

Communication Strategy of EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 in the Czech Republic

(version 2)

Introduction

This Communication Strategy is submitted by the Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic, which acts as the National Focal Point for the EEA and Norway Grants in the Czech Republic (NFP). The NFP is responsible for providing information regarding contribution from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants to general public, potential beneficiaries, relevant stakeholder and partners.

The key objective of the Communication Strategy is to provide a comprehensive approach and guidance on publicity and visibility of the EEA and Norway Grants in the third programming period (2014-2021). This Communication Strategy will serve also as an underlying document for preparing the **Communication Plans** of the particular programmes.

At present, the programme drafts (so-called Concept Notes) are still under preparation, and so it is not possible to define precisely the target groups. They will be precisely defined in the individual Communication Plans that will be prepared after the Concept Notes are submitted to the donors for assessment. The Communication Strategy will be therefore updated as needed, based on the approved programmes.

A source document for drawing up the Communication Strategy was a situational analysis of the past periods and a socio-economic analysis carried out by an external marketing agency. A SWOT analysis is attached to this Communication Strategy.

A brief analysis of the EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014 situation

The 2009-2014 programming period can be evaluated as successful mainly with regard to the high absorption level (over 85%) and to the quality of projects in the programmes (most projects were evaluated in independent evaluations as very good to excellent).

A problem was the short period between announcing a call and the deadline for submitting grant applications. With regard to the tight deadlines it is logical that the operators and partners focused mainly on communication towards potential grant applicants while communication towards the general public was slightly less pronounced.

The NFP should also communicate towards the general public (for example through the articles in newspapers) already from the beginning of programming period. Also the innovative communication channels (e.g. Twitter, Instagram,) have not been used. The NFP aims to improve the use of new communications tools and to focus more on general public.

On the other hand, programme operators and programme partners have created a number of quality publication materials, in the form of brochures in paper and electronic versions, videos, photographs, texts etc. that can be used also in the new programming period, in particular for communication with the general public.

The NFP issued a number of articles in national newspapers either on whole programmes or on particular interesting projects at the end of programming period. Several programme operators and partners also quite successfully used the social networks. The NFP organised a large number of interesting conferences.

All of that experience the NFP will build on in the new programming period.

Objectives of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 in publicity

The overall aim is:

- **increase public awareness on existence of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014 – 2021 in the Czech Republic and provide information to the public on its objectives, possibilities, implementation and impact, as well as make the cooperation with the Donor States – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway more visible.**

The partial aims are:

- increase public awareness of the general public on the impact of cooperation between the donor countries and the Czech Republic on the social and economic development
- increase public awareness about the donor states and their roles
- inform professional public and general public about bilateral cooperation between the Czech Republic and donor states
- providing positive information to the general public on programmes, their impacts achieved results
- informing the potential (new) applicants about the financing options and bilateral cooperation
- increase an interest of journalists in the EEA and Norway Grants

Target groups

The target groups for communication are multiple and they differ for each priority area. As the specific focus of the particular programmes has not been finalised yet, it is not possible to be more particular about the target groups of the potential applicants.

In general, the target groups can be divided into the professional (meaning experienced in public financing) and the general public.

The professional public:

- ✓ **experienced applicants** – those who already have experience with using grants, either from EEA and Norway Grants or similar. Here, it is important to focus on *practical information, how to apply for a grant, to inform about dates, news, functioning of the information system for administration of applications etc.* Communication with them will be carried out mainly through the individual programme operators, or programme partners.
- ✓ **potential applicants** – these are often entities with experience in using public funds but without direct experience with the EEA and Norway Grants. This type of applicants must be provided with *an explanation of the specificities of the EEA and Norway Grants, with examples of successful projects from various fields so that they can identify with a similar project, provide them with "frequently asked questions and answers"; use publicity in professional magazines, on thematically focused servers etc.* Communication with them will be carried out through the individual programme operators or programme partners.
- ✓ **new potential applicants** – entities with no previous experience with funding. This type of applicants shall be found and addressed by specific types of communication channels (e.g. social media, articles in newspapers, competitions, PPC). *The aim is bring them on the official websites where will be informed about the possibility of support of EEA and Norway Grants, examples of successful projects.* Communication with them will be carried out through the instruments of the NFP and in further stage through the individual programme operators or programme partners.

- ✓ **FMO, programme operators, project promoters, programme partners from donor states, programme partners from international organizations, potential foreign partners of Czech entities** - close contact with this group will be maintained. *Group will be informed about actual status of the implementation, especially about the calls, about the possibilities of bilateral cooperation, new guidelines, achieved results and outcomes and about upcoming relevant event.*

General public is important both for implementing the programme objectives and for the key objectives of the EEA and Norway Grants. Apart from that, the lay public influences the professional public which may then become "new potential applicants". It consists of:

- ✓ **general public** - communication with them must focus rather on *basic explanation of what the EEA and Norway Grants mean (also mention the reason why EFTA States finance projects); use a reference to the website with successful projects from the past programming periods. Information about cooperation among Czech Republic and donor states will be highlighted.* Specific communication channels will be used (e.g. social media, articles in newspapers, competitions, brochures, leaflets, PPC). The NFP will be in charge of this target group.
- ✓ **journalists** – this specific group will be provided by *information about the actual status of the implementation, about the approved and implemented projects, achieved results and outcomes and bilateral activities.* NFP as well as programme operator will be in charge of this target group.
- ✓ **private entities that could be eligible for support of financing.** This is a very specific group of the lay public, which, in general, does not have experience with public financing, apart from that; however, it also perceives public finances as a great administrative burden. Communication towards this group will be carried out by the NFP but this only group of lay public should be addressed also by operators.

Communication strategy of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021

Identity and a uniform visual style

Uniform identity is key. New logos and colour typology will be observed throughout the EEA and Norway Grants implementation. The principles of correct use will be applied in accordance with the Communication and Design Manual and will be provided to the final beneficiaries in a set of instructions. Logos will be placed on all information materials, articles, promotional items, presentations, billboards, memorial plaques etc.

At the same time, a uniform name will be used in the new period - **EEA and Norway Grants (equivalent in Czech Fondy EHP a Norska)**, and, for the purposes of promoting the individual programmes, separately also EEA Grants and Norway Grants according to the source of financing.

The slogan „**Working together for a green, competitive and inclusive Europe**“ will be used at all suitable opportunities. At the moment it is presented on banner promoting the EEA and Norway Grants and on Facebook page. For the general public this slogan will be more clarified by promoting examples - results of the projects from programmes representing these 3 aspects - green, competitive or inclusive.

The key messages will be the promotion of bilateral cooperation between the Czech Republic and donor states and promotion of specific objectives of all programmes supported in the Czech Republic.

Also, to each programme will be recommended to have, apart from its official title according to the Memorandum of Understanding, a short name (according to the list of programme title from the FMO)

If the POs wish to use any other short names, slogans or taglines e.g. on banners, billboards etc. throughout the life of the programme it shall be built on the key slogan for the whole EEA and Norway grants and consulted with the NFP and the FMO to be clear and consistent.

Regular cooperation with journalists

Journalists are addressed through the Press Department of the Ministry of Finance and also by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Prague. The aim for the new period of EEA and Norway Grants is closer cooperation with journalists also through contacts gained from programme operators or the actual grant beneficiaries. The aim is to obtain the largest possible number of personal contacts.

Press releases will be, as it was in the second period of the Financial Mechanism in the Czech Republic, issued on the occasion of important events, but will now be also prepared on the occasion of completing interesting and reader-attractive projects, e.g. related to areas highly visited by tourists or well-known cultural monuments. Press releases will be also offered to **regional** dailies.

Press conferences will be used only occasionally, due to the low interest by journalists, on topics that are very interesting or current. The attractiveness of the event will be increased by the choice of an interesting venue, by connection with a cultural or otherwise interesting event or an attractive guest. A media kit is a matter of course.

Press articles - paid advertising

Already in the past period, the NFP had a number of articles printed in the national press. The aim for the new period is to reduce paid advertising as much as possible but, conversely, to have the best possible cooperation with journalists. Nevertheless, some communication tools (e.g. contests or prepared conferences) will be supported also with paid advertising. Announcement of the calls under the bilateral fund will be promoted.

Contests

Travellers (or geocaching) contest – the NFP in cooperation with the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Prague will prepare a contest that will concern tourist attractive places across the Czech Republic where a project supported by the EEA and Norway Grants has been implemented. It will take place in the summer of 2018, in the highest tourist season. Publicity will make use of both the website and Facebook, and paid advertising in newspapers and traveller magazines. Local level actors, such as municipalities or EU centres active in the region of chosen projects will be informed about the contest.

Instagram will be used to share photographs made during visits. A **photo contest** will be used as a complementary activity. That way, NFP will obtain numerous interesting photographs (the rights to use them will be ensured).

The website

The current website will be preserved: www.eeagrants.cz, and also www.norwaygrants.cz. The website is a key tool for sharing information. The website has quite a good visit rate (approx. 3,000 visits/month, measured for January - April 2018). At present, the appearance of the website mainly concerning the new programming period is being redesigned (the finalization of the first part has been finished in March 2018, next adjustments are supposed during rest of the year 2018). The website will have a clearer design and will be simplified so the information could be easy find. In the next steps (after the Concept Notes are approved), icons and short names will be added to the programmes and a signpost for potential applicants (so that it is easier for them to find the right programme for their projects). Information session will be regularly updated and relevant.

Possibility for registration of email address to the mailing list will be strengthened at the website. A digital newsletter will be distributed to the registered address and other stakeholders. Relevant newsletter (for example providing information on announcement of calls) will be sent also to local level actors.

Special webpage dedicated **for bilateral cooperation** and allowing match-making of partnerships by registration in database will be prepared on the main websites during 2018.

The website is intended for the professional public but after the modification it will provide sufficient information also for the lay public including the media. The website also provides an overview of the completed projects, including photographs.

The website is both in Czech and English.

All important information on the programmes will be placed on the joint website www.eeagrants.cz (www.norwaygrants.cz), where each programme has its own pages with information. Programme operators may also set up separate websites for their programmes outside the joint website, and the websites will then be interlinked.

Website complies with responsive design and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines for the visually impaired. The websites contains also icons to social media.

Facebook and other social networks

Today, social networks are a popular and necessary form of communication with the stakeholders, although this specific form is interesting only for certain groups of people. The NFP is already using **Facebook**. The page is updated regularly and news is published there at least once a week. The NFP is now considering using also a paid form of publicity via Facebook. Facebook is used also by a number of programme operators, programme partners, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Prague and final beneficiaries. The use of Facebook will be embedded in the Communication Plans of each programme and the mutual marking of websites and contributions sharing will be one of the key activities in the social networks.

Another tool is **Instagram** where photos and short videos from projects will be regularly added and short stories presented. The NFP uses the hashtag #eeanorwaygrants, as it is already used in other countries by the NFPs and the FMO.

YouTube is a very popular network and a well-marked video or presentation content will be easy to find. NFP will place on YouTube short videos made by the NFP at project visits, conferences and other events, or interesting interviews.

Twitter is used by NFP for short communications and messages.

All social media are actively used by the NFP. All social media contains the link to the official websites.

Important events

NFP will prepare at least 3 important events in line with Annex 3 to the Regulation.

1. **The signing of Memoranda** in September 2017 was already one of those events that reached very good publicity (the news was published in several printed dailies and on internet news journals).
2. **The kick-off event** is planned for beginning 2019. The focus themes will be presented to the professional and more general public and the media. Local level actors will be also invited.

3. **The interim event** will focus on more specific and current themes. It will take place at a time when a part of the projects will already be completed and some outputs will be presented. Bilateral cooperation will be also promoted.
4. **The final conference** will promote results, achievements and impacts of the donor's support. The core audience will be visitors and journalists invited by the final beneficiaries of grants and of course representatives of the donors.

The NFP will also cooperate in other important events prepared under the various programmes.

Information materials and promotional items

Information leaflets will inform briefly about results from the last period and about the possibilities of financing in the new period and bilateral cooperation with donor states and will be handed out at the kick-off conferences, seminars and meetings.

The NFP will follow up on many **brochures** that were prepared in the past period on the particular programmes and were evaluated as very well designed and beneficial. It is planned to create a summarising but brief informative brochure "What has been achieved" that will present the most successful and visually most attractive projects at the end of new programming period. Brochure will be in digital form presented at the websites and relevant social media.

Promotional items will be created only where it will be meaningful and suitably connected to the programme theme. As a basis, the NFP will create pens, notepads, bags and banners.

During the implementation of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021, the NFP will consider using other communication tools, e.g.:

Advertising campaigns in towns

The rent of advertising spaces at frequented places, the campaign can be focused directly on particular projects (regionally), or on a certain theme, e.g. in connection with health and the supported projects.

Campaigns in urban public transport vehicles

It is possible to use advertising spaces in trams and in the metro to promote EEA and Norway Grants. That could be used e.g. as part of announcing a call of the Bilateral Fund.

PPC campaigns

Paid advertising on the internet, that can be used by the NFP and programme operators to address the general public and potential applicants.

The concept of quizzes and competitions

Complementary to the initial contest, e.g. on awareness of EFTA, EEA and EU or on knowledge about Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

Cooperation with the Embassy and programmes operators

The communication measures implemented by the NFP will suitably complement the activities of the **Royal Norwegian Embassy in Prague**. Embassy will be also helpful in finding project partner from Norway.

The same applies to cooperation with the programme operators. The cooperation will be strengthened **by regular contact through emails, sharing information on websites and social networks and via digital newsletter**. The NFP will ask all the programme operators for sum up of upcoming events, actions and new interesting information about the progress in each programme. **Gathering and/or producing good visual materials from the projects including photos and videos will be encouraged**.

When considered as effective the publicity working group including the NFP and programme operators will have ad hoc meetings for discussing actual matters. The Royal Norwegian Embassy will be also invited.

Bilateral cooperation

Bilateral cooperation Bilateral Fund is promoted by the NFP in many ways. A special webpage is dedicated for the bilateral cooperation. Calls under the Bilateral Fund are consulted with the DDPs who are helpful in order to reach out to potential and project partners in the donor states as well as the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Prague. Open Call will be promoted on the website, by social media, article in newspaper and the information will sent to relevant stakeholders via newsletter. The information will be provided also to the local level actors and relevant private entities.

Local level actors

Communication towards regions and local level actors will be ensured mainly through the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic, a voluntary and non-governmental organisation founded as an interest group of towns and municipalities. The NFP has long term cooperation with this Union. Representatives of the Union will be invited to participate in all relevant events and informed about the relevant open calls.

Evaluation of the Communication Strategy

The particular communication measures will be evaluated on an ongoing basis, or immediately after ending the use of the given communication tool. At the beginning and also at the end of the programming period, the NFP will carry out a survey on the awareness of the EEA and Norway Grants so that it is possible to evaluate the impact of the communication tools on the public awareness of the EEA and Norway Grants.

A summary of the communication tools, their use for target groups, the timeframe and the manner of evaluation are provided in the table below:

Communication tools	Target groups	Objective	Timeframe*	Evaluation methods
The website	Professional public (experienced applicants and potential applicants), general public, journalists	To inform the professional public of calls, events, news and results, bilateral cooperation. To provide basic information to the general public	Throughout the life of the EEA and Norway Grants	Number of unique views of the website
Press articles - paid advertising	Professional public (experienced applicants and potential applicants), general public	To inform the professional public of the possibilities of receiving a grant, bilateral cooperation, to raise public awareness	Throughout the life of the EEA and Norway Grants	Number of advertisements in newspapers

Travellers' contest and photo competition	General public	To raise public awareness of the EEA and Norway Grants	Summer 2018	Number of registered contestants, feedback
Press releases, press conferences	Professional public (experienced and potential applicants), general public including journalists	To raise the interest of journalists in EEA and Norway Grants through regular cooperation, to inform potential applicants, to raise public awareness	Throughout the life of the EEA and Norway Grants	Press monitoring - number of articles, number of journalists at press conferences
Facebook, Instagram, YouTube	Professional public (grant beneficiaries and their partners from abroad), general public (only in some programmes)	To address the general public, to show interesting outputs from projects	Will be used intensively after the first projects are approved	Number of followers, number of sharings
Twitter	Professional public, journalists	To inform of interesting events	Throughout the life of the EEA and Norway Grants	Number of followers, number of retweets
Kick-off event	Professional public, general public, journalists	To inform potential applicants, to present the themes to the public and journalists	September 2018	Number of participants
Interim event	Professional public, general public, journalists	To show interim results, to highlight bilateral cooperation, to point out the remaining possibilities of spending	2021-2022	Number of participants
Final conference	Professional public, general public, journalists	To show results of the whole period, to present the most interesting projects, outputs	2024	Number of participants
Information materials, brochures	Professional public (potential applicants and their partners), general public	To inform of the possibilities of receiving a grant, bilateral cooperation, to explain the term EEA and Norway Grants	Mainly at the kick-off conferences, seminars etc.	Number of distributed copies
Advertising campaigns in towns, advertising in urban public transport vehicles	General public	To raise public awareness of the EEA and Norway Grants	The second half of the programming period	Number of campaigns (advertisings)
PPC campaign	General public	To raise public awareness of the EEA and Norway Grants	Any time during the programming period - not earlier than 2019	Number of clicks
Television advertising	General public	To raise public awareness of the EEA and Norway Grants - focused mainly on cultural projects and environmental projects, possibly research	About in the middle of the programming period - as soon as the first interesting projects are completed	Average ratings of the TV programme
Competitions and quizzes	General public	To raise public awareness of the EEA and Norway Grants	Any time during the programming period - not earlier than 2019	Number of registered contestants

*the dates are indicative, they will change based on the current situation

List of indicators

Indicator	Units	Baseline value	Target value	Source of data	Evaluation date
Number of respondents who have heard of EEA and Norway Grants and have an idea of what they are used for	%	14*	30	Questionnaire survey on the awareness of EEA and Norway Grants	2024
Number of respondents who answer correctly the question which countries contribute to EEA and Norway Grants	%	x	40	Questionnaire survey on the awareness of EEA and Norway Grants	2024
Important events organised	Quantity	1	at least 3	Strategic Report	2017-2024
Increased visit rate of the website	Number of visitors per month	3,300	3,900	Google Analytics	annually
Increased number of followers on Facebook	Number of followers	1,116	2,000	Facebook	regularly
Brochures on the achieved results, distributed at the final conference	Number of copies	x	At least 500 copies	Strategic Report	2024
Information leaflets on the possibilities of spending EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021, distributed at the kick-off conference and other events	Number of copies	x	At least 300 copies	Strategic Report	Autumn 2018

*a value from the questionnaire survey of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Prague

Roles and responsibilities

The Communication Strategy of EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 is the responsibility of the National Focal Point (Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic).

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Annex 1

SWOT analysis

WEAKNESSES	STRENGTHS
<p>A part of the programme operators is without experience so far, which may adversely affect absorption, project monitoring and publicity <i>(mitigation effort: NFP will be helpful via PO network)</i></p>	<p>NFP and the majority of programme operators already have experience from two grant periods. Many grant beneficiaries already have experience with using grants and with cooperating with donor partners</p>
<p>Some programme operators do not have sufficiently experienced teams to ensure all communication related to the programme, mainly professional marketing outputs for the press. <i>(NFP will be helpful in this matter via cooperation on publicity activities)</i></p>	<p>Very good EEA and Norway Grants absorption rate in the past periods</p>
<p>The current existing communication is directed almost exclusively towards the professional public and the general lay public is informed at a minimum (low awareness of EEA and Norway Grants) <i>(NFP will more concentrate on this target group in new programming period through social media, contests, the promotional activities, media and contact with journalists and accessible website)</i></p>	<p>The individual focuses of the programmes were discussed at so-called stakeholder consultations and so they result from real needs in the programme area</p>
<p>At present, the objective of the donors, i.e. the good name of the donor countries (mainly Norway) has not been fully achieved in the Czech Republic. Norway Grants are known within the general public, apart from the grant beneficiaries, only where it is not too desirable (Hate Free, Barnevernet). <i>(NFP will spread the good name of EEA and Norway grants using all possible way though general public. The NFP cooperates with the Press Department of the Ministry of Finance and in case of negative portrayals of the Grants will proactively counter erroneous remarks as soon as they occur and defend the Grants)</i></p>	<p>The overall satisfaction of beneficiaries with the functioning of the system and with NFP and programme operators across programmes</p>
<p>Logo change in the middle of the period <i>(new logo is used as much as possible in order to raise public awareness about connection of new logo and EEA and Norway Grants)</i></p>	<p>Support by the Norwegian side in searching for partners across programmes</p>
<p>Inconsistent use of Czech equivalents of the names, divided financing (EEA Grants, Norway Grants) - different names are confusing for the public <i>(in new programming period the consistence will be ensured by uniform identity)</i></p>	<p>Almost all operators are already using social networks in some way and therefore have a base to build on.</p>
THREATS	OPPORTUNITIES
<p>EEA and Norway Grants often mistaken for EU funds (and EU operational programmes also have a negative reputation - administrative burden, low absorption...) <i>(NFP will provide more explanatory information and consider competitions and quizzes regarding difference of EU and EFTA)</i></p>	<p>Dedicated website controlled by NFP and focused on communication with the professional as well as the general public</p>

<p>Aversion of a part of the population towards the Roma and therefore the efforts to help them/ finance their inclusion, same as the risk that some programmes dealing e.g. with human rights, gender issues or civil society support will be negatively received by the public and by some journalists and politicians</p> <p><i>(more explanatory activities, cooperation with PO of this programmes)</i></p>	<p>The possibility to use successful projects from past grant periods for publicity and communication mainly with the general public</p>
<p>The public does not know why the donor countries finance the projects, which leads to various conspiratorial theories</p> <p><i>(NFP will provide more explanatory information – basic facts)</i></p>	<p>All priority areas arise from the already existing policies and objectives of the Czech government and address real problems, which mean that a large part of the projects is well communicable and comprehensible for the general public.</p>
<p>Facebook gradually hinders the dissemination of unpaid content. Moreover, the target group is very diversified and so it is almost impossible to keep the attention of the fan=applicant and deliver the information that way without paid support.</p> <p><i>(NFP is making steps to enable pay for some content)</i></p>	<p>To start regular PR activity to promote the good name of EEA and Norway Grants</p>
	<p>Science and research are a priority of the government and this programme is very positively received by the general public - can be used in publicity</p>
	<p>A separate activity financed from EEA and Norway Grants to support awareness of Norwegian funds and their objectives, of EFTA, EU and EEA and the differences among them</p>