

ADDENDUM NO 1

to

Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021

PROGRAMME AGREEMENT

for the financing of the Programme “Local Development, Poverty Reduction and Roma
Inclusion”

hereinafter referred to as the “Programme Agreement”

between

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
hereinafter referred to as the “NMFA”

and

The Government Office of the Slovak Republic,
hereinafter referred to as the “National Focal Point”,
representing Slovakia,
hereinafter referred to as the “Beneficiary State”
together hereinafter referred to as the “Parties”

Article 1

1. The Annex II to the Norwegian Financial Mechanism Programme Agreement for the financing of the Programme SK-LOCALDEV “Local Development, Poverty Reduction and Roma Inclusion” is replaced by the Annex II sent with this Addendum.
2. The modifications contained in the new version of Annex II to the Programme Agreement entered into force on 31/07/2020.

Article 2

This Addendum and the Annex II accompanying it constitute an integral part of the Programme Agreement. Except from the modifications stated above, the Programme Agreement remains unchanged.

Signed in Brussels on 1 September 2020

Signed inon

For the NMFA

For the National Focal Point

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Árni Páll Árnason
Acting Director
Financial Mechanism Office

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Július Jakab
Head of the Government Office of the Slovak
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Local Development, Poverty Reduction and Roma Inclusion

Operational rules (Annex II)

1. Programme summary

This Annex sets out the operational rules for the programme. The programme agreement is based on the MoU, the concept note and comments made by the NMFA. Commitments, statements and guarantees, explicit as well as implicit, made in the concept note, are binding for the National Focal Point and the Programme Operator unless otherwise explicitly stipulated in the annexes to this programme agreement.

The Programme Operator is the Government Office of the Slovak Republic. There is no Donor Programme Partner. The Council of Europe is designated as International Partner Organisation (IPO). The Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities and the government administrative unit responsible for the development of the Least Developed Districts shall be members of the Cooperation Committee.

The programme shall cover the following programme areas: Roma Inclusion and Empowerment (PA7), Children and Youth at Risk (PA8) and Local Development and Poverty Reduction (PA10).

The programme objective, '*Strengthened social and economic cohesion*' shall be attained through three outcomes:

- Outcome 1 '*Social and economic development of the least developed districts strengthened*', implemented by way of an open call for proposals (Call#1). The call shall aim to enhance access of vulnerable children and youth to a broader range of extra-curricular activities to improve their educational outcomes and provide them with skills increasing their chances for obtaining employment. The call, focused on the least developed districts, shall support multi-functional youth centres through enhancing the collaboration and networking of existing local actors working with children and youth (e.g. local and regional authorities, schools, kindergartens, community centres, NGOs) to better respond to specific local needs.
- Outcome 2 '*Social inclusion of marginalized Roma communities enhanced*', implemented by way of:
 - an open call (Call#2) supporting community-based interventions in or for the direct benefit of marginalised Roma communities using an integrated approach, i.e. linking multiple interventions to improve their status and opportunities in the fields of education, employment, health, housing or non-discrimination.
 - a small grant scheme (SGS) supporting the capacity-building of smaller local organisations through the implementation of grassroots initiatives and the replication of proven good practices in the field of local development and the social inclusion of marginalised Roma communities, in fields listed for the open call above.
- Outcome 3 '*Capacity of schools for inclusive education enhanced*', implemented by way of one pre-defined project (PDP). The project shall aim to increase the number of schools applying inclusive education models through training school staff and to broaden access to curricula on Romani language and history. Expanding the activities of the project funded from the 09-14 mechanism, it will enhance the cooperation with the donor project partners, the European Wergeland Centre (EWC) and the Nansen Centre for Peace and Dialogue.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Eligible applicants:

The rules on eligibility of applicants and project partners are set in Article 7.2 of the Regulation. The following limitations shall be placed:

Call / SGS number	Outcome(s)	Eligible applicants	Eligible partners
<i>Call#1</i>	<i>Outcome 1</i>	<p>Self-governing regions of Banská Bystrica, Košice, Prešov and their budgetary and allowance organisations</p> <p>Municipalities located in the Least Developed Districts and their budgetary and allowance organisations</p> <p>State administration bodies</p> <p>Applicants shall have at least two different project partners among those listed as Eligible partners</p>	<p>Entities established as a legal person in the Slovak Republic (at least two different kinds from the list):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State budgetary and contributory organizations established in accordance with Act No. 523/2004 Coll. on Budget Rules of the Public Service; • Municipalities in accordance with Act No. 369/1990 Coll. on Municipal Administration • Higher territorial units and offices of self-governing regions in accordance with Act No. 302/2001 Coll. on self-government of higher territorial units • NGOs or other legal forms running a community centre or centre working with children and youth <p>Other partners in addition to two project partners from the list above in accordance with Article 7.2 2 of the Regulation</p>
<i>Call#2</i>	<i>Outcome 2</i>	In accordance with Article 7.2.1 of the Regulation	In accordance with Article 7.2.2 of the Regulation
<i>SGS</i>	<i>Outcome 2</i>	In accordance with Article 7.2.1 of the Regulation	In accordance with Article 7.2.2 of the Regulation

2.2 Special rules on eligibility of costs:

Costs are eligible in accordance with Chapter 8 of the Regulations.

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 100% of the co-financing required by the programme for the project.

3. Bilateral relations

3.1 Bilateral relations

The programme shall contribute to strengthening bilateral relations between Slovakia and Norway.

The programme shall, as appropriate, facilitate donor partnership projects by encouraging partnerships with donor state entities in the open calls.

The programme will facilitate bilateral cooperation between Slovakia and Norway in the field of inclusive education, namely through study visits and trainings for school management and teaching staff on education for democratic citizenship (EDC) and human rights education (HRE).

The further use of the funds for bilateral relations allocated to the programme shall be agreed in the Cooperation Committee.

4. Selection of projects and financial parameters

4.1 Open calls and availability of funds (including number of calls, duration of calls, and estimated size):

Call / SGS number	Total available amount	Maximum grant applied for	Minimum grant applied for	Indicative timing
Call#1 Outcome 1 <i>"Social and economic development of the least developed districts strengthened"</i>	€7 700 000	€1 000 000	€200 000	1 st half 2020
Call#2 Outcome 2 <i>"Social Inclusion of marginalized Roma communities enhanced"</i> :	€6 000 000	€1 000 000	€200 000	1 st half 2020
SGS Outcome 2 <i>"Social Inclusion of marginalized Roma communities enhanced"</i>	€1 247 059	€200 000	€25 000	1 st half 2020

4.2 Selection procedures:

The project evaluation and award of grants shall be in accordance with Article 7.4 of the Regulation.

The Programme Operator shall be responsible for project evaluation and for the award of grants.

The Programme Operator shall establish a Selection Committee (SC) 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 three of them shall be external to the Programme Operator and the IPO.

The IPO, the NMFA and the National Focal Point shall be invited to participate in the meetings of the Selection Committee as observers.

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. The experts shall be impartial and independent of 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 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. Prior to making such decision, an on the spot visit may be carried out by the Programme Operator when construction works or purchase of special equipment are foreseen in the project. If the Programme Operator modifies the decision of the Selection Committee or suggests modification of the project, it shall inform 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 process set out in this Article shall apply to all calls for proposals, including the SGS, under this programme.

4.3 Project grant rate:

Grants to projects from the programme may be up to 100% of total eligible expenditure of the project. In the case of projects where the project promoter is a social partner, as defined in Article 1.6 of the Regulation, the project grant rate may be up to 90% of total eligible expenditure of the project. The project grant rate shall in all cases be set at a level that complies with the State Aid rules in force and takes into account any and all other forms of public support granted to projects. Any remaining costs of the project shall be provided or obtained by the project promoter.

5. Additional mechanisms within the Programme

5.1 Pre-defined projects

There will be one pre-defined project implemented under the programme.

1) "Innovative education of teachers to increase their intercultural competences in the education process of Roma pupils"

Project Promoter:	National Institute for Education (SK)
Donor project partner(s):	European Wergeland Centre Nansen Centre for Peace and Dialogue
Total maximum eligible costs:	€ 1,300,000
Project grant rate:	100.00 %
Maximum project grant amount:	€ 1,300,000

The overarching aim of the project is to contribute to improving the environment for inclusive education in Slovakia in order to increase the school participation and to improve the educational outcomes of Roma children and youth. To achieve this, the project aims to enhance the capacity of schools for inclusive education using a 'whole-school' approach, i.e. involving school management besides the teaching staff.

The project shall on one hand provide training for school management and pedagogical staff on inclusive, intercultural and democratic education to enable them to work better with children from Roma communities. On the other hand, the project shall develop teaching materials for curricula on Roma culture and history and Romani language and shall help teachers acquire the necessary qualifications to actively teach and mainstream these curricula in school education programmes.

The partnership with Norwegian institutions is an essential part of the project enhancing bilateral relations in the field of inclusive education practices. The Nansen Center for Peace and Dialogue shall organise a study visit for Slovak pedagogical staff in Norway. The European Wergeland Centre shall contribute to the next edition of the Slovak academy through providing expertise in the development of concepts of Education for democratic citizenship (EDC) and Human rights education (HRE) and related training for teachers/multipliers.

Project activities shall include:

1. Educational activities

- *Trainings for pedagogical staff members of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools on innovative education practices:* the aim is to prepare teaching staff (teachers, teachers' assistants, educators) to work with pupils from Roma communities, applying innovative forms of education and including the Romani language, Roma culture and Roma history in the teaching process. The trainings will create a platform

- for dialogue between schools in the field of inclusive and innovative education and strengthen development of Roma identity and Roma cultural values.
- *Preparation of teachers teaching Romani language for the state language examination in Romani language*
 - *Innovative education programs for school management and pedagogical staff*: the main goal of the training is to motivate school management to integrate Romani language, Roma culture and history into school education programmes and to adopt new forms of communication with employees to promote inclusive school environments.
2. Development and dissemination of teaching materials
 - *Production of teaching materials, including digitalization (electronic version)*: teaching materials include Romani/Slovak dictionary, language books, readers and workbooks, along with methodologies and good practices also in digital PDF format.
 - *Dissemination of results*: four technical project workshops between the project promoter and project partners are planned to take place in Norway. In addition to a website dedicated to project results, an opening and a final conference will serve to disseminate information about the project.
 3. Study visit in Norway for pedagogical staff: The study visit organised by the Nansen Centre for Peace and Dialogue shall prepare teaching staff (teachers, teachers' assistants, educators) for efficient work in classrooms with pupils from different cultural backgrounds and for new forms of dialogues in conflict situations at the level of classroom, increasing the motivation of teaching staff to building a positive school climate. It will also enable cooperation between schools from Slovakia and Norway.
 4. Slovak academy: training of school staff and multipliers
 - *Training on Education for democratic citizenship (EDC) and Human rights education (HRE)*: the training aims to support creating a democratic school climate in Slovakia, strengthening professional competencies of school management, teachers and other actors, supporting partnership and co-operation of schools in the field of education and training in human rights and democratic citizenship. It will provide practical tools to identify and respond to challenges facing the school by way of implementing action plans for a democratic and inclusive environment using the whole-school approach.
 - *Trainings for multipliers/trainers in EDC/HRE*: the training aims to train and create a network of trainers/multipliers to strengthen the capacity in EDC/HRE and inclusive school development and to support the implementation of the training in EDC/HRE – Slovak Academy “Building democratic and inclusive school environment for all”.

5.2 Financial Instruments

Not applicable.

6. Programme Management

6.1 Payment flows

The Programme Operator shall ensure that payments to projects are made in a timely manner. 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 projects 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 duration¹	Advance payment	1st Interim payment	2nd Interim payment	3rd Interim payment	4th Interim payment	Final payment²
Less than 24 months	20%	40%	35%	-	-	5%
24-36 months	15%	30%	25%	25%	-	5%
More than 36 months	10%	20%	20%	25%	20%	5%

The advance payment shall be paid following the signature of the project contract. Subsequent 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.

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

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

The periodicity of reporting periods and deadlines for reporting will be further detailed in the description of the Programme Operator’s management and control systems.

6.2 Verification of payment claims

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 Regulations 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 Regulations on-the-spot verifications of projects, which may be carried out on a sample basis, shall be carried out.

¹ 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.

² Retention may be applied at the end of the implementation or pro rata from each advance payment and interim payments.

The detailed procedure for verification will be further detailed in the description of the Programme Operator's management and control systems.

6.3 Monitoring and reporting

The Programme Operator shall monitor, record and report on progress towards the programme's outcomes in accordance with the provisions contained in the legal framework. The Programme Operator shall ensure that suitable and sufficient monitoring and reporting arrangements are made with the project promoters in order to enable the Programme Operator and the National Focal Point to meet its obligations to the NMFA.

When reporting on progress achieved in Annual and Final Programme Reports, the Programme Operator shall disaggregate results achieved as appropriate and in accordance with instructions received from the FMO.

6.4 Programme administrative structures

Not applicable.

7. Communication

The Programme Operator shall comply with Article 3.3 of the Regulation, the Information and Communication Requirements in Annex 3 of the Regulation and the Communication plan for the programme.

8. Miscellaneous

Not applicable.