International Visegrad Fund: official website

grant programs, mobility programs, artist residencies

guidelines-2013

Grant Guidelines—Small, Standard, and Strategic Grants submitted in 2013 and earlier

These guidelines are meant to help with the preparation and submitting of application forms, as well as processing of approved grant projects (Small Grants, Standard Grants, and the Visegrad Strategic Program) that **were submitted and approved in 2013 or earlier**. The document has the following structure:

1. **PROJECT PREPARATION**
2. **APPLICATION FORM/PROJECT PROPOSAL**
3. **PROJECT SELECTION**
4. **CONTRACTUAL TERMS**
5. **PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**
6. **REPORTING AND DISBURSEMENT**

1. PROJECT PREPARATION

1.1 Applicant

Any legal entity or natural person worldwide is eligible for funding, provided that the given project proposal deals with topics relevant to the Visegrad region and promotes cooperation among project partners in the region. Preferences are given to applicants from **non-governmental and non-profit organizations**, **municipalities** and **local governments**, **public schools** and **universities**, **research** and **scientific bodies** and **public institutions** in general with the exception of organizations directly funded from a state budget—e.g. ministries, embassies, cultural institutes (*Instytut Polski*, *České centrum*, etc.).

1.2 Project partners

It is compulsory to secure participation of subjects from at least **three V4 countries** (an organizer and at least two project partners); with the exception of Cross-Border Cooperation where cooperation of two countries is sufficient (organizer and a single project partner) and the Visegrad Strategic Program where **all four V4 countries** must be represented). Applicants are, however, strongly encouraged to **involve**

project partners from all four Visegrad countries. If cooperation does not—or cannot—include all four parties, applicants are requested to give reasons. Similarly as with applicants, organizations directly funded from state budget cannot be considered valid project partners—e.g., ministries, embassies, cultural institutes (e.g. *Slovenský inštitút*, *Magyar kulturális intézet*, etc.).

1.3 Project topic or the so-called "Visegrad feature"

There are no preferences as of content of a given project. Each project topic shall, however, contain a reasonable Visegrad feature, i.e., the project must deal with the Visegrad Group countries or with Central Europe and its peoples. Priority is given to projects that create **common added value** rather to projects which simply just *involve* partners from several countries.

1.4 Re-applying

Applicants may **re-apply** for grant support at any point only if all their previous grant projects financed by the Fund **have been finished** (i.e., their final reports have been duly approved by the Fund). The Visegrad Strategic Program is the only exception; Strategic Grants can be implemented simultaneously with Small or Standard Grants.

1.5 Consulting the Fund

Applicants can freely consult the staff of the Fund in writing (e-mail), by telephone or in person. Visitors to the Fund are kindly requested to make an appointment. Unannounced visits or consultations within 10 working days of the given deadline are discouraged.

1.6 FAQ I

- ***Can a private company be an applicant?***
  Any legal entity or natural person can apply; priority is, however, given to public and non-profit institutions.
- ***Can I apply if I am not from the V4 region?***
  Applicants from non-V4 countries are eligible no less than V4 applicants: their projects must, however, have a clear "Visegrad feature" (see paragraph 1.3) and involve partners from at least three V4 countries (see paragraph 1.2). Applicants are, however, strongly advised to involve project partners from all V4 countries.
- ***If I organize a music festival and invite bands and musicians from the V4 region—is it enough?***
  It is always advised to strive for more than merely collecting artists from four countries, who then perform one by one. An added value is always welcomed, let it be in the form of a joint performance (e.g., a jam session), or a separate stage (e.g. a "Visegrad" stage within a bigger festival).
- ***When can my project start?***
  Theoretically, a project can start once it has been approved and the contract has been signed between the grantee and the Fund. Only those costs that occurred during a given contractual period are legitimate and can be covered by the Fund. This means that applicant should carefully consider (1) the evaluation period of projects (see paragraph 3.1) and (2) the necessary time for completion of other contractual terms, such as project website, bank account, etc. (see paragraph 4).

[top]

2. APPLICATION FORM/PROJECT PROPOSAL

2.1 Deadlines

English is the official language of the Visegrad cooperation, as well as of the International Visegrad Fund—application forms, as well as all official correspondence with the Fund can be accepted only in English.

The following are annual deadlines for submission of Small Grants: **March 1, June 1, September 1** and **December 1**. The following are annual deadlines for submission of Standard Grants: **March 15** and **September 15** (unless stipulated otherwise on the website and in the on-line application system). The Visegrad Strategic Program has a single annual deadline (the date is announced). Electronic application forms shall be submitted **by 12:00 CET (noon)** on given deadline date. Hard-copy versions (print-outs) with relevant accompanying documentation shall be either sent by registered post on the same day at the latest or delivered to the Fund personally by 16:30 CET.

2.2 Project categories

There are six categories into which projects are divided. Applicants themselves shall decide which category best fits the content of their project. The following are the six categories with example of concrete project topics:

- **cultural cooperation** (film and theater festivals, exhibitions, publications)
- **education** (seminars, education workshops)
- **scientific exchange and research** (academic workshops, conferences)
- **youth exchanges** (summer camps, school exchanges)
- **cross-border cooperation** (site-specific, locally or regionally relevant projects)—applicants and project partners cannot have their seats further than 80 km from given border (projects in this category can involve two or three countries—see paragraph 2.9)
- **promotion of tourism** (tourist portals or brochures, promotion of concrete sites)

2.3 On-line application system

Application forms are available through an on-line system at http://applications.visegradfund.org/. The system usually opens 30 days prior to given deadline. Applicants need to register with an existing e-mail address to start a new application form. Each form is then password protected and can therefore be saved and edited later. Every application form has its unique 8-digit number (application ID)—applicants shall use this number whenever communicating agenda related to the project.

2.4 Hard-copy version and accompanying documentation

A hard-copy version of an application form can be printed out from the system only once the on-line application form has been submitted. The following documents must also be delivered to the Fund in a single package with the **original** application form (separately delivered documents cannot be considered):

- **original letters of intent** (see paragraph 2.5)
- **copies of ID or registration documents** of the applicant and project partners (see paragraph 2.6)
- **copies of confirmations about co-financing** (copies or scans of documents proving other confirmed financial contributions to the project from other donors or sponsors)

Please **do not bind** the documents together.

2.5 Letters of intent

Letters of intent are an important part of the application—they **document the project partners and describe their concrete role in it**. There is no template for such letters—the statutory representative of the partner organization (or the natural person) should formally declare their intention to actively participate in the project and briefly describe their role in it. They can also describe their experience with the applicant from their previous cooperation. The letters must:

- be **original documents—copies or scans cannot be accepted**
- be printed on an **official letterhead paper** (where applicable)
- be written in **English**
- refer to the project by its **official name** (as registered in the application form)
- **signed** by the project partner's **statutory representative** (or by **natural person** if the project partner is not a legal entity)
- delivered to the Fund as **part of the application form** (separate submission cannot be considered)
- dated no earlier than **3 months prior to a given deadline**

2.6 Identification documents (IDs)

Copies of identification documents shall confirm to the Fund the **legal status** of the applicant and of the project partners. The ID documents of V4 applicants are accepted in the original languages; **non-V4 applicants attach an English translation** of such documents (unofficial translations are acceptable).

Please note that a statute of an organization, founding documents or deed of foundation **do not replace the identification documents** and are therefore not required.

If the applicant or project partner is an organization (legal entity), the ID document must have the form of an **abstract** (printout, scan or copy) **from relevant registry** which is **not older than 3 months** (see below). The abstract must contain the following data:

- **name of the organization**
- **seat of the organization**
- **ID number**—tax number/registration number (e.g. IČO, DIČ, adószám, NIP, REGON, etc.)
- **legal form**
- **name of the statutory representative** (can be a separate document, e.g. a nomination decree)

Such documents have the form of an **abstract from relevant registry** (national statistical office, district court, interior ministry, etc.) and **cannot be older than 3 months**—see the following links:

- http://registry.czso.cz/irsw/
- http://portal.ksh.hu/ (http://portal.ksh.hu/pls/portal/vb.teaor_main.gszr_main1)
- http://www.stat.gov.pl/regon/ or http://krs.ms.gov.pl
- http://www.statistics.sk/pls/wregis/dotaz

If the applicant or project partner is **not** an organization (natural persons), they document their status with a copy of a **valid ID card** (e.g. passport).

2.7 Budget

The Fund covers up to **70%** of total project costs. The remaining **30%** of the budget shall consist of other **financial** (the applicant's, partners' or other donors' financial contributions) or **non-financial contributions**. The organization or volunteer work of the applicant and the partners, as well as other operational costs (e.g. use of one's own premises, equipment, cars, etc.) are considered a **non-financial (in-kind) contribution** and shall be included in the budget (Table A in the application form).

A well-planned budget shall be simple and realistic. The budget should include approximations of project's future expenditures in EUR (€) based on average prices in the region. Applicants are recommended to use the average exchange rates available at the given national bank at the time of preparing the application form.

When planning the budget, it is important to adhere to the following list of eligible cost categories, i.e., costs that **can** be covered by the Fund (for further details please paragraph 6.4):

1. Printing and publishing/Delivery of printed/published materials
2. Rent of premises and related technical services
3. Fees for artists/Copyrights
4. Fees for experts
5. Accommodation and board
6. Transportation costs
7. Translations and interpreting costs
8. Awards and prizes
9. Office supplies/Consumption and promotional material
10. Public relations costs (advertising, promotion)
11. Website design and update
12. Tangible and intangible assets (goods or services related to the project)—max. 7% of the granted sum (only possible within Strategic Grants)
13. Overhead costs—max. 5% of the granted sum in Small/Standard Grants, max. 10% in Strategic Grants—see point 12 in paragraph 6.4)

The following costs **cannot** be covered (with the exception of 5% overhead costs):

1. capital investments
2. applicant's own indirect costs (e.g. utilities, telephone bills)

3. internal costs (rent of one's own premises, accommodation in one's own premises, one's own work)
4. salaries or financial remuneration of employees (or any expenses related employment based on the labor code, including allowances and part-time work, per-diems, etc.)

2.8 Calendar—project phases and list of events

The calendar shall include as many details as available to the applicant at the time. **Project phases** refer to distinct phases or periods from the start of the project (preparation) to the implementation and settlement and conclusion. If a project gets approved, the **calendar of events** becomes a crucial tool for the grantee to keep the Fund up-to-date with all project activities, be it public events or closed sessions (please see paragraph 5.1 for more details).

2.9 FAQ II

- ***Applicants from which countries can participate in the cross-border projects?***
  The following two-country combinations are possible: *Czech-Polish*, *Czech-Slovak*, *Hungarian-Slovak* and *Polish-Slovak*; and the following three-country projects are possible: *Czech-Polish-German*, *Czech-Slovak-Austrian*, *Polish-Slovak-Ukrainian*, *Hungarian-Slovak-Austrian* and *Hungarian-Slovak-Ukrainian*.
- ***Which types of projects fit in the cross-border cooperation category?***
  They must involve project partners from the border areas and must be locally or regionally specific (e.g. mapping endangered species in the Tatras could be an example of a Polish-Slovak project).

[top]

3. PROJECT SELECTION

3.1 Evaluation period

Evaluation period lasts up to **40 working days** (ca. 2 months) after given deadline in the case of Small Grants and up to **50 working days** (ca. 2½ months) in the cases of Standard and Strategic Grants. Applicants shall take this into account when planning project events, as no project can be scheduled to start before its prospective approval.

3.2 Selection criteria

Every project is carefully reviewed on its own as well as **in the context of other projects** within a given deadline (especially among projects with similar topic). Preference is given to those projects which develop civil society, promote cooperation across borders and cultures and, last but not least, have Visegrad added value (see 1.3).

3.3 Approval/Rejection

Selection committee is called for each deadline by the Fund's Executive Director. The Executive Director makes his/her recommendations based on the discussion within the Committee and passes the recommendations to the Council of Ambassadors (the Council consists of ambassadors accredited in a country in chair of the Fund and representatives of a given foreign ministry). The Council decides on the 40th or 50th working day (see paragraph 3.1) at the latest when the final results are also published on the Fund's website. Decisions made by the Council are final and shall present no grounds for any form of appeal, nor do they require any detailed reasoning.

3.4 Announcement of results

A list approved projects within a deadline is published on the website of the Fund on the day of the approval by the Council of Ambassadors. All applicants—whose projects were approved or rejected—are also informed by e-mail.

3.5 FAQ III

- ***Who picks the projects?***
  Selection committee is called for each deadline by the Fund's Executive Director. The committee comprises members of the Fund's secretariat. The Executive Director makes his/her recommendations to the Council of Ambassadors (the Council consists of ambassadors accredited in a country in chair of the Fund and representatives of a given foreign ministry). The Council decides on the 50th working day (or 40th in case of Small Grants) at the latest when the final results are also published on the Fund's website (see paragraph 3.4).
- ***What is the proportion between approved and dismissed projects? What are my chances?***
  There is no direct answer to this question as each deadline and program is different. On average 20–30% of applicants receive support, depending on the deadline and program.

[top]

4. CONTRACTUAL TERMS

The contract between the grantee and the Fund is concluded once the grantee has fulfilled the following conditions: (1) setting up a separate bank account which will serve the purposes of the project; (2) setting up a project website (see paragraph 4.2); and (3) acceptance of the contract draft by the grantee.

4.1 Bank account

Every grantee shall set up a separate bank account (or a sub-account) for the purposes of the project and inform the Fund of the fact. Such bank account can be an already existing account—all operations conducted on the account during the contractual period must be, however, related only to the project. The bank account must be available within **20 working days** (ca. 1 month) after the approval of a project.

4.2 Project website

Project website must be set up and made available within **20 working days** (ca. 1 month) after the approval of a project and must be active for at least the whole contractual period. Each project website must have its own address. Alternatively such website can have the form of a sub-site within an existing website, or a website on a social networking site. Each project website must contain the logo of the Fund with a direct link to the Fund's website (www.visegradfund.org), as well as direct links to the websites of all project partners.

4.3 Contractual period

The maximum time frame for each Small Grant project is 6 months, for Standard Grant project 12 months and for Strategic Grants the time frame is between 12 and 36 months. After the implementation period of a project (i.e., the period during which the project as such takes place) there are additional **20 working days** (ca. 1 month) during which the grantee shall finalize and submit the final report. Each project is successfully concluded only after the Fund's approval of a given final report—within **30 additional working days** (ca. 1½ month).

[top]

5. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Once approved each grantee shall remain in contact with the Fund through the on-line system. All official correspondence (questions, comments, requests for prolongations) shall be conducted through the system or by e-mail; communication by telephone is possible but cannot be considered in case of disputes. All **contractual changes** (i.e., prolongations, changes of project partners, etc.) must be requested in writing—i.e., on letterhead paper with the signature of the statutory representative.

5.1 Calendar of events

The **calendar of events** is an on-line tool for communicating progress of a project between the grantee and the Fund. It is necessary to keep all events **up-to-date** since the calendar serves the purpose of project evaluation and extends the public relations of an event as the entries get published on the Fund's website.

Dates and sites for each event must be confirmed in the on-line calendar **only 10 working days** before the event takes place but **3 working days** at the latest.

5.2 Press releases

Grantees are obliged to prepare at least **one press release** per project. Press releases shall be submitted in the on-line system and disseminated to relevant mass media (as planned in the "Planned PR activities" section of the application form). Press releases serve the Fund for the purposes of project evaluation and enable media and public oversight over projects.

[top]

6. REPORTING AND DISBURSEMENT

6.1 Project disbursement—Tranches

Grants are disbursed in two or three tranches. The number and volume of tranches is decided during the evaluation process and specified in the contract. The rule is that Small Grants are paid in two tranches while Standard or Strategic Grants in two or three tranches.

The first tranche is transferred to the grantee within **15 working days** after the delivery of the signed contract to the Fund. Subsequent tranches are disbursed upon the delivery and approval of complete and duly prepared interim/final reports and financial settlements. Before submitting these reports—i.e., before claiming the second tranche—grantees are requested to have utilized approximately **4/5 (or 80%) of the first tranche**.

The last tranche makes usually about 20% of the grant's total sum. The sum of the last tranche must be first covered from the grantee's resources and gets reimbursed only after the approval of the final report and the financial settlement.

6.2 Interim and final reports

Original interim and final reports are to be delivered to the Fund by the deadlines stipulated in the contract. Both interim and final reports consist of (1) the report and (2) the original financial settlement. Please note that the report must always be accompanied by the financial settlement—they **must be sent together** (both signed by statutory representative). Processing of the reports by the Fund may take up to 30 working days.

Please note that the final financial settlement shall only cover those items not included in the previously submitted interim report(s), where applicable. The final report (narrative), however, shall refer to the whole project.

6.3 Financial settlement—General requirements for all costs

Financial settlement consists of an overview of expenditures within a project accompanied by (1) **copies of relevant financial documents** (invoices, receipts, bills, contracts), (2) **printout of the complete bank statement** or **all petty-cash vouchers** (for cash payments) and any other additional documents (as stipulated in paragraph 6.4). Grantees are kindly requested to number all financial documents (invoices, bills, etc.) with corresponding numbers used in the Financial settlement table. It is also recommended to sort financial documents chronologically.

6.4 Financial settlement—Additional requirements for specific types of costs

All costs claimed for reimbursement must be documented by corresponding financial document (invoice, receipt, bill, contract); below please find specific requirements for each cost category which are additional to the general requirements in paragraph 6.3:

1. **Printing and publishing/Delivery of printed materials:**
   samples of the printed materials containing the Fund's logo (books, magazines, posters, bulletins, etc.);
2. **Rent of premises and related technical services/Entrance fees:**
   copies of invoices where available; in case of entrance fees the entrance tickets as such will suffice;
3. **Fees for artists/Copyrights:**
   contracts/invoices regarding the service or purchase; contracts cannot be based on Labor Code;
4. **Accommodation and board:**

list of participants and detailed invoice with the following information: the provided board, prices (costs per unit, e.g. 1 lunch, 1 person/night) and dates;

5. **Transportation costs:**
   transportation costs reimbursement sheet (available on the Fund's website); copy of internal transportation costs document (where available); copy of vehicle registration documents; invoices or copies of tickets or boarding passes (where applicable);
6. **Fees for experts (professional contributors):**
   contracts/invoices regarding the service not ruled by Labor Code;
7. **Translation and interpreting costs:**
   contracts/invoices; samples of translated texts (printouts or digital copies);
8. **Awards and prizes:**
   brief report on the award-giving (list of awarded persons including their names, signatures and dates);
9. **Office supplies/Consumption and promotional materials:**
   samples of each item with the Fund's logo (T-shirts, bags, CDs/DVDs, USB sticks and other gadgets, etc.);
10. **Advertising and promotion:**
    samples of the advertisements in the print media, digital copies of audiovisual advertisements or on-line banners, photos of billboards;
11. **Website design and update:**
    full website link (URL);
12. **Tangible and intangible assets** (Strategic Grants **only**):
    goods or services related to the project—max. 7% of the granted sum;
13. **Overhead costs** (max. **5%** of the granted sum, **10%** in case of Strategic Grants):
    Grantees do not need to account for the "overheads", but must record these costs in their accounting system. The "overheads" must be traceable and verifiable in case of financial audit. Also, overhead payments must be carried through the project bank account (transferred to other accounts or withdrawn).

6.5 Frequent mistakes

The following are frequently made mistakes in the financial settlement (FS):

- **exceeding the 10% or 20% cash limit within Standard/Strategic Grants or Small Grants respectively**
- **missing compulsory documents** (i.e., FS table, Final report, copies of invoices, etc.)
- **missing payment documentation**, i.e., a printout of bank statement (non-cash payments) or petty-cash voucher (cash payments)
- FS table and/or Final/Interim reports **not signed by the grantee's statutory representative**
- submitting **FS with all project costs** (the Fund requires only FS with costs covered by the grant)
- submitting **FS with bank order/-s** instead of bank statement/-s
- **late submission of FS**
- submitting **incomplete documents** (missing additional required documents, such as the list of participants, samples of translated texts, original travel tickets or boarding passes, etc.)—see paragraph 6.4
- improperly filled financial table
- requesting reimbursements of **more than 70% of total project costs**
- requesting reimbursements of **non-eligible costs**
- requesting reimbursements of **goods for long-term use** (e.g. books, etc.)
- requesting reimbursements of ***brutto* amounts** while being a VAT payer

- submitting **unacceptable financial documents** (internal invoices, contracts ruled by the Labor Code, etc.)
- submitting invoices or contracts with **insufficient description of the delivered goods or services**
- **missing logo** of the Fund in the print or other promotional materials
- **wrong payment dates** (payment dates must correspond to the payment confirmations)
- **wrong EUR exchange rate** (the exchange rate must adhere to that of the respective national bank on the day of FS preparation)

6.6 Project conclusion

Project is deemed concluded only when two conditions are fulfilled—(1) **approval of the final report** and (2) **disbursement of the last tranche**. Project is concluded only once the final report (i.e., its narrative part and the financial settlement) is approved by the Fund and the last tranche is transfered onto the grantee's bank account.

6.7 FAQ IV

- ***Which types of costs cannot be covered from a grant?***
  The grant cannot be used to cover the following costs (for a list of eligible cost categories please see paragraph 2.7): capital investments, internal costs (e.g. renting one's own premises), VAT refunds, or one's own internal indirect costs or running costs (e.g. utility bills, project coordination or accounting) exceeding **5% of the granted sum** or **10%** in case of Strategic Grants (overhead costs). Tangible and intangible assets (goods or services related to the project) are allowed up to **7%** of the granted sum in Strategic Grants.
- ***What are overhead costs?***
  Overhead costs refer to any indirect or operating costs linked to the project (e.g. project coordination, one's own work on the project or other running expenses)—the Fund's limit per grant is **5%** of the granted sum in Small/Standard Grants and **10%** in Strategic Grants. Overhead costs do not need to be documented through invoices, receipts or bills; these costs should only be described in the financial settlement.
- ***Are cash operations allowed?***
  Bank transactions (wire transfers) are recommended, where possible. Cash operations are possible but are limited to **20%** in the case of Small Grants and **10%** in the cases of Standard or Strategic Grants.
- ***Which currency shall I use when filling out the FS table?***
  Use the currency of the project bank account.
- ***Which EUR exchange rate shall I use?***
  Use the middle exchange rate of the respective national bank on the date of FS preparation. You may find the exchange rates on the websites of the banks: www.cnb.cz, www.mnb.hu, www.nbp.pl and www.nbs.sk.
- ***What do I do if I don't use the whole advance payment (the first tranche) by the end of the given project phase? Can I obtain further installments?***
  You should spend around 80% of the first tranche before preparing the interim report and claiming further funds (see paragraph 6.1).
- ***When do I have to send the Interim/Final report and financial settlement?***
  One can submit the report and finished financial settlement immediately once a given project phase is finished, no later than on a given deadline (stipulated in the

Attachment 3 of the grant contract).

- ***Are costs of non-V4 participants refundable?***
  Yes, non-V4 participants can have their costs refunded in up to 40% of each cost item.
- ***Does the financial settlement have to include all project costs or only those covered by the Fund?***
  FS shall contain only those costs that are (to be) covered by the Fund.
- ***Do we claim for reimbursement only 70% of every single cost?***
  No, the 70% limit applies to the sum of all project costs**,** i.e., the Fund can cover up to 100% of all your accommodation costs, etc., but in sum max. 70% of total project costs. As a rule, the less invoices or other financial documents one submits, the easier the settlement.
- ***Can we claim for reimbursements the costs of preparation of the application form, its translation into English and the project accounting?***
  No, such costs are your internal costs and cannot be refunded. You may, however, use the overhead costs to cover such expenses.
- ***Can food vouchers be reimbursed?***
  No, food vouchers, as well as per-diems are non-eligible costs. The only way to cover board or catering is through a separate invoice.
- ***Whom can we consider an "expert" to cover their fees?***
  Expert is a person who contributes to the project with his/her professional work (research, study, lecture, etc.). Contracts with experts cannot be ruled by Labor Code but only by other legislature, e.g. Commercial or Civic Code. This means that salaries of the grantee's employees or his or her own work cannot be considered expert work and refunded.
- ***Which invoices are internal?***
  Internal invoices are invoices issued by units within an organization (e.g. by faculties or departments within a single university)—but only those organizations that operate under the same ID number. The Fund cannot refund any such costs, i.e., rent of one's own premises, accommodation in one's own hotel, etc.
- ***Can we claim for reimbursement fuel consumed when using private car for business purposes?***
  The Fund does not reimburse bills for fuel as such. But when using private car for business purposes you can calculate the transportation costs according to valid legislature in your country (based on average distances and average consumption for the given car). Use of official, company cars cannot be refunded.

[top]