

National Focal Points

Brussels, 13. September 2024

Subject: Consultation on the “Blue Book” for the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2021-2028

Dear Colleagues at the National Focal Points,

The agreements between Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway and the EU on the EEA and Norway Grants 2021-2028 were signed on 12 September 2024. We are consequently very pleased to send you this invitation to participate in the consultation on the draft Blue Book of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028.

Protocol 38D Article 3(1) to the EEA Agreement outlines the thematic priorities for the country-specific allocations, and states that the content of the programme areas within these thematic priorities will be consulted with the Beneficiary States. The main purpose of the draft Blue Book for the EEA Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 is to specify the content of the programme areas.

Proposed changes to the Blue Book

The draft Blue Book reflects the Donor States' ambition to streamline the portfolio and design targeted programmes. The goal is to integrate more effectively the common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and human rights — including the rights of minority groups — across the programme areas. This also implies a stronger focus on gender equality throughout the Grants' portfolio. Additionally, the structure of the Blue Book has been simplified by removing the “priority sectors” level and consolidating the twenty-three programme areas to fifteen, allowing for a sharper focus on the thematic priorities under the programme areas.

Three funds have been established within the EEA and Norway Grants 2021-2028 in line with the Protocol 38D and the Agreement between Norway and the European Union. They are Fund for Civil Society, Fund for Capacity Building and Cooperation with International Partner Organisations and Institutions and Fund for Social Dialogue and Decent work (only Norway Grants). These three funds will contribute to the objectives and thematic priorities of the EEA and Norway Grants and be managed by the Donor States.

Any questions regarding the consultation process may be directed to Bluebookconsultation@efta.int.

The FMO would hereby like to invite you to Brussels on 24 September 2024 for a workshop dedicated to clarifying the draft Blue Book. We hope that this can be of use to you in formulating your responses to the consultation process. Preliminary invitations have already been sent and we are at your disposal for any practical questions. In parallel, a public consultation process has been launched online: <https://eeagrants.org/news/launch-blue-book-consultation>.

Responses to the consultation process should be sent to the FMO no later than 18 October 2024.

We look forward to hearing all your feedback and to a swift launch of the new programming period.

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Yours sincerely,
Ragna Fidjestøl
Managing Director
Financial Mechanism Office