).
Eligible partners	From Beneficiary State: Polish municipalities and counties, Polish municipal companies, county-run companies, and municipal-county-run companies, Polish municipal unions or county-municipal unions - from the municipal functional areas of the Applicant From Donor States: Norwegian municipalities
Total amount available	EUR 47,058,824 / 199,651,766.70 [2]
Minimum grant amount	EUR 3,000,000 / PLN 12,727,800

[1] https://www.gov.pl/web/fundusze-regiony/strategia-rozwoju-polski-do-2035-r-
[2] 1 EUR = 4,2426 PLN

Maximum grant amount	EUR 5,000,000 / PLN 21,213,000		
Maximum grant rate	Public sector 100 %	Non-governmental Not applicable	Private entities Not applicable
Minimum co-financing requirement	Public sector 0%	Non-governmental Not applicable	Private entities Not applicable
Duration of projects	Minimum Not specified in months	Maximum All projects must be completed by 30 April 2031	

Specific objectives and expected results

Objective of the Norway Grants

The Norway Grants contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area and to the strengthening of relations between Norway and Poland.

The Norway Grants promote the European green transition, democracy, rule of law and human rights and social inclusion and resilience.

Support from the Norway Grants is based on the common values and principles of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. All activities funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 shall be consistent with respect for these values and principles.

Objective of the programme

The main objective of the programme area is building **more resilient, inclusive and sustainable communities**.

Objective and focus of this call

General objective: The main purpose of this call is to address the need for Poland's transition toward a more innovation-driven economy able to face key urban challenges such as sustainability, mobility and citizen engagement through various Smart City initiatives. These initiatives are particularly important in helping cities manage complex issues, including efficient management of city data, crucial for anticipating and responding to potential crises.

Common values and principles: Project Promoters, Partners and projects shall respect the values and principles governing the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, as referred to in Article 1.3.1 of the Regulation, i.e. human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. Applicants shall describe how gender equality considerations are integrated into the project.

Supporting Smart City 4.0 solutions in Polish cities: This call aims to identify and support initiatives implementing the Smart City 4.0 concept in Polish cities - an urban development model that uses modern information and communication technologies, engages residents in decision-making, and contributes to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (at least Goal 11). It also seeks to strengthen local government competences in developing and managing smart cities while addressing cities' current challenges.

Project proposals will be prioritised based on the following aspects:

- The level of innovation and usability of the proposed solutions
- Comprehensiveness and systemic nature of the project
    - Project rationale (including diagnosis)
    - Utilisation of participatory mechanisms and inclusiveness

- Complementarity of soft and hard measures

Potential impact through development, dissemination and exploitation of project results.

Building institutional capacity: Projects shall strengthen the **institutional capacity** of local governments for smart city development and management, including through targeted training that improves staff competences in digital solutions and citizen-centred public services.

Participation and inclusion: Projects shall ensure active participation of citizens and urban stakeholders in the design and implementation of smart city solutions.

Expected results

All projects selected through this call for proposals will contribute to the overall outcome of "Improved quality of life and safety in Polish cities" through one of more output level results:
* Smart City tools/solutions implemented
* Public participation in city governance strengthened
* Local capacity improved

Tick if relevant	
Outcome 1	Improved quality of life and safety in Polish cities
Indicator	Level of user satisfaction with new digital services/tools offered by cities
Indicator	Level of city staff satisfaction with efficiency gains thanks to the implementation of new smart tools
Output 1.2	Smart city tools/solutions implemented
Indicator	Number of new or improved smart governance tools / solutions implemented: • Integrated smart shrinkage strategies • Interoperable open-data platforms • Digital citizen-engagement applications • Accessible e-governance services • Urban innovation spaces • Digital cultural or tourism platforms
Indicator	Number of new or improved smart environment tools / solutions implemented: • Renewable-energy and energy-efficiency systems • Sensor-based water and waste management • Automated urban-greenery maintenance • Emission-free smart mobility services • Climate-resilience early-warning systems • Intelligent building-management systems • Continuous environmental monitoring platforms
Indicator	Number of new or improved smart technology tools/solutions implemented: • Generative-AI applications for city management • Digital twins and integrated data platforms • IoT and sensor networks • Video-analysis technologies • Robotic process automation • AI-based city monitoring data • Data-driven mobility management • Accessibility-enhancing technologies • Edge-computing infrastructure
Output 1.4	Public participation in city governance strengthened
Indicator	Number of public consultations processes organised by a public institution
Indicator	Number of people who participated in consultations with a public institution
Output 1.5	Local capacity improved
Indicator	Number of training courses delivered
Indicator	Number of municipal sector employees that have completed a training course

In their grant application, applicants are required to select the indicator(s) they will contribute to and specify the corresponding target values. Applicants may choose indicators associated with any of the three outputs covered by the Call for Proposals, according to the expected results of their proposed project.

Eligible applicants and partners

Eligible applicants	The call aims to support implementation of the Smart City 4.0 concept in European metropolis, national metropolises, supra-regional metropolises and national urban agglomerations in accordance with the *Recommendations for planning regional policy interventions in development strategies,* adopted by the Minister of Development Funds and Regional Policy on July 2, 2026 (32 cities). Eligible cities not only have the capacity to implement ambitious smart city solutions, but they also play a key role in disseminating innovative impulses nationwide. **Eligible applicants:** • European metropolis – Warszawa (1 city) • National metropolises – Katowice, Kraków, Łódź, Poznań, Szczecin, Gdańsk, Wrocław (7 cities) • Supra-regional metropolises – Białystok, Bydgoszcz, Lublin, Rzeszów, Toruń (5 cities) • National urban agglomerations – Bielsko-Biała, Częstochowa, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Kielce, Koszalin, Olsztyn, Opole, Radom, Rybnik, Zielona Góra, Bytom, Chorzów, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Gliwice, Ruda Śląska, Sosnowiec, Tychy, Zabrze, Gdynia (19 cities)
Eligible partners from Poland	• Polish municipalities and counties, Polish municipal companies, county-run companies, and municipal-county-run companies, Polish municipal unions or county-municipal unions - from the municipal functional areas of the Applicant
Eligible partners from Norway	• Norwegian municipalities
Eligible partners from other eligible countries, international organisations	• Not applicable

Partnership

Who is a partner?	A partner is an entity actively involved in, and effectively contributing to, the implementation of a project. It shares with the project promoter a common economic or social goal which is to be realised through the implementation of that project. In this regard, a consultant, contractor, supplier or service provider is not considered a partner.
Partnership with Donor State entities	Partnership with a partner from Norway is encouraged under this call. The applicant is expected to include in their applications expectations for partnership where they identify the potential fields where they would be interested in cooperating with a partner from Norway. Each project budget should set aside a sum of EUR 300,000 (PLN 1,272,780) specifically for bilateral cooperation activities. When a Norwegian partner is found, the reserved amount shall be shared between the partners and the share of each partner shall be agreed in the partnership agreement. If no partner from Norway is found within a reasonable time, the reserved amount shall be deducted from the respective project budget and returned to the Programme.

Eligible activities

Thematic scope of activities	Project Promoters are to implement projects in at least one of the following thematic areas and are required to foster residents' participation and inclusiveness, as well as be aligned with the UN SDGs (at minimum Goal 11). **1. Smart Governance** - the use of modern governance and participatory tools to support data-driven decision-making and citizen involvement in urban management: - Smart shrinkage solutions, - Data-driven and evidence-based governance, - Citizen engagement and participatory tools, - Inclusive policymaking, - e-Governance and digital public services, - Urban innovation spaces, - Smart cultural initiatives and tourism-supporting activities. **2. Smart Environment** - solutions aimed at improving environmental sustainability and strengthening cities' resilience to climate change: - Renewable energy & energy efficiency, - Smart water & waste management, - Urban greenery & vegetation management, - Smart and sustainable mobility, - Climate resilience, - BMS – Building Management Systems, - Environmental monitoring. **3. Smart Technology** – the deployment of advanced digital technologies that enhance urban management and the quality of public services: - Generative AI, - Digital twins and data integration platforms, - IoT infrastructure and sensor-based management, - Video sensor technologies, - RPA – Robotic Process Automation, - AI-based smart city monitoring, - Data-driven mobility management, - Accessibility-enhancing technologies, - Edge computing technologies.
Geographic scope of activities	Not applicable
Activities eligible for support	Only activities within the twenty three areas listed above will be eligible. Examples of eligible activities/actions are provided in the Guideline for Applicants.
Activities not eligible for support	Activities outside the twenty three areas listed above.

Eligible expenditure and forms of grant

Start and final dates of eligibility of expenditure	Expenditures are eligible as of the date of the Programme Operator's decision to award the project grant. The Programme Operator shall in the same decision fix

the final date of eligibility of expenditure which shall be no later than the date referred to under paragraph 5 of Article 8.14 of the Regulation[3] (30 April 2031).

Eligible expenditure

Detailed information on eligible costs can be found in Chapter 8 of the Regulation "Eligibility of Expenditures".

Main categories of eligible costs:

a. The cost of staff assigned to the project
b. Travel and subsistence allowances for staff and participants in the project
c. Cost of new or second-hand equipment
d. Purchase of land and real estate under the conditions set in Article 8.8, of the Regulation
e. Costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they are identifiable and assigned to the project
f. Costs entailed by other contracts awarded by a Project Promoter or project partner for the purposes of carrying out the project
g. Project management costs, including indirect costs (up to 7% of eligible direct costs), shall not exceed 10% of eligible direct costs.

Details are described in the Guideline for Applicants.

Limits on certain categories of expenditure	**Category of expenditure**	**Limits (max. % of project eligible expenditure)**
	Hard Measures (Investment)	Maximum 78%
	Soft Measures (Non-investment)	Minimum 22 %
	Project Management	Maximum 10 %
	Bilateral Cooperation	A sum of EUR 300,000 (PLN 1,272,780) must be set aside per project

Non-eligible expenditure

Pursuant to Article 8.9 of the Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028, expenditures such as interest on debt, recoverable VAT, and unnecessary or imprudent expenses shall not be considered eligible for funding

Forms of grant

Apart from the expenditure based on the eligible costs actually incurred, the following form of grant will be applicable to the below category of expenditure.

Please note that the Programme Operator has not elaborated any additional SCOs than the off-the-shelf ones set forth in the Regulation.

Category of expenditure	Form of grant	Method of calculation
Indirect costs of the project	Flat rate	Up to 7% of eligible direct costs to calculate indirect costs of a project (Article 8.5.1 (a) of the Regulation)

[3] Any reference to 'the Regulation' this should be understood as the Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2021–2028.

Project promoters may re-grant a part of their project grant. Re-granted funds shall be incurred by the beneficiaries of such grants in accordance with Chapter 8 of the Regulation. The rules on selection of projects included in Chapter 7 of the Regulation shall apply to the re-granting process. Re-granting shall be carried out in accordance with competitive procedures under the:

- Act on Public Benefit Activity and Volunteering

Re-granting under a single project-promoter's project may not exceed 10 per cent of the total project budget.

The minimum amount for a single grant is PLN 100,000 and the maximum is PLN 250,000.

Re-granting must be consistent with the scope of the project.

Financing conditions and reporting

Forms of payment

Payment of the project grant shall take the form of advance payments, interim payments and a final payment.

The advance payment may be requested following the signature of the project contract.

Further payment requests are linked to the project reporting schedule.

Reporting

Project Promoters shall report on the progress of their project and results via interim reports and a final report upon the completion of the project. Reporting deadlines shall be set in the project contract.

	% of project grant	Condition of payment	Deadline for payment
Advance payment	Maximum 20%	Signature of project contract, submitted payment request	30 working days
Interim payments	70%	Approval of project interim report	30 working days
Final payment	At least 10%	Approval of project final report	30 working days

State aid

State aid regime applied for the call

Under this call for proposals no state aid or de minimis aid is granted by the Programme Operator.

Submission of applications

Form and content of project applications

Project applications shall be prepared in Polish by filling in the application form, the budget, and providing further information, including the disclosure of any consultant involved in the preparation of the project application (see documents in the Annex no 1). Project applications shall be submitted only in electronic form, with a qualified electronic signature.

Please carefully consult the Guideline for applicants when preparing the application (see Annex no 2).

Method of submission	Project applications shall be submitted to the Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy via the e-Doręczenia service (e-Doręczenia address: AE:PL-27378-80065-JJACB-24, or the ePUAP platform (box address: /MIR/SkrytkaESP), before the deadline specified under the Basic Information section of this call. The date and time of the submission of the Project Application is identical to the date and time of the registration of its receipt by the server of the Programme Operator.
Limitations on the submission of applications	Each applicant is eligible to submit only one grant application under this call. In case more applications are submitted, the last application registered as submitted will be considered. Further ones will be rejected.

Selection procedure

General information

The Programme Operator shall be responsible for project selection and the award of grants.

1. Administrative/Eligibility Check: Conducted by the Programme Operator; applicants have 14 days to appeal rejection. Applications that are deemed not to have met the administrative and eligibility criteria will be rejected and excluded from further assessment.
2. Expert Assessment: Scored by at least two experts independent of the Programme Operator.
3. Selection Committee: Recommends projects for funding, taking into account formal recommendations from Programme Operator, based on the ranking list, provided by independent experts. KS is a full member of the Selection Committee.

Administrative and eligibility checks

The Programme Operator shall review all submitted applications against the defined administrative and eligibility criteria, including any exclusion criteria (see Annex no 3).

Applications that are deemed not to have met the administrative and eligibility criteria will be rejected and excluded from further assessment.

The applicant whose application is rejected at this stage may appeal against the decision within 14 days after receiving the decision on the rejection of the application.

Assessment

Applications that meet the administrative and eligibility criteria shall be separately reviewed and scored against the selection criteria for assessment (see Annex no 4) by two impartial experts in a given field appointed by the Programme Operator. All experts shall be independent of the Programme Operator and the Selection Committee.

Project proposals will be assessed on the basis of substantive evaluation criteria, including admissible (pass/fail) criteria and scored criteria. Evaluation will be based on applicant declarations and available information.

The evaluation criteria will be divided into:

- **Part A** criteria related to the thematic scope of the call – evaluated by a pair of thematic experts

- **Part B** project criteria (financial/organizational) – evaluated by a pair of financial/organizational experts.

Part A

Admissible criteria. *(Failure to meet any admissible criterion (selecting NO) results in the termination of the assessment and rejection of the application)*

1. Compliance of the Project with the objectives of the call.

2. Compliance of the Project with the values and principles governing the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism set forth in the Article 1.3.1 of the Regulation.

Scored criteria

3. Problem diagnosis, the need for project implementation, and the logic of change, and complementarity of activities.

The assessment focuses on the quality of the problem diagnosis, the description of its scale, causes, and consequences, its relevance to residents' needs, and the consistency of the logic of change (problem – cause – activity – result – method of measurement), and consistency of activities.

4. Quality of stakeholder participation tailored to the project nature.

The assessment focuses on the quality of involvement of residents, and other stakeholders in the design, testing, implementation, or improvement of the solution.

5. Inclusiveness, accessibility, and countering the digital divide.

The assessment focuses on whether the project addresses the needs of groups at risk of digital exclusion, ensures the accessibility of solutions and services, and provides alternative access channels where necessary.

6. Adequacy and functional novelty/new value of the solution.

The assessment focuses on the extent to which the proposed solution addresses the identified problem, provides a significant functional improvement, and whether the scope of novelty is justified by the needs and the expected results of the project.

7. Complementarity with the existing ecosystem of solutions and no duplication of functionalities.

The assessment focuses on whether the project develops or complements existing national and local solutions, aligns with urban processes and policies, and does not lead to unjustified duplication of functionalities.

8. Public value of the solution.

The assessment focuses on the expected public value of the solution, including benefits for residents, public service users, and the public institution.

Public value means a measurable benefit to residents, public service users, or a public institution, in particular in terms of quality, accessibility, efficiency, transparency, security, resilience, environmental impact, or social inclusion.

9. Organizational, financial, and technical sustainability, and operational readiness

The assessment focuses on the maintenance model for the project after the funding period, the assignment of responsibilities, and the organization's readiness to launch and maintain the solution.

10. Results, indicators, utilisation and dissemination of results.

The assessment focuses on the identification of short- and long-term results, their measurability, the expected benefits for society, and the selection of activities for the exploitation and dissemination of the project results. Activities aimed at disseminating project results and utilizing them after the completion of the implementation are assessed exclusively under this criterion.

Part B

Admissible criteria (*Failure to meet any admissible criterion (selecting NO) results in the termination of the assessment and rejection of the application)*

1. Project management costs.

2. Proportion of hard (investment) and soft (non-investment) measures.

Scored criteria

3. Schedule

The assessment covers: coherence, logic and feasibility, i.e. the possibility of carrying out activities within the deadlines indicated by the applicant and the possibility of carrying out the project within the expenditure eligibility period.

4. Budget and cost-effectiveness

The assessment covers: the cost-effectiveness of the project, i.e., the adequacy of the adopted rates to market prices. Accuracy of the description of budget items, including the scope and purpose of the expenditure. Linking the expenditure to the descriptive section of the application. Accounting accuracy.

5. Project Team

The following aspects are assessed: the composition, experience, and the planned level and manner of the involvement of project team members in project activities, as well as the planned development/strengthening of the team if gaps and development/training needs are identified.

In the case of a partnership project, the involvement of the applicant's project team and the partner's project team is assessed.

6. Management model

The assessment covers: information flow, monitoring the achievement of results, risk management, and financial control within the project.

In the case of a partnership project, the management model is assessed, taking into account the applicant and the partner.

Each expert separately scores the application. If the discrepancy between the scores for a given criterion exceeds 30%, the experts are required to reconcile the scores so that the difference does not exceed 30%. The average of the scores awarded by the experts is used to prepare the ranking list of projects. The evaluation chart includes a consistent justification for the evaluation made by

both experts for a given criterion. The lead expert is responsible for providing the evaluation chart including final scores awarded and consistent justification.

In the event that projects receive the same number of points, the order of applications on the ranking list shall be determined by number of points awarded in following award criteria, in the following order:

3. Problem diagnosis, the need for project implementation, the logic of change, and complementarity of activities.

4. Quality of stakeholder participation tailored to the project nature.

5. Inclusiveness, accessibility, and countering the digital divide.

State aid verification

With regard to the projects included on the list of recommended projects, the Programme Operator will verify whether such projects involve State aid or de minimis aid. During this verification process, the Programme Operator may request from the applicant any explanations necessary to verify the existence of State aid or de minimis aid.

Selection Committee
(Optional for calls for proposals with a maximum grant amount per project of up to EUR 100,000)

The Programme Operator shall establish a Selection Committee that shall recommend the projects to be funded within the programme. The Selection Committee shall consist of at least three persons possessing the relevant expertise. KS is a full member of SC.

The Programme Operator shall provide the Selection Committee with the list of ranked project applications. Together with the ranked list of project applications, the Programme Operator shall present its verification of the project's compliance with the applicable State aid rules. Where the Programme Operator concludes that a project involves State aid or de minimis aid, the Selection Committee shall decide whether to reject funding for the project in its entirety or for the part of the project concerned. The ranking list includes applications that received at least 60% of the total points at the substantive assessment stage. The Selection Committee shall review the ranked list of project applications.

The Selection Committee may modify the ranking of the projects in justified cases. In the event of justified doubts of the Project Selection Committee regarding a given application, the Programme Operator, at the request of the Committee, shall invite the expert assessing the project to a meeting of the Committee in order to become acquainted with an additional justification of the assessment. The justification for the modifications shall be detailed in the minutes of the meeting of the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee shall submit the list of recommended projects to the Programme Operator.

Grant award decision

The Programme Operator shall verify that the selection process has been conducted in accordance with the Regulation and that the recommendation of the Selection Committee has been established in compliance with the rules and objectives of the programme. Following such verification the Programme Operator shall, based on the recommendation of the Selection Committee, make a decision on which projects shall be awarded a grant.

If the Programme Operator modifies, in a justified case (e.g. in the event of a finding of non-compliance with Article 1.3.1 of the Regulation), the approved list of recommended projects by the Selection Committee, it shall inform the Selection Committee, NMFA, NFP and the affected applicants and provide them with a justification.

The Programme Operator shall notify the applicants about the results of the selection process within a reasonable time and publicise the results.

There is no legal entitlement to the project grant. The grant award decision of the Programme Operator may not be appealed.

Project contracts

Based on the grant award decision, the Programme Operator shall conclude a project contract with the Project Promoter setting out the terms and conditions of the grant and the roles and responsibilities of the parties.

Prior to signing project contracts the Programme Operator shall assess the compliance of Project Promoters and Partners with the common values listed in Article 1.3.1 of the Regulation.

Provisional timeline

Deadline for submission of applications	January 2027
Administrative and eligibility checks	January 2027 – March 2027
Assessment of applications	March 2027 - May 2027
Decision on the award of grants	June 2027
Signature of project contracts	July 2027 - October 2027
Deadline for the completion of projects	**30 April 2031**

Further information, contacts for queries and the complaint mechanism

Further information

For further information please consult the following documents:

Regulation on the implementation of the Norway Financial Mechanism 2021-2028: https://eeagrants.org/en/fmo/documents-library/regulation-implementation-norway-grants-including-annexes-2021-2028

Programme Agreement: https://eeagrants.org/en/poland/programmes/local-development/documents/programme-agreement-pl-localdev

Contact for queries

Any queries concerning the call may be directed to the following contacts no later than 14 working days before the deadline for the submission of applications. A written response shall be sent within 10 working days of the receipt of the query.

Frequently asked questions and answers will be published on the website of the call.

Institution	Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy	Association of Polish Cities	
Name	Department of Assistance Programmes		
E-mail	Smart.RL@mfipr.gov.pl	www.norweskiedlamiast.pl	
Telephone	+48 22 273 78 00		

Contact to file a complaint	*National Focal Point for EEA/ Norway Funds* *Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy* *Department of Assistance Programmes* *Wspólna Street 2/4, 00-926 Warsaw* *tel. +48 22 273 78 00* *Email: eog@mfipr.gov.pl*

Contact to Donor Programme Partners (if relevant)	**Iceland**	**Liechtenstein**	**Norway**
	n/a	n/a	Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities <e-mail > <telephone> https://www.ks.no/om-ks/ks-in-english/

Annexes to the call for proposals

Annex 1	Application form incl. budget template
Annex 2	Guideline for applicants
Annex 3	Criteria for administrative and eligibility assessment
Annex 4	Selection criteria and scoring chart for assessment
Annex 5	Project contract template