

## EEA Financial Mechanism 2004-2009

**Fund set-up****1. Description of sub-projects**

## 1.1 Eligible activities (sub-measures if any)

The Fund shall support scholarships for students and teachers at university level in all academic fields to finance trans-national mobility from Romania to the EEA EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway). Students will undertake a study or placement period abroad. Teachers will have teaching assignments or continuous training.

Placement means a mobility period having as purpose a practical training, related to the specialisation of the student for the future career, at which the student is supposed to achieve skills, competences, rather than theoretical knowledge.

## 1.2 Eligible applicants:

End-recipients are individual students enrolled in any of the Romanian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that participate in the "Erasmus" programme of the European Union and teachers employed by such HEIs.

## 1.3 Minimum and maximum grant amount per sub project:

Each student will receive a grant of 1.000 Euro for each month of study or placement abroad. Each teacher will receive a grant of 1.000 Euro per week of teaching or training abroad; for stays exceeding three weeks, the grant shall be 3.500 Euro.

## 1.4 Duration of sub-projects:

The mobility period for students shall be between 3 and 12 months; the mobility period for teachers shall be between 1 and 4 weeks.

## 1.5 Co-financing:

No co-financing shall be required from the HEIs or the end-recipients (teachers and students).

## 1.6 Eligibility of costs, including in-kind:

Grants to end-recipients will take the form of a lump sum to cover costs such as administration, preparation, travel, accommodation and subsistence, insurance, etc.

**2. Selection of sub projects**

## 2.1 Institutional set-up:

## 2.1.1 The role of the Intermediary

The Intermediary has the overall responsible for the selection of sub-projects.

The Intermediary's tasks shall include the following:

- organising a contact seminar;
- promotion of the Fund at national level;

- conclude the financing agreements with the selected applicants (end-recipients);
- transfer payments to the end-recipients;
- receive and analyse final reports from the end-recipients;
- monitor the selection process within the HEIs;
- report to the Focal Points.

In order to verify the selection process, the Intermediary shall request all Romanian HEIs benefiting from support under the Fund to send a sample of files (for selected and/or for rejected applicants) and copies of the minutes of the selection committees; moreover, during monitoring visits carried out by the Intermediary in the framework of its contractual obligations for the Erasmus programme (in a sample of universities each year) the Intermediary staff shall control the whole selection process, from the announcement of the availability of the grants to contracting with the end-recipients.

#### 2.1.2 The role of the Romanian HEIs

The following tasks will be carried out by the Romanian HEIs:

- conclude bilateral agreements with HEIs from Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway. The bilateral agreements shall follow the framework of the Erasmus bilateral agreements;
- promotion of the Fund among students/teachers and the general public;
- organise and conduct the selection of the students/teachers (end-recipients);
- receive a copy of the final report of the end-recipients when they return from mobility for the purpose of recognition of exams and transferable credits.

The selection of the end-recipients (students and teachers) will be organised by the respective Office for Community programmes of the Romanian HEI in which the applicant is enrolled. Its members are appointed by the rector of each HEI and its functioning and tasks are regulated through ministerial order of the Minister of Education, Research and Youth.

There are selection committees organized at department/faculty level whose members are appointed by the rector. A selection committee is composed of a minimum of 3 persons, representing at least 2 separated departments/faculties from one HEI. The nominations must avoid any conflict of interest; each member of a committee will sign a declaration to this end.

## 2.2 Selection process and procedures:

### 2.2.1 Allocation of funds to the Romanian HEIs

The Intermediary will put in place the following mechanism to arrange for the selection of applicants:

After the contact seminar, a period of one month will be allocated to the Romanian HEIs in order for them to conclude bilateral agreements with the HEIs from the EEA EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway).

Subsequently, the Intermediary shall launch a special call for proposals from all the HEIs participating in the Erasmus programme. The call will contain information regarding the total amount of the Fund allocated for the academic year, the estimated number of scholarships for students and teachers, the deadline for applications (per post mark), and the requested documents. The file to be submitted shall contain an application form with information concerning the bilateral agreements signed between the Romanian HEI and HEIs from EEA EFTA countries, the requested

number of students and teachers to be supported, the requested periods for mobility and destinations. Copies of the bilateral agreements shall be attached to the application form. The Intermediary will distribute the available amount based on the requests of the HEIs, in proportion to the number of mobilities indicated in the bilateral agreements signed by each Romanian HEI with an HEI from the EEA EFTA countries. Subsequently, the Intermediary will announce the amount of the funds and number of grants allocated to each HEI.

#### 2.2.2 Selection of end-recipients (students and teachers)

The HEI shall announce the availability of grants to students and teachers from the Fund in open calls. Applications shall be submitted to the Office for Community programmes of the HEI in which the applicant is enrolled or employed, which shall arrange for their assessment. The assessment shall include administrative compliance assessment, eligibility assessment and quality assessment.

In each participating university, the Office for Community programmes shall launch open call for applications, for students and teachers; the calls shall contain information regarding the level of the grants, the available destinations, the deadline for submissions the applications, the procedures and selection/eligibility criteria, ensuring transparency and equal treatment for all.

The selection committees will assess each file from formal and qualitative point of view; at the end of the process, a minute will be signed by each member of a committee, containing at least the criteria used for selection, the list with the approved applicants and their grants, the reserve list and the list with rejected applicants. The final decision concerning the grant is taken by the rector. The final results at HEI's level will be published by the Office for Community programmes.

Unless specified in the Grant Agreement (including this annex), the selection process shall follow the rules governing the Erasmus programme.

The HEI shall inform applicants whose applications are rejected about the reasons for the rejection.

Applicants whose application is rejected due to non-compliance with administrative or eligibility criteria can request the HEI to review its decision. The applicant shall submit such a request to the Intermediary within 10 days from being notified about the rejection and shall provide reasons for why the decision should be overturned.

The HEIs will send the results of the selection process to the Intermediary, who will conclude a financing agreement with each end-recipient, stating the rights and responsibilities of the end-recipients, the reporting formats, and the documents required by the Intermediary when the end-recipient returns from mobility.

The students and teachers who are selected shall have the status of “zero-grant Erasmus students” and “zero-grant Erasmus teachers”, respectively. Thus their mobility must comply with the qualitative requirements for Erasmus mobility. “Zero-grant Erasmus student” means a student selected as an Erasmus student, without financing from the Erasmus programme, but having all the rights of an Erasmus student: no fees/taxes to pay to the host university and recognition from the home

university of the studies or practical training abroad, including the right to receive the corresponding number of transferable credits.

“Zero-grant Erasmus teacher” has an equivalent meaning: the teacher is reported as an Erasmus teacher but he/she does not receive a grant from the Erasmus programme.

### 2.3 Selection criteria:

The Romanian HEIs will carry out the selection taking into account the following criteria (based on the Erasmus criteria):

- For students: academic results, participation in research or social services activities, motivation letter, linguistic competencies and interview
- For teachers: scientific activity, motivation letter, linguistic competencies and interview.

### 2.4 Open calls and availability of funds (including number of calls, duration of calls, and estimated size):

There shall be two open calls for applications from students and teachers. Each call shall be open for at least 2 months. The first open call will cover an indicative allocation of 687,500 Euro, of which 50,000 Euro are indicatively allocated to teacher’s scholarships. The second call will cover an indicative allocation of 325,000 Euro of which 25,000 Euro are indicatively allocated for teacher’s scholarships. The call for proposals shall take into account the principles of the EEA Grants’ *Open Calls Guide*.

## 3. Arrangement by Intermediary for monitoring and receiving reports from end-recipients

Each end-recipient shall submit a final report in two copies when returning from mobility: one to the Intermediary (in order to justify the grant) and the other for the sending (home) university, for the purpose of recognition of the mobility period abroad.

## 4. Reporting from Intermediary to Focal Point

The Intermediary shall submit reports to the Focal Point in accordance with the *Reporting and Monitoring Guideline* and the *Disbursement Guideline*.

The Intermediary shall provide the Focal Point with statistical reports by the completion of the grant awarding process after each open call, at the completion of the implementation of the Fund, as well as additional statistical reporting as required by the Financial Mechanism Office. For these statistical reports the Intermediary shall use the template for statistical reporting for sub-projects provided by the Financial Mechanism Office.

## 5. Disbursements to Intermediary (management costs)

### 5.1 Advance payment scheme:

An advance payment of up to 20 percent of the management costs shall be disbursed.

### 5.2 Subsequent disbursements:

Subsequent payments of management cost will be made as advance instalments in a manner to be set out in the Project Implementation Plan and requested through the Project Interim Reports. Final disbursement of the balance of the incurred management costs will be made following acceptance of the Project Completion Report.

## **6. Disbursement to Intermediary (funds for re-granting)**

### 6.1 Advance payment scheme:

n/a

### 6.2 Subsequent disbursements:

Disbursements of funds for re-granting shall be made as advance instalments in a manner to be set out in the Project Implementation Plan and requested through the Project Interim Reports. The request shall be justified with reference to information on already disbursed funds and forecast for future needs. The payment scheme shall aim to ensure that sufficient funds are available for a timely transfer of funds to the end-recipients, whether by advance payments, subsequent instalments, or final payments.

## **7. Disbursements to end-recipients**

### 7.1 First date of eligibility:

Costs in sub-projects become eligible at the date of the signing of the grant contract between the Intermediary and the end-recipient.

### 7.2 Advance payments and disbursements:

Each end beneficiary may qualify for advance payment of 80 percent of the total grant, which shall be paid as soon as possible after the signing of the contract between the Intermediary and the end-recipient. The remaining amount of the grant (20 percent) will be reimbursed to the applicant on the basis of an approved final report and additional documents required (certificate of attendance from the host university, mentioning the name of the beneficiary, the purpose of mobility and the exact period of it and, for students only, the transcript of records).

## **8. Publicity**

### 8.1 Intermediary level

Information on the launching of the Fund shall be published in periodicals, in the daily national press, via the electronic newsletter of the Intermediary and on the websites of the Focal Point and the Intermediary.

The publicity measures shall be in accordance with the *Publicity Guidelines* and the submitted publicity plan. They shall ensure transparency by providing possible applicants with adequate and high quality information about EEA Grants in general, as well as be designed to raise public awareness and disseminate information about the Fund.

The list of approved grant applications shall be published and regularly updated on the websites of the Focal Point and the Intermediary.

### 8.2 Sub-project level:

The end-recipients shall, when appropriate, publicise the fact that the implementation of the sub-project has been supported from the EEA Grants.