

OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS
RESTORATION OF DEGRADED WETLAND ECOSYSTEMS (CLIMALocal)
PROGRAMME SK-CLIMATE
 Norway Grants 2014 – 2021
SLOVAKIA

1. BASIC DATA AND CONDITIONS

The objective of this open Call is the restoration of degraded wetland¹ ecosystems in the territory of the Slovak Republic.

This Call is focused on support of measures for wetland loss and degradation reduction, revitalization of wetlands, restoration of their ecosystem services and public awareness raising on the importance of wetlands in the context of climate change. The main objective is to restore and strengthen the capacity of degraded wetland ecosystems to adapt to climate change and ensure the sustainable fulfilment of their ecosystem services in order to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change on the environment and quality of life of the inhabitants.

Call launching:	15.12.2020
Call closure:	26.02.2021 31.03.2021, 23.59 CET
Call number:	ACC04
Programme outcome:	Enhanced ability of targeted ecosystems to adapt to climate change
Programme output:	Restoration of degraded wetland ecosystems
Maximum Grant to be applied for:	1 000 000 €
Minimum Grant to be applied for:	200 000 €
Co-financing:	0% for State sector entities – State budgetary and allowance organisations, 5% for all other Public sector entities – central government authorities and local authorities, 10% for Non-governmental organisations ² , Social Partners ^{3, 4} and other Non-profit organisations, Private sector entities.
Total allocation:	4 800 000 €
Announced by:	Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic

¹ In the context of this call, **wetland** is defined as a transitional area between the aquatic and terrestrial environment, where groundwater level is usually near the surface or it is area covered by shallow layer of water. It must meet three characteristics: the habitats are flooded or saturated by water; the presence of wetland vegetation (hydrophytes and hygrophytes); and the presence of hydromorphic soils." (Seffer, J. et al.: Mokrade pre život (Wetlands for life), DAPHNE, 1996).

² In accordance with the Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial mechanism (hereinafter referred to as „NFM“) 2014 – 2021 for the purposes of the call **“Non-governmental organization”** (hereinafter referred to as „NGO“) is defined as a non-profit organization established as a legal entity, having a non-commercial purpose, independent off local, regional and central government, public entities, political parties and commercial organizations. Religious institutions and political parties are not considered NGOs.

³ In accordance with the Regulation on the implementation of NFM 2014 – 2021 for the purposes of the call **“Social Partners”** are defined as representatives of employers’ organizations and trade unions.

⁴ In case of NGOs and Social Partners in-kind contribution in the form of voluntary work may constitute up to 50% of the co-financing.

Eligible Applicants:	Any entity, public or private, commercial or non-commercial and non-governmental organisations, established as a legal person in the respective Beneficiary State
Eligible Partners:	Any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, as well as non-governmental organisations established as a legal person either in Norway, Beneficiary States ⁵ or a country outside the European Economic Area that has a common border with the respective Beneficiary State, or any international organisation or body or agency thereof, actively involved in, and effectively contributing to, the implementation of a project
Further conditions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The eligible Applicant may submit under this Call only 1 Project Application. In case of submitting more than 1 Project Application by the same Applicant the second submitted Project Application shall be automatically rejected. ▪ Maximum eligible Project implementation duration is 36 months. ▪ The Project must be technically and financially completed by 30.04.2024. ▪ The compulsory annexes to the Project Application are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Budget in line with prescribed template in Annex 2 of the Call; 2. Plan for restoration of degraded wetland ecosystem in line with prescribed template in Annex 3 of the Call; 3. Partnership statement, Letter of intent or other similar document proving the partner's interest in participating in the project if the project is realized in partnership with Slovak or foreign Partner (in Slovak or English respectively, a sample form of the Partnership statement is in Annex 6a, 6b of the Call); 4. Declaration stating that the activities carried out within the Project will be used only for non-economic purposes in in line with prescribed template in Annex 7 of the Call; 5. Cadastral map with delineated target area and the location of all technical measures planned within the Project; 6. Agreement of owner or operator/tenant of all lands concerned, where technical measures are planned, with Project realization⁶; 7. Agreement of operator or tenant/borrower of watercourse, or its integral tract, with Project realization⁶ (if relevant); 8. Consent/Supporting opinion of the Department of Protection of Nature, Biodiversity and Landscape of Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic to the Project plan.⁷
Funding source(s):	Norway Grants and State Budget of the Slovak Republic

⁵ For a full list of Beneficiary States see the Document Agreement on a Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the Period 2014 – 2021 <https://eeagrants.org/resources/agreement-norway-grants-2014-2021>

⁶ If Applicant or its Partner is directly the owner or operator/tenant, relevant free available information provided in the Application (e. g. Title deed number, No. of contract), or supporting documentation provided are sufficient (e. g. lease, contract on watercourse borrowing etc.).

⁷ Except of case the Applicant or Project Partner is the State budgetary or allowance organisation subordinated to the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic acting in the field of nature protection.

2. EXPECTATIONS AND RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Projects supported under this Programme contribute to the Programme Objective defined as *Climate change mitigated and vulnerability to climate change reduced*.

The focus of the Call meets national strategic documents aiming systematic planning and realization of measures for wetland restoration and protection and provision of sustainable wetland ecosystem services to contribute the reduction of climate change impacts on inhabitants and the environment ([„Strategy of adaptation of the Slovak Republic on climate change“](#); [Orientation, Principles and Priorities of the Slovak Republic Water Management Policy by 2027“](#); [Updated National Strategy for Biodiversity Protection to 2020“](#); [„Action Plan for the Implementation of Measures Resulting from the Up-dated National Strategy on Biodiversity Protection to 2020“](#); [„Updated Wetlands Management Program for the years 2015 – 2021: Action Plan for Wetlands for the years 2015-2018“](#)). Project applied should be in accordance with the above mentioned strategic documents as well as related Slovak legislation in force ([Law on protection of nature and land No. 543/2002 as amended](#), [Act on flood protection No. 7/2010 Coll. as amended](#) and other related laws/regulations).

Projects supported under this Call contribute to Programme Outcome defined as *„Enhanced ability of targeted ecosystems to adapt to climate change“* and Programme Output defined as *„Restoration of degraded wetland ecosystems“*.

Project indicators, i. e. measurable indicators defining Result Framework of supported Projects within this Call, include:

- Programme indicators, so-called standard indicators;
- bilateral indicators (relevant only for the Projects realized in cooperation with Partner from Norway);
- publicity indicators.

Standard indicators are mandatory for the Applicant. The minimum requirements for eligible Project are following:

	Expected Programme results	Indicator	Minimum requirements for eligible Project
Outcome 2	Enhanced ability of targeted ecosystems to adapt to climate change	Estimated number of people benefiting from ecosystems improvement measures	non defined
		Improved environmental status of supported ecosystems	yes
Output 2.1	Restoration of degraded wetland ecosystems	Estimated area of wetland ecosystems restored (in m ²) ⁸	10 000

⁸ For estimation of area of wetland ecosystem restored within the project, buffer zone around the wetland can be included. Maximum size of the buffer zone around the wetland can be 20% of wetland area. Applicant shall describe brief characteristics of this buffer zone and its relevance for the wetland within the „Plan for restoration of degraded wetland ecosystem“, in line with prescribed template in [Annex 3 of the Call](#).

		Number of awareness campaigns carried out ⁹	1
		Number of wetland ecosystems supported	1

Bilateral indicators are the following:

Indicator	Minimum requirements for eligible Project
Number of projects involving cooperation with a Donor project partner (disaggregated by Donor State) ¹⁰	1
Number of training courses co-organised by donor state and beneficiary state entities ¹¹	non defined

Publicity indicators are mandatory for the Applicant in the range defined in [Annex 3 of Regulation](#) on the Implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014 – 2021 (hereinafter referred as to the “Regulation”). The minimum requirements for eligible Project are the following:

Indicator	Minimum requirements for eligible Project
Number of information events	2 (project grant < 500 000 EUR) 3 (project grant > 500 000 EUR)
Number of website visits	> 0

In the Project Application, Applicants are obliged to set target values for mandatory Project indicators and optional Project indicators (if relevant), together with description of the way of their measurement. Baseline values of Project indicators are automatically set to zero. Description of Project indicators (mandatory/optional) together with units of measurements and sources of verification, i. e. recommended way of indicator measurement, is provided in the **Guideline for Applicant**.

The full Results Framework of the Programme is listed in the Annex I to the Programme Agreement concluded between Slovak Republic and the Donors and published at <https://www.crz.gov.sk/index.php?ID=4229638&l=sk>.

3. SELECTION CRITERIA AND PRIORITISED PROJECTS

The Project must **include mandatory activities** in line with the Chapter 4.

Selection criteria – administrative compliance criteria, eligibility criteria and content related criteria applied for this Call are in the [Annex 4](#) to the Call.

⁹ **Awareness raising campaign** is defined as planned series of coordinated communication activities that are realised to achieve a common goal, for a defined target group and are conducted in a defined period of time. 1 campaign is expected within the Project. Detail description of the indicator is provided in **the Guideline for Applicant** and [Core indicator guidance](#).

¹⁰ Target value is relevant for Projects realized in cooperation with Partner from Norway.

¹¹ Optional indicator (e.g. in the form of workshops, seminars, accompanying trainings/lessons) is relevant for Projects realized in cooperation with Partner from Norway.

The content related criteria are scored and divided according to the following evaluation areas:

- project;
- financial;
- administrative;
- bilateral and
- bonus.

A Project Application can only be approved if it complies with the administrative compliance criteria and eligibility criteria and in the evaluation of content related criteria will reach

Minimum required total number of points: **60 and simultaneously**

Minimum required number of points for evaluated area:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------|
| - project | 40 |
| - financial | 10 |
| - administrative | 10 |

As prioritised Projects could be considered Projects that will be scored with the highest score (20 points) for one or more of below listed criteria:

- Relevance and technical preparedness of proposed activities in relation to the baseline situation, defined objectives and expected results of the Project;
- The level of involvement of Partners from Norway in the Project.

Inclusion into Project of bilateral activities as well as aspects assessed as bonus is not mandatory (they are optional), however, in the selection process the Project Applications that include those are scored with more points.

Bilateral area includes the following criterion:

- The level of involvement of Partners from Norway in the Project.

Bonus area includes the following criteria:

- Contribution of Project to the achievement of the Programme output „Estimated area of wetland ecosystems restored (in m²)“ beyond the minimum requirements for eligible Project in line with the Call;
- Involvement of international cooperation with partners professionally engaged in the field of wetland restoration and protection;
- Synergy of the Project with other Project contributing to the climate change mitigation or adaptation in target area;
- Contribution of degraded wetland ecosystem restoration to the climate change mitigation through avoiding emissions of greenhouse gases emissions and/or increasing carbon capture;

- Inclusion of disadvantaged groups of inhabitants among target groups of eligible Project activities (e. g. socially isolated people, people with disabilities).

4. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The Project must include three mandatory activities:

- Realization of measures for restoration of degraded wetland ecosystem with positive impact on quality of life of inhabitants in target area in the context of climate change;
- Realization of awareness raising campaign for public on the significance of wetland ecosystems in relation to climate change mitigation and/or adaptation and the importance of their restoration and protection, with link to restored wetland ecosystem within the Project;
- Realization of information and communication activities providing the mandatory publicity of the Project in line with [Annex 3 of Regulation](#).

Applicant shall define the current environmental status of target degraded wetland ecosystem and expected improvement in the context of proposed measures in „Plan for restoration of degraded wetland ecosystem“ in line with prescribed template in **Annex 3** of the Call.

Particular measures on restoration of degraded wetland ecosystems are not exhaustively listed.

Eligible measures supported by this Call are those which measurably contribute to the achievement of result framework of the Programme set in Chapter 2 of this Call. In this context, following measures are considered to be eligible:

1. Measures improving the environmental status of degraded wetland ecosystem and increasing the wetland ability to adapt to climate change;

Examples of eligible measures

Restoration of lateral continuity of wetlands and inundations with surface flow
Restoration of dry river arms and horseshoe lakes including restoration of water inflow
Restoration of bank wetland vegetation
Restoration of degraded vegetal wetland biotopes (removal of invasive species of plants/wood plants, planting/revitalization of the native plant/wood plant species, sowing of the original mixture of grasses and herbs, mowing, grazing, mulching by light mechanization)
Restoration of wetland management and management of wetland biotopes (monitoring of the quality of wetland ecosystems, sustainable management, implementation of preventive measures to protect biodiversity planting of protection strips around fields and water areas etc.)
Revitalization of peat bogs and moors
Improvement of conditions of ecosystems by measures focused on water retention

Restoration of hydrological regime of wetlands (elaboration and realization of hydrological studies, adaptation of drainage canals/infrastructures, deepening, dredging and removal of deposits from wetlands, construction of facilities for water retention / filling / pumping, regulation of small streams)

Construction of wetlands in the inlet of restored wetlands to reduce the amount of sediment, nutrients and pesticides from entering the “natural” restored wetland system

2. Measures increasing ability of wetlands to stabilize local climatic conditions and mitigate negative impacts of climate change in target area;

Examples of eligible measures

Restoration of wetland retention potential to retain water in the period of heavy rainfall/ excessive precipitation for the use of water in dry period
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Restoration of wetland flood potential
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Restoration of the infiltration capacity of wetland area for groundwater replenishment
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Management or revitalization of vegetation in land with character of a wetland so it does not become a barrier to water runoff during floods and preserve natural conditions as much as possible
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3. Measures raising public environmental awareness on significance of wetlands in target area, in the context of climate change.

Examples of eligible measures

Installation of the information and educational boards
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Bird and/or animal watching tower

Installation and running of the information digital kiosk

Building the educational footpaths, terraces, educational areas

Building educational infrastructure accessible for disabled people
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Creating the information point

Creating and implementation of the information - educational program
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Organization of events, environmental education, preparation of methodological materials /manuals, promotion materials, educational materials

Non-recommended measures¹² are following:

- Measures not improving the environmental status of degraded wetland ecosystem in the context of climate change;

¹² **Non-recommended measures** are considered by the Programme Operator as being measures non-contributing to achievement of the objective, expectations and results framework of this Call.

- Building new wetland without link and positive impact on the existing degraded natural or artificial wetland;
- Measures realized on watercourse and water constructions without direct connection with the wetland;
- Restoration of longitudinal continuity of rivers and wetland biotopes;
- Release of migration barriers for fauna (construction of fish by-passes, biocorridors);
- Wetland restoration which will lead to disturbance/degradation of biotopes that are part of protected areas of network Natura 2000;
- General Awareness information activities not bound directly to the target wetland;
- Non-investment measure focused only on the change of manipulation regulations of water construction on watercourse without realization of physical (technical) measures;
- Compilation of project documentation without Project realisation.

5. ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES

Except for the so-called “excluded expenditures” listed in Article 8.7 of the [Regulation](#) on the Implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, all types of expenditures can be eligible, provided that they meet the conditions listed in this Call and in Article 8.2, 8.3 and 8.5 of the [Regulation](#).

The inclusion of an expenditure item in a Project budget approved by the Programme Operator cannot be considered as a prerequisite of its eligibility.

In case of Projects where the Project Promoter is an NGO or a Social Partner, in-kind contribution in the form of voluntary work may, in accordance with Article 6.4.5 of the Regulation, constitute up to 50% of the co-financing required for the Project. More information on in-kind contribution in the form of voluntary work is provided in the **Guideline for Applicant**.

Eligible expenditures of Projects are in line with Article 8.2 (2) of [Regulation](#) those which meet the following criteria:

- a) they are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a Project as specified in the Project Contract;
- b) they are connected with the subject of the Project Contract and they are indicated in the detailed budget of the Project;
- c) they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the Project;
- d) they must be used for the sole purpose of achieving the Objective(s) of the Project and its expected Outcome(s), in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- e) they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular through being recorded in the accounting records of the Project Promoter and/or Project Partner and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the Project Promoter and/or Project Partner is established and according to generally accepted accounting principles; and

- f) they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.

Direct and indirect costs are considered as eligible.

Eligible direct expenditures in a Project are in line with Article 8.3 (1) of [Regulation](#) the following:

- a) **the 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;
- b) **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;
- c) **cost of new or second hand equipment**, In case the Programme Operator determines that the equipment is an integral and necessary component for achieving the Outcomes of the Project, the entire purchase price of that equipment may, by way of exception from the rule contained in paragraph 4 of Article 8.2 of [Regulation](#), be eligible;
- d) **purchase of land and real estate** under the conditions set in Article 8.6 of [Regulation](#)¹³;
- 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** for the purposes of carrying out the Project, provided that the awarding complies with the applicable rules on public procurement and this [Regulation](#);
- g) **costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the Project Contract** for each Project.

Indirect costs in a Project are overheads. The indirect costs of the Project shall represent a fair apportionment of the overall overheads of the Project Promoter or the Project Partner. The amount of indirect costs may be determined in one of methods defined in the Article 8.5.1 of [Regulation](#). More information on possible methods of identification of the indirect costs is provided in the **Guideline for Applicant**.

The following costs shall not be considered eligible in accordance with Article 8.7 of [Regulation](#):

- a) interest on debt, debt service charges and late payment charges;
- b) charges for financial transactions and other purely financial costs, except costs related to accounts required by the NMFA, the National Focal Point or the applicable law and costs of financial services imposed by the Project Contract;
- c) provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- d) exchange losses;
- e) recoverable VAT;
- f) costs that are covered by other sources;
- g) fines, penalties and costs of litigation, except where litigation is an integral and necessary component for achieving the Outcomes of the Project; and
- h) excessive or reckless expenditure.

¹³ Purchase of real estate and/or land may not represent more than 10% of the total eligible expenditure of the Project, more information is available in **the Guideline for Applicant**.

More information on the eligibility of expenditures is provided in the **Guideline for Applicant**.

Unless a later date is provided in the Project Contract, expenditures are eligible as of the date on which the Programme Operator decides to award the Project Grant. The Programme Operator shall in the **Project Contract** fix the final date of eligibility which shall be no later than either one year after the scheduled completion of the Project or the date referred to in Paragraph 3 Article 8.13 of the [Regulation](#) (currently 30 April 2024) , whichever is earlier.

Expenditures incurred after 30 April 2024 are not eligible. Time eligibility of expenditures (first and last date of eligibility) will be fixed in the Project Contract.

The eligibility of expenditures incurred by a Project Partner is subject to the same limitations as would apply if the expenditures were incurred by the Project Promoter.

Project Partners whose primary location is outside the Beneficiary State may opt to submit proof of expenditure by way of an independent audit report. The Programme Operator highly recommends that Project Partners from Norway as Donor State indeed opt to use this possibility and that they indicate the costs related to these audits in the Budget. For further information, see Article 8.12 of the [Regulation](#).

6. RECOMMENDED MILESTONES AND TIMEFRAME

The Programme Operator highly recommends that the Projects comply with the following time-frame:

Event/Milestone	Expected date
Call closure	032 /2021
Project Contract signed (Project start)	Indicative timing 098/2021
Project End	Not later than 04/2024

The entire selection process is estimated approximately to 6 months.

7. PARTNERSHIP

Partner is a legal entity actively involved in, and effectively contributing to, the implementation of a Project. It shares with the Applicant a common economic or social goal which is to be realised through the implementation of that Project.

In a working partnership, the Partner has its own budget and activities he is responsible to meet. Financial participation of the Partner, i. e. spending Project Grant and/or Project Co-financing by Partner is not required. However, Programme Operator recommends to involve only those entities without financial participation as Partners with substantial contribution to the Project implementation. Other entities involved in the Project can be mentioned in the Project Application as cooperating entities.

The applicant is responsible for all commitments and irregularities of the Partner in relation to the Programme Operator.

If the Project is to be implemented in a partnership, Partnership statement, Letter of intent or other similar documents proving the partner's interest in participating in the Project **shall be submitted along with the Project Application**. The document must be signed and submitted as a scanned version. A sample form of Partnership statement is attached as **Annex 6a, 6b** to this Call.

After the Project Application is approved, draft partnership agreement shall be submitted. Partnership agreement shall be drawn up in line with the Article 7.7 of the [Regulation](#). The draft agreement is subject to the Programme Operator's reviewing before it is concluded. More information is provided in the **Guideline for Applicant**.

In case of withdrawal of the Project Partner before the Project Contract is concluded, the Applicant is obliged to adequately replace the Partner within the deadline set by the Programme Operator.

The number of Partners is limited to 4.

The creation and implementation of the relationship between the Project Promoter and the Project Partner shall comply with the applicable national and European Union law on public procurement as well as Article 8.15 of the [Regulation](#). The relationship between the Project Promoter and Project Partners must not have a character of supplier-customer relationship. An inappropriate example of a partnership is a situation in which the Partner provides services to the Applicant. This is not really a partnership but a business relationship.

Partnership with entities from Norway as Donor State

Partnerships with the entities from Norway are considered as an added value of the Project. The Applicants are reminded that the Donor Programme Partners cannot be project partners under this Call.

In order to support the establishment of such partnerships, the Program Operator provides the possibility to apply for a Grant for the search and establishment of the partnerships between Slovak entities and entities from Norway.

Eligible expenditures include, in particular, accommodation, travel and subsistence allowances.

Grant conditions related to funding from the Fund for Bilateral Relations and further information can be found in the Call for Smaller Scale Activities – Travel Grants (number ACC_BF 01 published at <https://www.minzp.sk/en/eeagrants/calls/calls-sk-climate.html>).

8. SPECIAL PROVISIONS RELATED TO BUILDINGS

In case the Projects will include purchase or reconstruction of land and real estate (buildings) the Project Promoters will be upon the signature of the Project Contract obliged to:

- Keep any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the Project in their ownership for a period of at least 5 years following the completion of the Project and continue to use such buildings for the benefit of the overall objectives of the Project for the same period;
- Keep any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the Project properly insured against losses such as fire, theft and other normally insurable incidents both during Project implementation and for at least 5 years following the completion of the Project; and
- Set aside appropriate resources for the maintenance of any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the Project for at least 5 years following the completion of the Project. The specific means for implementation of this obligation shall be specified in the Project Contract.

Buildings that are constructed, reconstructed or renovated from the Project Grant, cannot be sold, rented, or mortgaged within five years of the completion of the Project (i.e. the approval of the Final Project Report), or longer if stipulated in the Project Contract. Further details can be found in Article 8.6 of the [Regulation](#).

9. SELECTION PROCEDURES

The Project evaluation and award of Grants shall be in accordance with Article 7.4 of the [Regulation](#) and with the Annex II of the [Programme Agreement](#) on Programme financing. The Programme Operator shall be responsible for Project evaluation and for the award of Grants.

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. At least one of them shall be external to the Programme Operator. The FMC, NMFA and the National Focal Point shall be invited to participate in the meetings of the Selection Committee as observers. The Donor Programme Partners shall be involved as non-voting members.

The Programme Operator shall review the Applications for compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria. Applicants whose Applications are rejected at this stage shall be informed and given a reasonable time to appeal that decision.

Each Application that meets the administrative and eligibility criteria shall be reviewed by two experts appointed by the Programme Operator, who shall be impartial and independent of the Applicants, the Programme Operator and the Selection Committee.

The experts shall separately score the Project according to the selection criteria published with the Call for proposals. For the purposes of ranking the Projects, the average of the scores awarded by the experts shall be used. If the difference between the scores given by the two experts is more than 30 % of the higher score, a third expert shall be commissioned by the Programme Operator to score the

Project independently. In such cases the average score of the two closest scores shall be used for the ranking of the Projects.

The Programme Operator shall provide the Selection Committee with a list of the ranked Projects. The Selection Committee shall review the ranked list of Projects. It may modify the ranking of the Projects in justified cases. The justification for the modifications shall be detailed in the minutes of the meeting of the Selection Committee. If such a modification results in a Project's rejection, the affected Applicant shall be informed in writing about the justification for the modification. The Selection Committee shall submit the list of recommended Projects, together with a reserve list, to the Programme Operator.

The Programme Operator shall verify that the selection process has been conducted in accordance with the Regulation and that the recommendations from the Selection Committee comply 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 supported. In duly justified cases, the Programme Operator may modify the decision of the Selection Committee. If the Programme Operator, in duly justified cases, modifies the decision of the Selection Committee, it shall inform the Selection Committee and the Applicants affected 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.

The Selection criteria are attached as **Annex 4** to this Call. The Selection Committee Statutes and Rules of Procedures are attached as **Annex 5a, 5b** to this Call. Further information on the selection process are provided in the Chapter C of the **Guideline for Applicant**.

10. FINANCING AND REPORTING

Interim and final payments to the Projects shall be based on approved Project reports.

Payments of the Project Grant shall take the form of advance payment, interim payments and a final payment. The level of advance payment to Project shall be set out in the Project Contract. The maximum level of advance payment shall be linked to the project budget and duration as follows:

Project implementation duration ¹⁴	Advance payment	1 st Interim payment	2 nd Interim payment	3 rd Interim payment	Final payment ¹⁵
Less than 12 months	35%	55%	-	-	10%
12-24 months	25%	45%	20%	-	10%

¹⁴ The Project Contract may set suspensive conditions related to advance, interim and/or final payments. In justified cases, at the Programme Operator's discretion, a Project Promoter may receive extraordinary payments to ensure sufficient funds for the Projects during the implementation so as to avoid any liquidity problems, provided that the Programme Operator has sufficient capacity to proceed with these payments.

¹⁵ Retention may be applied at the end of the implementation or pro rata from each advance payment and interim payments.

More than 24 months	20%	30%	25%	15%	10%
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The advance payment shall be paid following the signature of the Project Contract. **Subsequent (interim) payments** shall be paid after the approval of Project interim reports. **The final payment** will be paid after approval of the final report.

An advance payment, if any, of a percentage of the total Grant amount shall be paid within 15 working days from the submission of a request or within the period set in the Project Contract. The interim payments shall be paid within 1 month after the approval of Project interim reports.

The approval of Project interim and final reports shall take place within 3 months from the submission of the required information.

Upon approval of the final Project report a final balance payment, if applicable, shall be made within 1 month.

Project Promoters shall submit interim and final Project reports containing information on Project progress and incurred expenditure. In line with point i) of Article 5.6.2 of the [Regulation](#) incurred expenditure reported shall be subject to administrative verifications before the report is approved. Verifications to be carried out shall cover administrative, financial, technical and physical aspects of Projects, as appropriate, and be in accordance with the principle of proportionality. Examination of proof of expenditure related to the administrative verifications may be carried out on a sample basis. Additionally, in line with point ii) of Article 5.6.2 of the [Regulation](#) on-the-spot verifications of Projects, which may be carried out on a sample basis, shall be carried out.

11. STATE AID

The activities eligible under this Call are of non-economic in nature, they will not have impact on competition and thus the provision of state aid is not expected under the Call.

The Applicant shall submit together with the Project Application (**Annex 7** to the Call) a declaration stating that the activities carried out within the Project will be used only for non-economic purposes.

If the Applicant is an undertaking/organization carrying out an economic activity, the undertaking/organization shall ensure that the commercial and non-commercial activities shall be kept financially separate. The separation shall be proven by separate accounting. At the same time the undertaking/organization shall ensure that all incomes related to the Project Outputs shall be re-used for non-commercial activities financing.

Before approving a Project Application the Programme Operator will carry out a **state aid test**.

12. PROJECT APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION

Project Application shall be prepared in English in the pre-defined form attached as **Annex 1** to the Call.

The Project Application shall be submitted in one of the following ways:

- electronically, by electronic mailbox and in case of Annexes, which for technical reasons, cannot be submitted electronically in paper form to the delivery address below, or
- in paper form to the delivery address below.

Documentation shall be submitted in paper form in one original and one copy.

The **Project Application Form** and the **Guidance for Applicant** are available for download at <https://www.minzp.sk/en/eeagrants/calls/calls-sk-climate.html>. The compulsory and optional annexes (if relevant) shall be submitted along with the Project Application form, in line with Chapter 1 of this Call.

Documentation of the Project Application shall be submitted in following form and extent:

Document	Extent of documentation submitted in paper form	Form of electronic version of documents (e-mailbox, data/memory media (CD, DVD, USB))	Prescribed template
Project Application form	1 original, 1 copy, 1 data/memory media (CD, DVD, USB)	XLS/XLSX	YES (Annex 1 to the Call)
Project budget		XLS/XLSX	YES (part of the Project Application form, Annex 2 to the Call)
Plan for restoration of degraded wetland ecosystem		PDF	YES (Annex 3 to the Call)
Partnership statement, Letter of intent or similar document (if Project is realized in partnership)		PDF	NO
Declaration stating that the activities carried out within the Project will be used only for non-economic purposes		PDF	YES (Annex 7 to the Call)
Cadastral map with delineated target area and the location of all technical measures planned within the Project		PDF	NO
Agreement of owner or operator/tenant of all lands concerned, where technical		PDF	NO

measures are planned, with Project realization ⁶			
Agreement of the operator or tenant/borrower of watercourse, or its integral tract, with Project realization ⁶ (if relevant)		PDF	NO
Consent/Supporting opinion of the Department of Protection of Nature, Biodiversity and Landscape of Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic to the Project plan ⁷		PDF	NO
Other (optional annexes)		PDF	NO

In case of sending a Project Application in paper form the Programme Operator reminds the Applicant to submit the Project Application in hardcover (e. g. comb binding, or other binding).

The postal address for delivering documents in paper form is:

Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic
Directorate of Environmental Programmes and Projects
Department of Transnational Cooperation Programs and Support Activities
Karloveská 2
841 04 Bratislava

The following information shall be provided on the envelope:

- „DO NOT OPEN“;
- Call number „ACC04“;
- Full name of the applicant;
- Project title.

In case of non-delivery of Project Application in the pre-defined form (in line with the [Annex 1 and 2 of the Call](#)), the Project Application will be automatically withdrawn without possibility of submitting missing document.

Documents submitted in paper form can be delivered to the above mentioned postal in one of the following ways:

- personally during working days 8:30 – 12:00 and 12:30 – 15:00,
- registered post,
- courier services.

The date and time of receipt of the Project Application and compliance with the date and time of closing the Call will be assessed as follows:

- in case of personal submission date of personal submission of the paper Project Application form to the delivery address;

- in case of sending a Project Application by registered post or courier, the date of submission of the paper Project Application form for post or courier service;
- in case of submission of the Project Application through the electronic mailbox, the date and time of time stamp of the signature;
- in case of the Project Application delivery in electronic form through the electronic mailbox of the Programme Operator combined with paper delivery of annexes to the address specified in the Call, which for technical reasons cannot be submitted by e-mailbox the time of delivery of the Project Application form is considered.

13. FURTHER INFORMATION

Please note that the Applicant is obliged to disclose in part 12 of the Project Application form **any consultant, i. e.** internal or external person involved in the preparation of the Project Application.

There is no legal entitlement to the Project Grant.

Before and during preparation of a Project Application the Applicant is strongly advised to comply with the following **documents**, as amended:

- Guideline for Applicant;
- Project Contract template;
- Partnership agreement template for Slovak Partner;
- Partnership agreement template for foreign Partner.

Further recommended documents are:

- [Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014 – 2021](#);
- [Programme Agreement for the financing of the Programme](#) „Climate change mitigation and adaptation“ concluded between The Financial Mechanism Committee/the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and National Focal Point on 23 September 2019 with effect from 27 September 2019;
- Guidelines, instructions and other documents published by the Financial Mechanism Office, published on the website: www.eeagrants.org;
- Documents published by the National Focal Point (Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic), published on www.eeagrants.sk and Certifying Authority (Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic), published on the website: <https://www.finance.gov.sk/sk/financne-vztahy-eu/zahranicna-pomoc/financny-mechanizmus-ehp-norsky-financny-mechanizmus-2014-2021/>.

An overview of the above listed documents is also published on the website of the Programme Operator: www.minzp.sk/eea/.

Furthermore, information are published on: <https://www.facebook.com/eeagrants.SKCLIMATE/>.

Link to the website of the National Focal Point with information on how to submit a complaint is here: [complaints](#).

The Programme Operator can be contacted for queries:

- by **phone** on phone number 0906 314 236 during working days, between 9:00 – 14.00;
- by **e-mail**: vyzvy.eeagrants@enviro.gov.sk (questions received by e-mail will be responded as soon as possible, not later than 10 working days);
- via **e-mailbox** (E0005579903);
- **in written** (paper) form to postal address:

Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic
Directorate of Environmental Programmes and Projects
Department of Transnational Cooperation Programs and Support Activities
Karloveská 2
841 04 Bratislava

Programme Operator recommends Applicants to use preferably e-mail communication.

The queries sent by post will be answered by the Programme Operator by e-mailbox preferably and by e-mail.

The general queries frequently asked by the Applicants will be published on the website of the Programme Operator in the FAQ section (**Frequently Asked Questions**).

Information published on the website www.minzp.sk/eea/ as well as information provided in written form (electronically or in paper form) are binding. Information provided by telephone or orally cannot be regarded as binding and it is not possible to refer them.

Specific information activities in relation to this Call will be published by the Programme Operator on the website www.minzp.sk/eea/.

Applicants are recommended to keep track of the website www.minzp.sk/eea/, where updated information related to the announced Call will be published.

14. CALL ANNEXES

1. Project Application form
2. Template for Project budget
3. Template for Plan for restoration of degraded wetland ecosystem
4. Selection Criteria
 - 5a. Selection Committee Statute
 - 5b. Selection Committee Rules of Procedures as amended
 - 6a. Sample form for Partnership statement in Slovak language
 - 6b. Sample form for Partnership statement in English language
7. Template for Declaration on non-economic purposes of Project activities