

Rules for the Preparation, Approval and Implementation of the Visegrad Strategic Program Financed by the International Visegrad Fund

Under Article 20 of the Statute of the International Visegrad Fund (hereinafter the “Fund”), the Council of Ambassadors is issuing these conditions to outline the rules of procedure for the preparation, approval and implementation of the Visegrad Strategic Program projects (hereinafter “the Rules”) in the areas determined by the Statute.

Chapter I—Project Eligibility and Preparation

Article 1

Applicants shall prepare each project according to the Rules and the on-line application form for the Visegrad Strategic Program (hereinafter “Strategic Grants”) available on the website of the Fund. If necessary, additional information about the project can be enclosed with the hard-copy version of the application form and delivered to the Fund within the deadline.

Article 2

All relevant information and instructions for Strategic Grants are available on the Fund's website (www.visegradfund.org).

Article 3

The criteria for project selection are as follows:

- topic and content of the project, its originality and adherence to the priorities of the Visegrad Strategic Program for the given year available on the website of the Fund
- quality, relevance and contribution of project partners
- transparency and accuracy of the budget
- development of civil society
- promotion of the concept of Visegrad cooperation
- multiplicative effect
- proposed media coverage and public relations, networking effect
- continuity of the project
- previous experience with the applicant (where applicable)

Article 4

Any legal entity or natural person worldwide is eligible for support, provided that the nature of the submitted project is relevant to or related to the Visegrad Group (V4) countries. Preference is given to projects organized by non-profit and non-governmental organizations, public educational, cultural and research institutions and municipalities or local governments.

Applicants can apply for Strategic Grants provided that their project involves entities from all four V4 countries (including the applicant).

Article 5

An applicant who obtained funding for Small, Standard or Strategic Grant in the past can re-apply for a grant, provided that all previous projects were completed and the Final Reports were duly approved by the Fund. Exempt from this restriction is the Visegrad Strategic Program, which can be implemented simultaneously with Small or Standard Grants.

Chapter II—Application Form/Project Proposal

Article 6

The application form is available on the website of the Fund.

Article 7

The application form shall be filled out in the on-line system in English. All formal communication with the Fund must be also conducted in English.

Article 8

The application form must be submitted both on-line and in a hard-copy version within the given deadline to the following address:

International Visegrad Fund
Kráľovské údolie 8
811 02 Bratislava
Slovak Republic

Article 9

The annual deadline is May 15, unless otherwise stipulated (letters must be postmarked and electronic versions of applications submitted by this date at the latest).

Article 10

Applicants will be sent written confirmation (via e-mail) of the receipt of their applications.

Chapter III—Project Selection and Approval

Article 11

The evaluation procedure may last up to 50 working days after the deadline. Applicants shall take this fact into account when preparing their calendars of events. The Fund cannot consider or support projects that start before their due approval.

Article 12

The Fund shall review application forms according to their compliance with the Fund’s formal requirements and has the right to verify any data provided by the applicant or to request additional information, if necessary.

Article 13

The Executive Director of the Fund (“the Executive Director”)—in cooperation with the Deputy Executive Director, the Public Relations Coordinator and the respective program manager—prepares a written statement of projects recommended for approval and documentation of all submitted projects to the Council of Ambassadors (hereinafter “the Council”).

Article 14

At its session the Council shall either accept or reject projects. The Council can also accept a project with reservations, in which case the applicant shall make the necessary changes. Decisions made by the Council are final and shall present no grounds for any form of appeal and require no detailed reasoning.

Article 15

The Fund informs all applicants of results in writing. The Fund is under no obligation to justify any decision, nor is it obligated to return application forms or any of their parts to respective applicants.

Article 16

The Executive Director is authorized to sign a contract once a project is approved by the Council.

Chapter IV—Contractual Terms

Article 17

A grantee has an obligation to set up a special bank account for the purposes of a given project—unless stipulated otherwise in the contract—i.e. deposits thereto and withdrawals therefrom shall only be related to that project. All project payments must be carried out through said bank account. The grantee is obligated to submit its account number via the on-line system within 20 working days of project approval by the Council.

Article 18

The grantee is obligated to set up a website or a separate sub-site within an existing website dedicated to the project; such project website can be set up as part of a social networking website (hereinafter “Project Website”). Each Project Website shall have its own URL, shall visibly contain the Fund’s logo with a direct link to www.visegradfund.org and contain direct links to the websites of each of the project partners, where applicable. The grantee is obligated to submit the URL of the Project Website via the on-line system within 20 working days of project approval by the Council.

Article 19

Contracts are made available to grantees via the on-line system. The grantee is obligated to check all data in the contract and approve it via the on-line system within 40 working days of its posting in the on-line system.

Article 20

The contractual period starts the day the contract—approved by the grantee—is signed by the Executive Director. The Fund shall inform the grantee of the signing in writing (via e-mail) and subsequently shall prepare the contract and send it to the grantee by post. The grantee is obligated to return the signed contract to the Fund within 20 working days of its delivery.

Article 21

Failing to fulfill the conditions stipulated in Articles 17, 18, 19 and 20 may result in financial penalty in the amount of 20% of the approved budget or in termination of the grant. The decision shall be made by the Executive Director and approved by the nearest Council of Ambassadors.

Chapter V—Project Implementation

Article 22

The grantee is obligated to implement the approved project in compliance with the time frame and financial conditions stipulated in the contract. The project shall be financed by the Fund at up to 70% of its total cost. The time frame for the implementation of Strategic Grants shall be between 12 and 36 months.

Article 23

The grantee and the project partners are obligated to acknowledge the Fund's support of the project (1) on all premises where events take place as part of the project (in the form of a banner or flag), (2) in all printed materials distributed as part of the project and (3) on all websites connected with the project, including the grantee's and project partners' websites (see Article 18). All acknowledgements must carry the visible logo of the Fund and, if on-line, must be directly linked to www.visegradfund.org. Acknowledgements in event venues must be present for the duration of the events; acknowledgements on-line must remain active for the whole contractual period of the grant project, at minimum.

Article 24

The Grantee is obligated to issue at least one press release or public invitation regarding the Project. Each press release or public invitation must be entered into the on-line system and disseminated to relevant media. Each press release must contain acknowledgement of the Fund's support of the project according to this Contract.

Article 25

The grantee is obligated to maintain an up-to-date calendar of events that occur as part of the grant project. Any change in the dates, venues or types and names of events originally stipulated in the calendar of events must be updated in the on-line system no later than 3 working days prior to the planned date. Changes in more than half of the scheduled events must be approved in writing by the program manager.

Article 26

The grantee shall immediately notify the Fund of any changes in contractual conditions (e.g. changes of the budget, project partners, contractual period or project name) in a letter signed by the grantee's statutory representative accompanied with a copy of relevant documents declaring the changes. The Executive Director decides on such changes and, if necessary, submits them for approval to the Council. All changes are possible only within the contractual period.

Article 27

The Fund reserves the right to carry out monitoring visits of projects and, if necessary, to request additional documentation regarding each project. The grantee is obligated to allow visits from the staff of the Fund or from personnel authorized to do so by the Fund and to provide any materials related to the project upon request.

Article 28

Failure to fulfill the conditions stipulated in Articles 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 27 may result in financial penalty in the amount of 20% of the approved budget or in termination of the grant. The decision shall be made by the Executive Director and approved by the nearest Council of Ambassadors.

Chapter VI—Project Disbursement

Article 29

Grants shall be disbursed in two or three tranches. The number and amount of the tranches is specified in the contract. The first tranche shall be transferred within 15 working days of the Fund's receipt of the signed contract. The second tranche—if not final—can be disbursed upon the approval of the Interim Report. The final tranche shall be set to 20% of the approved sum and can be disbursed upon the approval of the Final Report.

Article 30

The grantee shall conduct bank transfer (non-cash) transactions, where possible. Cash operations shall be limited to 10% of the approved sum.

Article 31

All financial documents (receipts, bills, contracts and invoices) related to a project must be kept and copies thereof delivered to the Fund as part of the Interim and Final Reports.

Article 32

Up to 5% of the approved sum may be used to cover project overhead costs (operating costs directly linked to the project).

Article 33

Within each Interim and Final Report a narrative and a financial report is to be prepared by the grantee. All narrative and financial reports must be separately signed by the grantee's statutory representative.

Article 34

Failure to fulfill the conditions stipulated in Articles 30, 31, 32 and 33 may result in financial penalty in the amount of 20% of the approved budget or in termination of the grant. The decision shall be made by the Executive Director and approved by the nearest Council of Ambassadors.

Article 35

Requirements for the preparation of the Interim and Final Report, all additional instructions, as well as relevant forms are available on the Fund's website.

Article 36

All disputes that may occur during the implementation of granted projects should be submitted to consultation between the Executive Director and the grantee.

Article 37

These Rules shall enter into force on the day of their approval by the Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.