

Programme “Local Development, Poverty Reduction and Enhanced Roma Inclusion”
financed by EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021

SMALL GRANT SCHEME “ACCESS TO FINANCING”

Launched on February 5th, 2019

Deadline for projects submission: April 24th, 2019

BUCHAREST, 2019



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Preamble

This document aims to provide the necessary information for potential applicants (Project Promoters – PP) under the call organized under the small grant scheme “Access to financing”, launched on February 5th, 2019, by the **Romanian Social Development Fund (RSDF)**, under the Programme “**Local Development, Poverty Reduction and Enhanced Roma Inclusion**”.

Before filling-in your application, we recommend that you make sure you have gone through all the information presented in this document and in the Applicant’s Guide, and that you have understood all the aspects related to the specificity of the projects financed by EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 and the manner of their implementation¹.

1. General information on the Programme

The Programme is financed by means of EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 and is implemented by RSDF (as Programme Operator – PO) in partnership with **The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)**, as Donor Project Partner and with **The Council of Europe (CoE)**, as International Partner Organization.

The objectives of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 are to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area and to strengthen the bilateral relations between the Donor States (**Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway**) and the beneficiary states by financing five priority areas:

- 1) Innovation, research, education and competitiveness
- 2) Social inclusion, youth employment and poverty reduction
- 3) Environment, energy, climate changes and an economy with low carbon emissions
- 4) Culture, civil society, good governance and fundamental rights and freedoms
- 5) Justice and home affairs

The Programme covers 5 of the 23 Programme areas covered by the EEA and Norwegian Grants 2014-2021, respectively:

- Area no 7 Roma Inclusion and Empowerment
- Area no 8 Children and Youth at Risk
- Area no 10 Local Development and Poverty Reduction
- Area no 16 Good Governance, Accountable Institutions, Transparency
- Area no17 Human Rights – National Implementation

The overall objective of the Programme is to actively contribute to strengthening the economic and social cohesion at national and local level in Romania and to strengthening the bilateral relations with the Donor States. In this respect, the PO facilitates and encourages the establishment of partnerships for the exchange of experience and good practices between entities from Romania and the Donor States Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

¹ An indicative list of documents, as well as the addresses of the web pages where these documents can be consulted, is presented at the end of the text of this call

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The programme has a total value of **82,352,941 Euro**, out of which:

- 25,000,000 Euro financing from EEA Grants 2014-2021
- 45,000,000 Euro financing from Norway Grants 2014-2021
- 12,352,941 Euro financing from the State budget (15% co-financing)

During the implementation of the programme, the principles of cost-effectiveness, transparency and responsibility in the management of the funds should be observed to the highest degree, and also the principles of good governance, sustainability of results, ensuring equal opportunities and of gender, must be observed. All the projects shall apply the values and fundamental principles of the European Union and the Council of Europe (*e.g.: respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, respect for the rule of law and human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities etc.*). The program will be conducted in accordance with applicable national and European law, as well as the specific rules applicable to the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021.

2. The Small Grant Scheme “Access to financing”

The overall objective of the small grant scheme is to increase the capacity of local authorities to obtain funding for the implementation of measures stipulated in local development strategies and plans that address local development and poverty reduction in poor, isolated / marginalized communities, defined according to the specific section of this call (Section 2.6 Eligibility of target groups).

In the context of the present grant scheme, the area of local development and poverty reduction is approached via measures that facilitate the improvement of **quality and access to social services** in the broad sense, meaning social services as defined in the national legislation, as well as services in the fields of education, health, employment and housing, aiming to increase the quality of life and to promote social inclusion of vulnerable groups from rural and small urban areas (with a population of less than 20,000 inhabitants).

For the sustainable development of these rural and small urban areas, it is important to improve existing conditions and basic services by developing the social infrastructure. Therefore the grant scheme provides financial support to local authorities for procurement of technical assistance services in order to develop technical documentation and to obtain the necessary legal approvals for investments aimed at increasing the quality of life in the respective communities by increasing the quality and access of the inhabitants to social services.

The community investments designed under this grant scheme will be in line with the objectives of Romania's National Strategy on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction 2015-2020 with regards to the implementation of people-based and area-based policies, addressing the needs of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

The investments will comply with the **non-segregation principle**, meaning that they will not create new, segregated services, or develop/maintain existing segregated services, that separate/isolate further the vulnerable target groups from the rest of the community, with the exception of situations in which the proposal demonstrates that the desegregation measures are not possible for objective reasons and the proposed investment is accompanied by measures that will lead to creating or consolidating the relations between the vulnerable group and the rest of the community. Moreover, the call encourages the investments that promote the **desegregation principle**, meaning that the investments will contribute to eliminate the

disparities at territorial and social level between the segregated community and the majority of population and to improve their access to infrastructure and quality services.

In order to justify the relevance of the proposed investment for the marginalized community, the applicants shall identify in the project proposal the strategic documents at local level (local development strategies and action plans of Local Action Groups (LAG), action plans developed under other various programmes and initiatives etc.) that support the necessity and opportunity of the respective investment for the needs of the target groups.

Moreover, the applicants (and partners, if the case) shall apply a community driven development approach in a way that will demonstrate the involvement of the target groups in the selection of the proposed investment, will provide transparency to the decision-making process and will increase the accountability of the local authorities, all these elements being vectors of local development. In this regard, the PP shall organize a process of community consultation. Details regarding the minimum requirements for community consultation are provided in the Guide for Applicants.

2.1. Expected results

This call for project proposals falls under the programme area no. 10 “Local Development and Poverty Reduction”.

It is expected that the projects financed under the Small Grants Scheme "Access to financing" shall contribute to the following results:

	Expected programme results	Indicator	Unit of measurement	Source of verification	Target value at programme level	Target value at call level
Outcome	Increased use of social services by disadvantaged groups	Number of submitted applications for social service funding that have been granted	Number	PP records	N.A	N.A ²
Output	Capacity of the municipalities/ towns to access social service funding reinforced	Number of municipalities/ towns supported in accessing additional funding for social services	Number	PP records	25	25
		Number of applications for social service funding submitted by the supported municipalities	Number	PP records	25	25

The proposals will also set project-level specific indicators, according to the specificity of each project (feasibility studies/documentation for intervention works developed etc.).

Each proposal shall target one single investment objective.

² The number of submitted applications for social service funding that will be granted will depend on external factors to this call, therefore there is no target set by the PO.

The investments must have a reasonable balance between the expected results, in terms of number of beneficiaries who will gain access to quality services, and the estimated costs, aspect which will be considered in evaluation.

2.2. Financial allocation

The total amount allocated to this small grant scheme is **1,000,000 Euro**, out of which 850,000 Euro (85%) represents the financing from EEA Grants 2014-2021 and 150,000 Euro (15%) represents public co-financing.

The minimum grant amount that can be requested by a applicant is **5,000 Euro**, and the maximum amount is **40,000 Euro**.

2.3. Grant rate

Having in view that the applicant is a public entity³, the grant rate is 100% of eligible expenditure of the project.

2.4. Project duration and implementation period

In determining the duration of the project, the applicants shall take into account the limits set by the programme (the estimated duration of a project, the latest date for finalizing the implementation of the project), the application of procurement procedures, the specificity of the reporting and payment system, but also the individual aspects of the project (type of activities, type and level of estimated costs etc.).

The expected implementation period of a project is between 6 and 9 months.

2.5. Eligible Project Promoters

The eligible applicants under this small grants scheme are local public administration authorities at the level of administrative-territorial units of the following types⁴:

- Communes
- Towns (including municipalities)
- Counties

This small grant scheme addresses exclusively to those local authorities whose territory includes marginalized communities (as defined in section 2.7 Eligibility of target groups) **from rural or small-urban areas** (with a population of up to 20,000 inhabitants, according to the 2011 Census).

Specific points in evaluation will receive local authorities with low financial capacity, given the social-economic context of the area, and lack of specialized human resources, that hinders their access to existing funding and therefore, implicitly, cannot provide the necessary infrastructure needed for ensuring the access of the population from marginalized communities to social services. These local authorities have a very poor record of accessing non-reimbursable funding, having accessed none or very few projects in the last 5 years.

The eligible applicants may submit a single application for financing under this small grants scheme.

³ Local government authorities with legal personality who use / manage public funds and / or public patrimony.

⁴ See Law no 215 / 2001 regarding local public administration as subsequently amended and supplemented.

2.6. Eligible partners

The programme aims to support initiatives of cooperation between public entities, between public entities and the civil society and between entities from Romania and Donor States. In this respect, projects can be submitted in partnership and the partnership will be evaluated according to the value added brought to the project.

The partners (from Romania and/or Donor States) may be involved in designing the concept of the investment and may partner with applicant in further submitting an application to access funding for the respective investment or for other purposes.

In this respect, it is recommended that partners have the capacity to act in the project area, in accordance with the role assumed and in accordance with their legal responsibilities or status.

Under this Call, the following public or private legal entities are eligible as partners:

- a. from Romania: public entities, local authorities and nongovernmental organisations, established as Romanian legal persons.
- b. from Donor States: any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, as well as nongovernmental organisations established as legal persons in the Donor States.

The entities in one of the following situations are not entitled to be partners in the project:

- *are bankrupt, are under the administration of a judicial authority or under liquidation procedures, have suspended their business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning the above mentioned matters, or are in any similar situation arising from a similar procedure applied under the provisions of the national legislation or regulations;*
- *are guilty of serious professional misconduct proven by any means, which the PO can identify or reasonable justify;*
- *have not fulfilled its obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or payment of taxes to the state budget, in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are registered/established;*
- *are subject to a final legal judgment “res judicata”, for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization or any other illegal activity affecting the financial interests, without any evidence that they have taken in recent years corrective measures in this regard;*
- *they have been declared to be in a serious breach of the contractual obligations regarding procurement procedures or procedures for the award of grants;*
- *they are in a situation of a conflict of interest with the organization or persons directly or indirectly involved in the grant award procedure, regardless the moment when the PO ascertains this situation;*
- *they are guilty of serious misrepresentation occurred in the process of supplying the information required by the PO or fail to provide the requested information, regardless the moment when this situation occurs.*

Selection of partners

The creation and implementation of the partnership will comply with the applicable national and EU legislation on public procurement, Article 8.15 of the Regulation, as well as the provisions of Chapter V, Article 14 of Government Emergency Ordinance No. 34/2017.

Article 14 of Government Emergency Ordinance No. 34/2017 foresees that Romanian public entities acting as applicants must, when selecting Romanian NGOs to act as project partners, apply a transparent and non-discriminatory partner selection procedure. The selection methodology has to be prepared by the applicant and approved by the legal representative of the applicant. The applicant is entirely responsible for the partner selection process and will have to declare to the PO that it has complied with the applicable legal provisions.

Partnership agreement

The applicant will sign a *Partnership Agreement* with the project partners (recommended template provided in the Guide for Applicant). The Partnership Agreement must clearly set out the roles, responsibilities and budget of the parties, coordinating bodies, financial arrangements between the parties etc. (see Article 7.7 of the Regulation). The Partnership Agreement will be submitted in draft as an appendix to the project proposal and will be finalized and signed by the partners before signing the project financing contract. For partners from Donor States, a letter of intent is also required when submitting the application (see the recommended template provided by PO in the application).

Funds for bilateral relations

During the project proposal preparation period, the PO can provide to entities from Donor States and Romania that are eligible under the call, in the framework of a call for bilateral activities proposals, funds for the organization of bilateral activities with the purpose to facilitate partnership relations, respectively to prepare and/or conclude a partnership agreement for the project, and to effectively and jointly prepare the project application. The bilateral activities may be organized in Donor States or in Romania. The maximum amount that may be claimed by an applicant for a bilateral initiative is 5,000 Euro. More details on how to access these funds can be found on PO's website: <http://frds.ro/index.php?id=126>

2.7. Eligibility of target groups

The target group is represented by rural and small-urban marginalized communities inhabited by people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, who will benefit from the investments to be made through the subsequent financing to be accessed by the applicants and for which the technical documentation is developed with funding under this call.

Marginalized communities eligible under this small grant scheme are areas that simultaneously meet the following conditions:

1. Low level of human capital
2. Low level of employment on the labour market
3. Poor housing conditions.

The specification of each of these conditions to be met, of corresponding indicators and minimal thresholds is presented in the Guide for Applicants.

The demonstration of the eligibility of a community as being marginalized can be done in two ways:

- a) based on existing reference studies, as follows:
 - in case of administrative-territorial units from rural areas, the commune is identified with a marginalization rate in the *Atlas of Marginalized Rural Areas and of Local Human Development in Romania*⁵;

⁵ Atlas of Marginalized Rural Areas and of Local Human Development in Romania; Grigoraş, Vlad; Stănculescu, Manuela Sofia; Sandu, Dumitru; Corad, Bogdan; Iamandi-Cioinaru, Cătălina; Man, Titus; Marin, Monica; Moldovan, Ciprian; Neculau, Georgiana. 2016. Washington, DC: World Bank Group, available at http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/Minister/F6_Atlas_Rural_RO_23Mar2016.pdf, Annex 2 - The rate of marginalization at commune level by development regions

- in case of administrative-territorial units from small-urban areas (less than 20,000 inhabitants), the town/municipality is identified in the *Atlas of Marginalized Urban Areas in Romania*⁶ with a percentage of population that lives in marginalized areas on its territory.
- b) based on the applicants' justification of the marginalization character of the area, if the administrative-territorial unit is not included as presenting marginalized areas in the above mentioned studies. In this regard, the applicants will fill in the Fiche for validation of marginalized community(es) (see template provided in the Guide for Applicants).

Priority is given to administrative-territorial units with Roma population, which will receive specific points in evaluation.

2.8. Eligible activities

The main eligible activities of the small grant scheme consist of preparing the technical documentation, as supporting documents for the preparation of a financing application for investment projects to be submitted for funding from various national or international programmes or for funding from the state or local budget.

The eligible technical documents to be funded under the present grant scheme are:

- Scope of work;
- feasibility studies;
- documentation for the approval of intervention works;
- studies and other related technical documentation;
- payment of taxes/fees for obtaining the approvals/permits;
- grant application (if necessary).

The technical documentations to be developed will refer to community investments consisting of construction / extension / rehabilitation / modernization of the following types of infrastructure:

- Social Infrastructure - projects targeting social service infrastructure (social, education, health, employment infrastructure);
- Water Infrastructure - projects aiming to ensure the water supply of the units providing social services;
- Sewerage infrastructure - projects aimed at collecting wastewater for units providing social services;
- Roads, bridges and footbridges - projects targeting county-level interest roads, local-level interest roads, bridges and footbridges that allow disadvantaged groups access to social services;
- Housing Infrastructure - projects targeting social housing.

The investments will lead to an increased quality and access to social services by disadvantaged groups.

To apply for funding under this call, applicants will need to demonstrate ownership/administration rights of the land / construction targeted for investment.

⁶ Elaboration of Integration Strategies for Urban Marginalized Communities: the Atlas of Urban Marginalized Communities in Romania; Anton, Simona; Koo, Bryan; Man, Titus-Cristian; Moldovan, Sandu Ciprian; Stanculescu, Manuela Sofia; Swinkels, Robertus A. 2014. Washington, DC: World Bank Group, available at <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/857001468293738087/pdf/882420WP0P1430085232B00OU00900Atlas.pdf>,

Annex 8. Urban Population Based on Typology of Urban Areas

Applicants will also attach to the grant application the *Concept Note* elaborated according to the standard content stipulated in the Government Decision no. 907/2016 regarding the elaboration phases and the standard content of the technical and economic documentation related to the public-financed investment objectives / projects (see template provided in the Guide for Applicant).

The projects may also propose other types of activities, with the condition that they contribute to achieving project objectives.

2.9. Eligible costs

As a general rule, the costs are eligible if they were incurred during the eligibility period. The eligibility period of the costs starts on the start date of the project (the date of signing the project financing contract) and ends at the date as defined in the financing contract (with the subsequent amendments and additions, as might be the case).

At the end of the project, all the planned activities will be completed and all the expenses will be incurred / committed. Further information on costs eligibility can be found in the Regulation (Chapter 8) and the Guide for Applicants.

The budget of the project shall be expressed in RON (with a reference to the InforEuro exchange rate at the date when the budget was prepared) and shall exclusively comprise eligible costs (direct costs, indirect costs and contingency costs/ reserve).

Direct costs

The eligible direct costs of the project are:

- Cost of staff assigned to the project, comprising actual salaries plus social security charges and other statutory costs included in the remuneration, provided that this corresponds to the Project Promoter's and project partner's usual policy on remuneration. The corresponding salary costs of staff of national administrations are eligible to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the project concerned were not undertaken;
- Travel and subsistence allowances for staff taking part in the project. Having regard to the principle of proportionality, travel costs, including subsistence allowance, may be calculated as a lump sum, on the basis of defined rules approved by the Programme Operator;
- Costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they are identifiable and assigned to the project;
- Costs entailed by other contracts awarded by a Project Promoter for the purposes of carrying out the project, provided that the awarding complies with the applicable rules on public procurement and this Regulation; and
- Costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the project contract for each project.

The investment costs (budget chapter 3) will consist exclusively of costs related to the preparation of:

- scope of work;
- field studies (geotechnical, geological, hydrological, hydro-geotechnical, photogrammetric, topographic and land surveying studies of the land on which the investment objective is located);
- environment impact report;
- specialized studies required according to the specificity of the investment;
- supporting documentation and expenses for obtaining approvals and permits;
- technical expert opinion on existing constructions and on structures;

- energy performance certificate and energy audit of the buildings;
- feasibility study;
- documentation for intervention works approval;
- technical documentation required for obtaining approvals/permits/authorizations;
- other technical documentation as required by the minimum requirements of the type of financing the applicants shall subsequently apply for;
- taxes/ fees for obtaining approvals/permits.

The project costs under this call are mainly related to designing services, contracts concluded for the preparation of technical documentation and payment of the taxes/fees for obtaining the necessary approvals/permits, therefore the value of costs budgeted under chapter 3 Investment Costs must represent **at least 80% of the total budget of the project**. For these contracts the contracting authority shall be the Project Promoter.

Considering the social character of the financing programme, it is recommended that the design costs to be calculated as an amount up to 3% of the estimated value of the investment objective, mentioned in the Concept Note, subchapter 3.1 *Estimating the expenditures for the implementation of the investment objective*.

Maximum eligible costs of project promotion are 500 EUR, regardless the project total value.

The project costs shall observe the principle of reasonableness and efficient use of public funds, both for the designing services and for the estimation of the investment costs at project level.

Indirect costs

For entities from Romania, the indirect costs of the project shall be determined either on the basis of actual costs and shall be justified by the analytical accounting system (Art 8.5, lit. a of Regulation), or on the basis of a flat rate calculation (Art. 8.5, lit. c). The indirect costs calculation method shall be stipulated in the project financing contract and in the Partnership agreement (if applicable). The entities from Donor States may identify their indirect costs according to one of the methods mentioned in the Regulation (Article 8.5). The indirect costs calculating method cannot be changed during the project implementation.

Contingency

The maximum amount for these costs is 5% of the eligible direct costs. The contingency can only be used with the prior approval of the PO, and the available amounts shall be re-distributed to the other budget headings as their utilization is approved.

2.10. Non-eligible costs

- Interests on debt, debt service charges and late payment charges;
- Charges for financial transactions and other purely financial costs, except costs related to accounts required by the FMC, the National Focal Point or the applicable law and costs of financial services imposed by the project contract;
- Provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- Exchange losses;
- Recoverable VAT;
- Costs that are covered by other sources;
- Fines, penalties and costs of litigation, except where litigation is an integral and necessary component for achieving the outcomes of the project; and
- Excessive or reckless expenditure.

2.11. Durability of projects

Given the specificity of the grant scheme, the Project Promoter will need to demonstrate the capacity to use the results once the EEA financial mechanism funding has been completed, in terms of valorisation of the technical documentation delivered by the project.

In this respect, the Project Promoter will develop a plan / commit to ensure the sustainability of the project results, based on the following minimal requirements:

- The Project Promoter will ensure the quality of the technical documentation delivered by the project and will further update the documentation, at its own expense, if necessary, in order to meet the purpose for which it was elaborated and access funding;
- By April 30th, 2024, the Project Promoter will further submit an application to access funding for the respective investment and will demonstrate it by providing the PO with a proof of submission. It is expected that the application is declared eligible, at least;
- The Project Promoter will duly inform the PO and will submit supporting evidence regarding the approval of the application submitted for accessing funding for the investment designed under the small grants scheme

3. Projects verification, evaluation, selection and contracting

As PO, RSDF is responsible for collecting the project proposals to be funded under the present call, for selecting projects to be financed and for signing the project contracts.

All projects selection and approval operations shall observe the principles of confidentiality and impartiality.

The project proposals shall be analysed against specific criteria, following two steps: formal verification and content evaluation.

3.1 Formal verification

During the **formal verification stage**, the following shall be checked:

- a) Administrative compliance

The administrative compliance criteria⁷ refer to:

- compliance with the announced deadline;
- compliance with the required submission method/ways;
- all requested documents are attached and comply with the form requirements.

- b) Compliance with eligibility criteria

The eligibility criteria⁸ refer to:

- eligibility of the applicants;
- the community for which the investment is proposed is identified as marginalized according to the indicated reference studies or the applicants justified the marginalization character of the area (according to the Fiche for validation of the marginalized community)
- the community for which the investment is proposed is located in a rural or small-urban administrative-territorial unit (less than 20,000 inhabitants);
- the requested amount falls within the set limits;
- the investment proposed by the project has been chosen in a participatory manner (according to the Minutes of the community meeting for selecting the investment);

⁷ The first criterion is eliminatory, without the PO asking for any clarification.

⁸ Idem.

- the investment is in compliance with the non-segregation principle (according to Statement of compliance with the non-segregation principle).

The projects proposals must fulfil all administrative and eligibility criteria in order to pass to the content evaluation stage.

In case the provided information is not sufficient and clear enough to be able to make an objective decision as to whether a certain administrative conformity or eligibility criterion is fulfilled or not, the PO may send the applicants requests for clarification and/or submission of additional documents. The applicants shall respond within maximum 5 days since the receipt of the PO's request (any document/clarification received after this deadline cannot be considered valid).

If one or more of the above criteria have not been met, the project proposal is rejected (either as non-compliant or non-eligible) and is excluded from subsequent stages of the selection. The applicants of these projects proposals shall be notified within maximum 30 working days after the deadline for projects submission with regard to the results of the formal evaluation. The project proposals and all the documents related to the verification/clarifications shall be kept by the PO and some of the relevant data shall be recorded in the database (SMI).

The formal evaluation is performed by the PO's specialists.

3.2 Contents evaluation

The contents evaluation is performed by independent experts, selected and contracted by the PO. The selection of these experts shall be performed based on criteria related to their qualification, competence and expertise in the field.

Each project proposal that fulfils the administrative and eligibility criteria is evaluated by two independent and impartial experts. If the difference between the scores given by the two evaluators is more than 30% of the highest score, a third evaluator shall be appointed by the PO to perform an independent evaluation of the project. In such cases, the average of the nearest scores shall be considered for ranking the projects.

The main criteria on which the projects shall be evaluated are:

No.	Evaluation criteria	Maximum Score
1.	Relevance, necessity and opportunity	45
1.1	The investment for which funds are requested to prepare the technical documentation increases the access and/or quality of social services for the disadvantaged groups	5
1.2	The number of beneficiaries for which access to social services increases is significant <i>The score will be differentiated as follows: between 50 and 99 inhabitants receive 1 point; between 100 - 499 inhabitants are awarded 2 points; between 500 - 999 inhabitants are awarded 3 points; between 1000 and 2000 inhabitants are awarded 4 points; over 2,000 people are awarded 5 points</i>	5
1.3	The proposed investment leads to the enforcement of the principle of desegregation in the use of social services	5
1.4	The target groups and their needs are clearly identified and described	5
1.5	The proposed investment objective is relevant, necessary and appropriate as a solution to the needs identified at target group level	5
1.6	The accomplishment of the investment has an impact on Roma inclusion <i>The score will be differentiated according to the number of residents in the administrative-territorial unit who identify themselves as Roma, as follows: no Roma is given 0 points; Under 5% of inhabitants 1 point is awarded, 5% -</i>	5

No.	Evaluation criteria	Maximum Score
	<i>10% of inhabitants are awarded 2 points; between 10% and 15% of the population are awarded 3 points; between 15% and 20% of the population are given 4 points; over 20% of Roma people are granted 5 points</i>	
1.7	The investment is a priority at local/county/regional level, being included in the local development strategies and plans	5
1.8	The applicants demonstrates the need for financial support in order to contract technical documentation services	5
1.9	The applicants has not received financial support for the same marginalised community, in the last 5 years	5
2.	Technical consistency / Methodology	35
2.1	The Concept Note is designed according to the template provided by PO, is consistent and is correlated with the content of the application	5
2.2	The proposed investment objective is clearly described in terms of purpose, functions, technical parameters and data, minimum functioning period, specific requirements for functioning, formulated in a measurable manner	5
2.3	The proposed investment has been chosen using a community driven development approach, demonstrating satisfactory involvement of the target groups, beyond the minimum requirements of the PO	5
2.4	There is a realistic planning and methodology for the proposed project activities	5
2.6	The proposed visibility activities and methodologies are sufficient in relation to the scale of the targeted community	5
2.5	The proposal describes how the investment will contribute to the principle of equal opportunity and sustainable development in the marginalized community	5
2.7	The risk analysis is realistic and the risk prevention/mitigation measures are feasible	5
3.	Economic Efficiency /Sustainability	20
3.1	The cost of services for the preparation of the technical documentation is reasonable and proportionate to the estimated investment cost <i>The score will be differentiated according to the share (in %) of the budgeted value for design services in the estimated total value of the investment, as follows: over 7% is awarded 0 points; between 5% - 7% is awarded 1 point; between 3% and 5% are awarded 3 points; less than 3% is awarded 5 points</i>	5
3.2	The estimated investment value is based on cost of similar investments (according to section 3.1 of the Concept Note – Annex 4 to Application form)	5
3.3	The proposed budget corresponds to the described activities and the expected results	5
3.4	The applicants has identified the financing source/sources for accomplishing the proposed investment	5
Total score		100

Each criterion is divided into sub-criteria. For each sub-criterion, the evaluator may award a score between 0 and 5 points.

In order to be eligible for funding, the project proposal must meet cumulatively the following conditions:

- To obtain under criterion no. 1 Relevance, necessity and opportunity of the project, minimum 3 points to each sub-criteria except 1.2 and 1.6, and a total of minimum 30 points under criterion no 1⁹;
- To achieve a total score of at least 65 points¹⁰ out of the 100 possible, during the evaluation.

For ease of use, the final score obtained by each project shall be divided by 10.

After concluding the desk evaluation, the *Ranked list of projects* (outlined in descending order of the final scores), together with the most relevant remarks of the evaluators, will be drawn up. The list is made available to the members of the Selection Committee¹¹ (SC) and the SC will decide on the need for on-sight verification.

3.3 Projects selection and approval

The SC recommends to the PO the projects to be financed based on the conclusions of evaluation carried out by the independent evaluators and may modify the projects ranking in justified cases. The justification for the change shall be detailed in the minutes of the meetings and all the affected applicants shall be informed in writing on the justification for the change. The SC shall act if the field verification report reveals important inconsistencies between the information provided in the file and the reality in the field, shall aim to avoid overlaps with other financing programmes/double funding, shall avoid duplication of the projects under different calls by the same PP etc.

The PO shall verify that the selection process has been carried out in compliance with the provisions in the Regulation and the SC recommendations and complies with the programme's rules and objectives. After these verifications, the Board¹² of the PO, based on the SC selection, will make a decision regarding the projects that will be funded/rejected/put on the reserve list, depending the available funds and will award the projects.

The PO will subsequently sign funding contracts with the applicant.

The list of the projects selected for funding will be also sent to the EEA Financial Mechanism Office (FMO).

Until the final decision is taken, all the documents related to the projects evaluation shall be confidential.

All persons involved in the evaluation process shall sign confidentiality and conflict of interest statements

⁹ If, after verifying the first criterion *Relevance, necessity and opportunity of the project*, the project proposal does not meet the requirement, the project is rejected at this stage.

¹⁰ The average of the two independent appraisers' scores.

¹¹ The Selection Committee consists of three members: two representatives of the PO and one external expert. The representatives of the the Programme Partners (KS and CoE) are invited to participate in the SC's meetings in an advisory capacity and the representatives of the National Focal Point (NFP) from the Ministry of European Funds and the FMO are invited to participate as observers.

¹² The Board is the governing body of the PO. According to Law no 129/1998, the Board consists of 11 members (one representative appointed by the Prime Minister, one representative from the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family, Ministry of Transport, Construction and Tourism. Ministry of Public Finance, Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs, Ministry of European Integration and the National Agency for Roma, appointed by the managers of the respective institutions and four public personalities of the civil society sector, who are not part of the NGOs in relation with the Fund, appointed by the President of Romania).

3.4 Applicants notification

All the applicants (except for those who submitted projects that were rejected during the formal verification stage and who have already received notifications) shall be notified on the results of the projects selection within maximum 15 working days after the final decision of the PO. In the case of projects approved for financing, the notification shall also comprise the conditions to be fulfilled for signing the project financing contract, if any. If there are projects rejected as a result of SC's decision or Board's decision to change the ranking of the projects, the applicants affected by this change shall be informed in writing on the justification.

After finalizing the contracting stage, the final list of projects to be financed shall be published on RSDf's website at <http://www.frds.ro>.

3.5 Appeals procedure

The applicants may appeal the rejection of their project proposal only during the formal evaluation stage, in which case they may file an appeal within maximum 30 days from the date of receiving the notification. There is no appeal procedure as concerns the SC's decision.

3.6 Projects contracting

For each project approved for funding, the PO will conclude a *project financing contract*.

During the project implementation, if necessary, the provisions of the financing contract/its annexes may be mutually amended (without causing substantial changes to the initially approved proposal). The amendments might be subject of addendums to the financing contract, as the case may be.

4. Reporting and payment system

The Programme applies the pre-financing system. In the case of projects selected for financing under this small grant scheme, the payments to the applicant shall be performed by the PO under the form of an advance payment (up to 80%), the interim payment and payment of the final balance (if applicable). The interim payment (up to 20%) is performed based on the interim report containing supporting documents (technical and financial) and following the authorisation by PO of the declared expenses. The project funds (in Lei) shall be transferred to the accounts specifically opened by the applicant for the project at the local treasury.

5. Preparation and submission of the project proposal

If the applicants call on the services of a consultant for the preparation of the application/preparation of the application file, the consultant's name shall be mentioned in the application form, in the specific field of the form.

5.1 Help-desk services

During the period when the small grant scheme for project proposals is open, the PO provides to the potential applicants/project partners and other stakeholders, upon request, with help-desk services (information and clarifications). These services are provided by experts working in the main office and in the two branch offices.

The applicants can send questions and requests by phone (available telephone lines can be found at <http://frds.ro/index.php?id=136>), by e-mail (at info@frds.ro) or in direct meetings with PO representatives agreed upon in advance with help-desk operators.

Requests for information and clarifications related to the call may be submitted to the PO no later than 10 working days before the deadline for submission of projects under the small grant scheme. Subsequent requests will no longer be considered for settlement.

Answers to questions received by the PO may be provided immediately (in the case of a telephone conversation) or within 3 working days after receiving the message if the question is received by e-mail or if the question received over the phone requires a more elaborate response.

The most frequent and relevant **Questions and Answers** on the small grant scheme papers shall be published on the PO's website at <http://frds.ro/index.php?id=136>. These shall be updated periodically, depending on the questions received from potential applicants. We also recommend periodic consultation of RSDF's site in order to provide access to additional and/or updated information.

Also, after launching the call, PO will organize three information sessions at national level (Cluj, Craiova and Iasi) for potential applicants to this call and their partners. The estimated timetable for the organization of the seminars is Febr-March 2019. Information on the date and place will be published on the PO's website at <http://www.frds.ro> and on the [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/dezvoltare.locala/?ref=bookmarks) page of the programme, <https://www.facebook.com/dezvoltare.locala/?ref=bookmarks>.

5.2 Project proposal file preparation

The grant application form must be filled-in according to the requirements described in the Guide for Applicants (both documents are published at the following address: <http://www.frds.ro>).

The grant application and the annexes will be drafted in Romanian, on the template provided by the PO.

The grant application shall be accompanied by a package of additional documents. The list of documents to be submitted together with the grant application is available in the Guide for Applicants.

5.3 Project proposal submission

The project proposal file (respectively a hard copy and an identical copy in electronic format) shall be sent to the PO's office in Bucharest, the deadline being April 24, 2019, 16:00, either personally or by courier / mail (with receipt acknowledgment).

In case the project proposal is submitted by mail or courier services, the mailing date or the date of courier services takeover must be, at most, the announced deadline.

The files submitted by fax or e-mail, as well as those submitted to other addresses than the mentioned ones or after the announced deadline shall not be considered valid and shall be rejected.

After the deadline for projects submission has expired, the applicants can no longer take initiative to make corrections or revisions of the project proposal file.

The documents for the project proposal and the electronic copy of the file shall be presented in a sealed envelope/package, and the envelope/package shall bear the following information:

EEA Grants 2014-2021

Programme "Local Development, Poverty Reduction and Enhanced Roma inclusion"

Call: "Access to Financing"

Project title:

Applicant name:

The envelope / package will be sent to the PO's office at the address below:

Romanian Social Development Fund

Mailing address: Bucharest, sector 3, no 1 Eugeniu Carada Street, 3rd floor

Telephone: 021 315 34 40; 021 315 34 15

E-mail: office@frds.ro

Web page: <http://www.frds.ro/>

At any time before the PO's approval, the applicants may choose to withdraw the project proposal from the competition. In this case, the PO shall return, upon request, the original file of the financing application and keep the electronic copy.

6. Further useful information

For a better understanding of the aspects related to the specificity of the interventions financed from EEA and Norwegian Grants 2014-2021 and the overall projects implementation framework, we recommend consulting the following documents (the list is not limited):

- Memorandum of Understanding signed between Iceland, the Principality of Liechtenstein, the Kingdom of Norway and the Government of Romania on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, http://www.frds.ro/uploads/files/RO99_LEGISLATIE/2.%20Memorandum_EEA.pdf
- Regulation on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, <https://eeagrants.org/Results-data/Documents/Legal-documents/Regulations-with-annexes/EEA-Grants-2014-2021>
- Program Agreement signed between the NFP and the Donor States' representatives for the implementation of the programme http://www.frds.ro/uploads/files/RO99_LEGISLATIE/5.%20Acordul%20de%20program%207D.pdf
- Regulation (EU) 2016/679 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data [http://www.frds.ro/uploads/files/RO99_LEGISLATIE/6.%20Regulamentul%20\(UE\)%202016\(279\)%20.pdf](http://www.frds.ro/uploads/files/RO99_LEGISLATIE/6.%20Regulamentul%20(UE)%202016(279)%20.pdf)
- Government Emergency Ordinance no. 34/2017 on the Financial Management of the Non-Reimbursable External Funds related to the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, as subsequently amended and supplemented, http://www.frds.ro/uploads/files/RO99_LEGISLATIE/OUG34.pdf;
- Law 98/2016 on public procurement published in the Official Monitor no. 390 of 23 May 2016, as subsequently amended and supplemented, http://www.frds.ro/uploads/files/RO99_LEGISLATIE/Law%2098-2016.pdf ;
- Government Decision 395/2016 for the approval of the Methodological Norms for the application of the provisions regarding the award of the public procurement contract / the framework agreement in Law 98/2016, as subsequently amended and supplemented, http://www.frds.ro/uploads/files/RO99_LEGISLATIE/9.%20HG%20395%20din%202016.pdf
- Law 101/2016 on remedies and appeals in connection with the award of public procurement contracts, sectoral contracts and works concession and services concessions contracts, as well as for the organization and operation of CNSC, as subsequently amended and supplemented, http://www.frds.ro/uploads/files/RO99_LEGISLATIE/10.Legea%20101%20pe%202016.pdf;

- Order of the Minister of European Funds no. 1284 regarding the approval of the competitive procedure applicable to the private applicants / beneficiaries for the award of services or works supply contracts, financed from European funds, published in the Official Monitor no. 618 of August 12, 2016, as subsequently amended and supplemented
http://www.frds.ro/uploads/files/RO99_LEGISLATIE/11.Ordin_MFE_1284.pdf;
- Order MDRAPFE / ANAP no. 6.712 / 890/2017 regarding the approval of the procurement procedures for the projects with European financing implemented in partnership
http://www.frds.ro/uploads/files/RO99_LEGISLATIE/17.%20Ordin%206712%20MDRAPFE%20ANAP.pdf;
- Order No 348/2018 on the approval of the rules for the application of lump sums for travel expenses financed from the Bilateral Relations Fund and Technical Assistance Fund of the EEA and the Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021
http://www.frds.ro/uploads/files/RO99_LEGISLATIE/12.%20Ordinul%20384%20privind%20sume%20forfetare%20.pdf;
- Decision no 4/X/ST/26.10.2018 of the PO Steering Committee regarding the approval of methodology for the calculation and payment of lump sums for travel expenses in Romania and abroad, at programme and projects level, financed from the EEA and the Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021;
http://www.frds.ro/uploads/files/RO99_LEGISLATIE/HCD_oct%20.pdf;
- Decision no 1-I-ST-28.01.2019 of the PO Steering Committee to modify and complete Decision no 4-X-ST-26.10.2018
http://frds.ro/uploads/files/RO99_LEGISLATIE/HCD%2028_01_2019.pdf
- Government Emergency Ordinance 66/2011 on the prevention, detection and sanctioning of irregularities in the obtaining and use of European funds and / or related national public funds, as subsequently amended and supplemented
http://www.frds.ro/uploads/files/RO99_LEGISLATIE/14.%20OUG%20nr.%2066-2011.pdf;
- Government Decision 875/2011 for approving the Methodological Norms for the application of the provisions of Government Emergency Ordinance no. 66/2011 on the prevention, detection and sanctioning of the irregularities in obtaining and using the European funds and / or the related national public funds,
http://www.frds.ro/uploads/files/RO99_LEGISLATIE/14.%20OUG%20nr.%2066-2011.pdf;
- Government Decision 519/2014 regarding the setting of the rates related to the percentage cuts / financial corrections applicable for the deviations provided in the Annex to GEO 66/2011, as subsequently amended and supplemented,
http://www.frds.ro/uploads/files/RO99_LEGISLATIE/14.%20OUG%20nr.%2066-2011.pdf;
- Decision no. 907 of November 29, 2016 regarding the elaboration phases and framework content of the technical and economical documentation related to investment objectives / projects financed from public funds;
- Law no. 50 of July 29, 1991 regarding the authorization of construction works execution, as subsequently amended and supplemented;
- Order no. 839/2009 for approving the Methodological Norms for the application of Law no. 50/1991 regarding the authorization of construction works execution, as subsequently amended and supplemented;
- Law no. 10/1995 regarding the quality in constructions, as subsequently amended and supplemented;

- Guides adopted by FMC / NMFA in accordance with applicable Regulations (For more details, access the following link: <https://eeagrants.org/Results-data/Toolbox-for-programmes/Toolbox-2014-2021/Guidelines-and-Manuals>).
- Atlas of Marginalized Rural Areas and of Local Human Development in Romania; Grigoraș, Vlad; Stănculescu, Manuela Sofia; Sandu, Dumitru; Corad, Bogdan; Iamandi-Cioinaru, Cătălina; Man, Titus; Marin, Monica; Moldovan, Ciprian; Neculau, Georgiana. 2016. Washington, DC: World Bank Group, available at <http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/Minister/F6 Atlas Rural RO 23Mar2016.pdf>
- Elaboration of Integration Strategies for Urban Marginalized Communities: the Atlas of Urban Marginalized Communities in Romania; Anton, Simona; Koo, Bryan; Man, Titus-Cristian; Moldovan, Sandu Ciprian; Stanculescu, Manuela Sofia; Swinkels, Robertus A. 2014. Washington, DC: World Bank Group, available at <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/857001468293738087/pdf/882420WPOP1430085232B00OUO0900Atlas.pdf>