Norway grants

MINISTRY OF INVESTMENTS, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INFORMATIZATION OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Selection Committee

Statute and Rules of Procedure

Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021 - 2028

Relevant for Programme:

- Green Transition

Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic
Programme Operator

1. Legal framework

1.1. This document shall be read in conjunction with:

1.1.1. the Regulation on the Implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 (hereinafter referred to as "the Regulation"),

1.1.2. the Memorandum of Understanding on the Implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021–2028 (hereinafter referred to as the "Memorandum of Understanding"), and

1.1.3. the Programme Agreement on the Programme "Green Transition" (hereinafter referred to as "the Programme Agreement").

1.2. In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding, the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic acts as the Programme Operator.

1.3. In accordance with Article 7.4 of the Regulation, the Programme Operator hereby establishes the Selection Committee for the Programme.

1.4. Unless otherwise stipulated in subsequent amendments, these Statute and Rules of Procedure shall apply to all Calls for Proposals launched under the Programme, including in particular:

1.4.1. Call 1 under Outcome 1 "Integrated Green Transition Models in Urban Public Institutions (Green Transition in Urban Public Institutions)" (hereinafter referred to as "Call 1"),

1.4.2. Call 2 under Outcome 1 "Green and Blue Schools – Project-Based Climate Education" (hereinafter referred to as "Call 2").

2. Role and competence of the Selection Committee

2.1. The Selection Committee shall recommend the projects to be funded within the Programme.

2.2. The Selection Committee shall review the ranked list of Project Applications.

2.3. The Selection Committee shall, where applicable, consult the Donor Programme Partner and take into account its recommendations regarding any Donor project partner(s) included in the Project Applications.

2.4. The Selection Committee may modify the ranking of the projects in justified cases, based on objective and documented grounds. The justification for the modifications shall be detailed in the minutes of the meeting of the Selection Committee.

2.5. The Selection Committee shall submit the approved list of recommended projects to the Programme Operator.

3. Members of the Selection Committee

3.1. The Selection Committee for Call 1 and Call 2 and any other calls under the Outcome 1 shall have five members as follows:

3.1.1. one representative of the Programme Operator, acting as the Chair of the Selection Committee,

3.1.2. one additional member appointed by the Programme Operator,

3.1.3. one representative of civil society,

3.1.4. one representative of the Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate (NVE),

3.1.5. one representative of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic.

3.2. The Chair and the additional member shall be appointed by the statutory representative of the Programme Operator or an authorised representative.

3.3. The representative of civil society shall be nominated by the Chamber of Non-governmental Non-profit Organisations.

3.4. Members of the Selection Committee shall be nominated by the respective institutions in written form, e.g. by an e-mail addressed to the Chair from the statutory representative of the institution or from a person who would normally be recognised as competent to do so under the organisational structure of the institution.

3.5. All nominated members shall be formally appointed by the Programme Operator.

3.6. Each member may designate a permanent or temporary deputy by written notification to the Chair. The deputy shall exercise the same rights as the member in the member's absence. In case a member cannot be represented in the meeting, they may provide a written input to the Chair in advance.

3.7. The Chair may appoint a Secretary to support the administrative functioning of the Selection Committee.

3.8. The membership in the Selection Committee may be terminated or a member may be replaced, temporarily or permanently, at any time by the institution that nominated the member, or by the Programme Operator, e.g. in cases of resignation, conflict of interest or inability to perform duties. Any such change shall be notified in writing to the Chair without undue delay.

4. Observers

4.1. The National Focal Point, the Financial Mechanism Office and the Norwegian Embassy shall be invited to participate as observers.

4.2. Experts involved in the evaluation of Project Applications may be invited to the meetings upon request of any member and with the agreement of the Chair. Experts shall participate in an advisory capacity only and shall have no voting rights. Their participation shall be recorded in the minutes.

4.3. Any member may propose to invite an observer to participate in the Selection Committee meeting where their presence is needed for specific issues to be discussed. The observer will be invited with the knowledge of the Chair.

4.4. Observers shall have no voting rights.

4.5. Observers may be provided with the relevant documents circulated for the Selection Committee meeting, including the jointly agreed and finalised Minutes.

5. Conflict of interest

5.1. A member in a conflict of interest shall not participate in the discussion or decision-making on the concerned Project Application.

5.2. Members shall refrain from any activity that may be incompatible with the principles of implementation set out in Article 1.3.1 of the Regulation, including, but not limited to, the elaboration, preparation or submission of a Project Application under the Calls, participation in the expert evaluation of Project Applications, or involvement in the implementation of a Project supported under the Programme, except in cases where the Project is pre-defined.

5.3. Members shall inform the Chair of any actual or potential conflict of interest. A conflict of interest situation is deemed to be present where the member has direct or indirect interests that are or appear to be incompatible with the impartial and/or objective exercise of the functions related to the Selection Committee tasks. Such interests may be related to economic interests, political or national affinities, family or emotional ties or any other shared interests.

5.4. Members shall take every reasonable measure to prevent a conflict of interest situation from occurring. If a conflict of interest situation nevertheless occurs, the Chair, once notified, shall take all the necessary measures to prevent such a situation from affecting the integrity of the decision-making process of the Selection Committee.

5.5. In executing their tasks, members shall counteract corrupt practices. Further, they shall not accept, either directly or indirectly, any kind of offer, gift, payments or benefits which would or could be construed as an illegal or corrupt practice or as giving rise to a conflict of interest. Members shall immediately inform the Chair of any indication of corruption or misuse of resources related to the selection process.

5.6. Members shall maintain confidentiality regarding the discussions and documents submitted to the Selection Committee. They shall commit to fulfilling this obligation by signing a Declaration of Confidentiality and Impartiality (Annex I).

5.7. This chapter shall apply mutatis mutandis to observers.

6. Meetings

6.1. The Selection Committee shall meet at least once per Call for Proposals. Additional meetings may be organised based on a justified proposal of any member and with the agreement of the Chair.

6.2. The Programme Operator shall be responsible for organising the meetings of the Selection Committee. The Programme Operator shall send the following documents at least two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting:

6.2.1.invitation,

6.2.2.draft agenda,

6.2.3.the ranked list of Project Applications based on expert evaluation,

6.2.4. the Project Applications,

6.2.5. experts' evaluations.

6.3. The ranked list of Project Applications shall be divided into four categories:

6.3.1. Project Applications falling within the available allocation,

6.3.2. Project Applications or parts thereof, placed on the reserve list,

6.3.3. Project Applications not recommended for support due to insufficient funds, and

6.3.4. Project Applications rejected due to not meeting the eliminating criteria and/or the minimum score.

6.4. The Programme Operator may subsequently circulate additional background documents to facilitate the discussion, including an English summary of the projects to be voted on.

6.5. Members are encouraged to provide written inputs on Project Applications in advance, in particular by flagging problematic projects or signalling serious objections, including, but not limited to, potential breaches of common values listed in Article 1.3.1 of the Regulation[1].

6.6. Meetings may be conducted in person, via video link or teleconference, by agreement of the members. In case of need and with the consent of all members, meetings may also be conducted in writing (*per rollam*).

7. Language

7.1. The working language of the Selection Committee shall be English, i.e. the meetings shall be conducted in English and all documents produced by the Selection Committee shall be in English.

8. Decision-making

8.1. Quorum is reached if the majority of members is represented.

8.2. Members shall endeavour to closely cooperate in order to ensure that the votes and objections of all members are carefully considered. Mutual trust and confidence shall be applied whenever an objection is raised.

8.3. The Selection Committee shall reach its conclusions by consensus where possible. Where consensus cannot be reached, decisions shall be taken by a majority of votes.

8.4. Every member has one vote. In case of a tie, the Chair shall have a casting vote.

8.5. The Selection Committee shall divide the ranked list of Project Applications into three categories:

8.5.1. Project Applications falling within the available allocation,

[1] Article 1.3.1 of the Regulation provides that the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 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 programmes and activities funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 shall be consistent with respect for these values and principles and abstain from supporting operations that may fail to do so. Their implementation shall comply with the fundamental rights and obligations enshrined in relevant instruments and standards.

8.5.2. Project Applications or parts thereof, placed on the reserve list, and

8.5.3. Project Applications not recommended for support due to insufficient funds.

8.6. The Selection Committee shall take decisions on each Project Application under points 8.5.1 and 8.5.2 individually. Decisions on Project Applications under point 8.5.3 may be taken in bulk.

8.7. The Selection Committee may decide not to establish a reserve list.

8.8. In the event that two or more Project Applications receive the same score at the threshold of the available allocation or within the reserve list, the Selection Committee shall take a justified decision on their ranking.

8.9. In justified cases, in particular where the evaluation of one expert significantly deviates from the other evaluations, the Selection Committee may decide that such evaluation will not be taken into account. In such case, the final score of the Project Application shall be determined as the arithmetic average of the two closest scores.

8.10. If a member votes against a Project Application or raises an objection, proper justification shall be provided. The justification shall be sufficiently detailed to enable the applicant to understand the reasons for the decision and shall follow the text of the Call for Proposals and/or the selection criteria.

9. Meeting Minutes

9.1. The Minutes shall be drafted by the Programme Operator. The ranked list of Project Applications shall be included.

9.2. The draft Minutes shall be elaborated by the Programme Operator and circulated to all members and observers no later than five working days after the meeting. Members and observers may provide comments on the Minutes within five working days.

9.3. The jointly agreed and finalised Minutes shall be distributed to all members and observers no later than two weeks after the meeting.

9.4. The decisions of the Selection Committee shall become effective upon written consent to the jointly agreed and finalised Minutes by the last member or, in the absence of any objection, within five working days.

10. Final Provisions

10.1. The Statute and Rules of Procedure shall enter into force upon signature by the Chair.

10.2. The members may agree to waive or modify any of the deadlines set out above by consensus.

10.3. Any changes or supplements hereto shall be made by way of written amendments, which shall enter into force upon signature by the Chair. This shall not apply in cases where a successor institution has taken over the duties of a member represented in the Selection Committee.

In Bratislava, on ……

……..

Jaroslav Mojžiš

Chair

Annex I to the Selection Committee – Statute and Rules of Procedure

SWORN AFFIDAVIT
ON IMPARTIALITY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND NON-EXISTENCE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that, in the performance of my duties, I will act impartially, maintain the confidentiality of the information and undertake to exclude any conflict of interest, in particular, but not exclusively, as described in Art. 7.5 of the Regulation on the Implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028, so as not to distort or threaten the impartial, transparent, non-discriminatory, effective, efficient and objective performance of my function from financial, personal, family, political or other reasons.

If a conflict of interest or any other similar situation nevertheless occurs, I undertake to inform the Programme Operator and/or my superiors, in order to prevent such a situation from affecting the integrity of the tasks carried out by these entities, including, but not limited to the integrity of the selection process.

Programme and Call Code	
Name	
Function	
Unit (if relevant)	
Date	
Signature	