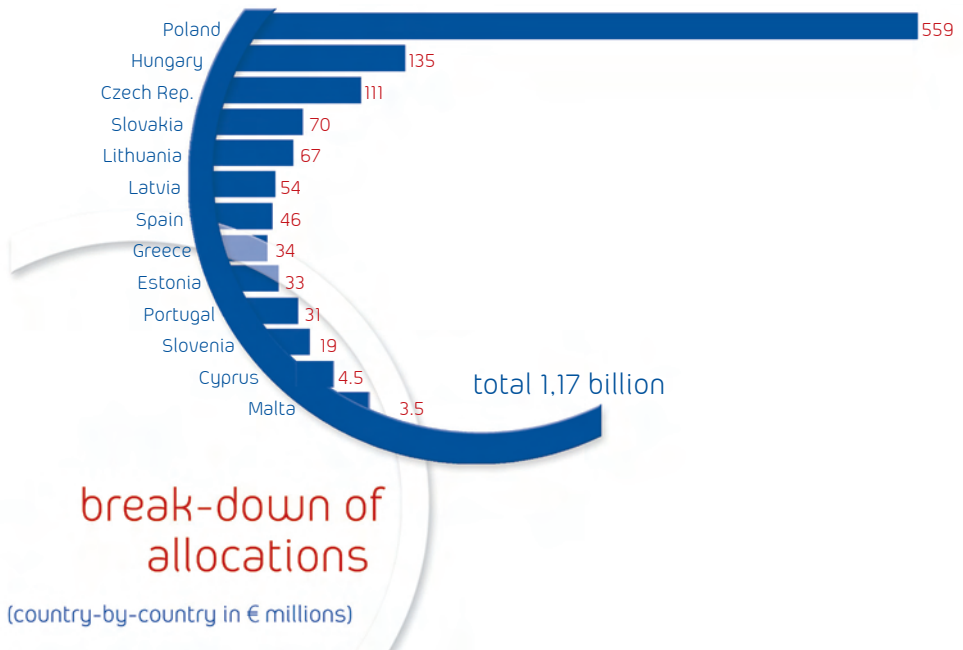




Solidarity Opportunity Cooperation

New partnerships for cohesion in Europe

In May 2004, the European Economic Area (EEA) expanded with the entry of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia as part of the EU enlargement. The 25 EU members and the three non-EU members of the EEA - Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway - all participate in the Internal Market, characterised by the so-called 'four freedoms': the free movement of goods, services, capital and persons. At the same time Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway established the EEA Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism to support social and economic cohesion within the enlarged EEA. The Norwegian Financial Mechanism is open to the ten new EEA members while the EEA Financial Mechanism is open to the ten new EEA members and to Greece, Portugal and Spain.



Through the EEA Financial Mechanism, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway have made € 600 million available for projects in the 10 new EU members, and to Greece, Portugal and Spain. Additionally, Norway has made € 567 million available to projects in the 10 new EU members through the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, making a total € 1.17 billion available for projects in the priority sectors of the financial mechanisms in the period 2004-2009.

OBJECTIVES

Through the two mechanisms, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway contribute towards:

- **Solidarity**, by reducing the social and economic disparities in the newly enlarged EEA
- **Opportunity**, by helping new EEA members become fully integrated in the Internal Market
- **Cooperation**, by bringing old and new EEA members together and opening new arenas for political and economic relations

PRIORITIES

In total, the financial mechanisms will make € 1.17 billion available over the 2004-2009 period to support projects in a wide range of priority sectors:

- Protection of the environment
- Sustainable development
- Conservation of European cultural heritage
- Development of human resources
- Health and childcare

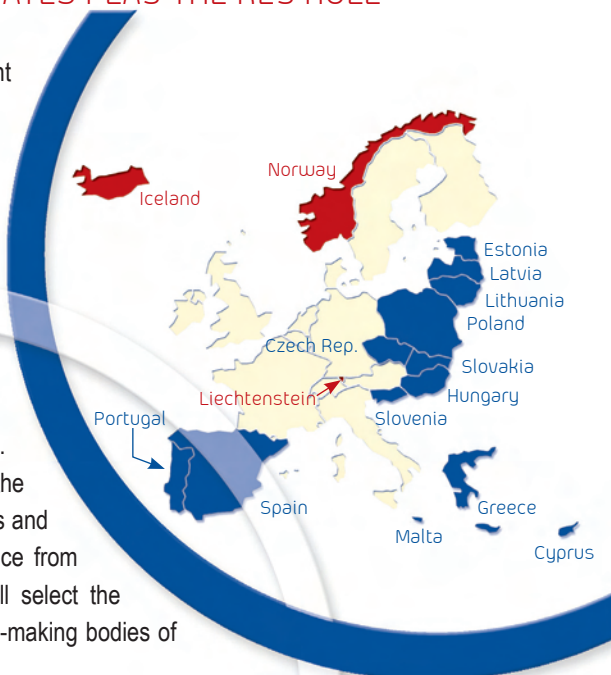
The Norwegian Financial Mechanism will also make funding available for:

- Implementation of legislation in the field of internal security and border control, such as support for 'Schengen' action plans
- Regional policy and cross-border activities
- Implementation of *aquis communautaire* through technical assistance

Academic research within the priority sectors of both mechanisms may also be eligible for funding.

BENEFICIARY STATES PLAY THE KEY ROLE

The EEA Enlargement Agreement (Protocol 38a) has established the priority sectors eligible for funding. On this basis, more detailed priorities are agreed between Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway and the beneficiary states. The beneficiary states have set up contact points for the mechanisms known as Focal Points. These are responsible for implementing the funds obtained from the financial mechanisms. Potential project promoters can contact the Focal Point in their country with inquiries and submit project applications for assistance from the mechanisms. The Focal Points will select the projects to be submitted to the decision-making bodies of the two mechanisms.



A full list of Focal Points and their contact details is available on: <http://www.eegrants.org/focalpoints>

FLEXIBLE PROJECT ASSISTANCE

The mechanisms offer several different types of assistance to allow end recipients in the beneficiary states more flexibility and greater possibilities. Assistance may be awarded in the form of:

- Individual projects - a clearly defined series of works to fulfil a precise technical function and clearly defined goals, normally involving grant assistance of € 250,000 or more
- Programmes - which could be seen as groups of projects coordinated jointly to achieve a common objective in either a region, a priority sector or as a combination of both
- Block grants - administered by an intermediary in the beneficiary state to facilitate the implementation of smaller projects, such as those of NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations), research institutions, and other target groups or sectors
- Seed money - to support the development of promising project ideas of high relevance

The different types of project assistance are described in the rules and procedures of the mechanisms and in separate guidelines available on: <http://www.eegrants.org>

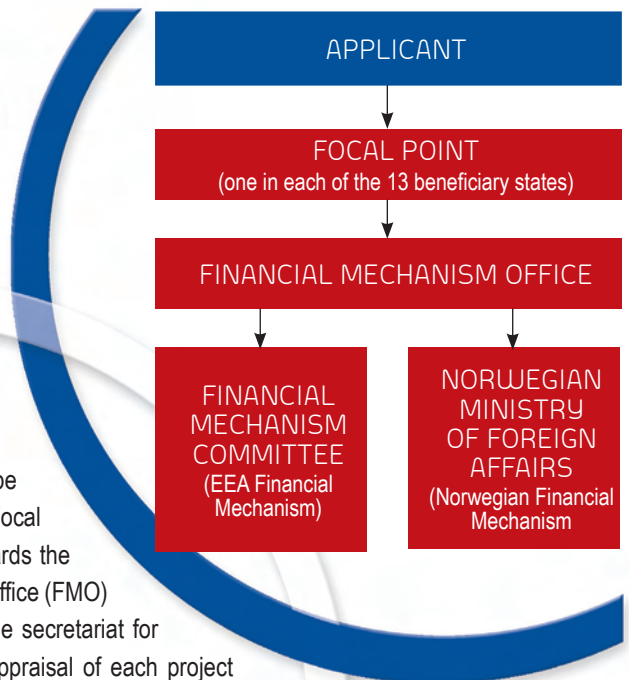
WHO CAN APPLY FOR A GRANT?

Project proposals can be submitted in a wide range of priority sectors by any public or private sector body and NGO constituted as a legal entity in the beneficiary states and operating in the public interest, such as:

- Central, regional and local authorities
- Education/research institutions
- Environmental bodies
- Voluntary and community organisations
- Public-private partnerships

HOW TO OBTAIN A GRANT

Proposals are submitted to the Focal Points for approval. Programmes and block grants and seed money may be managed by special intermediaries; potential applicants are advised to contact their Focal Point for further information. All proposals must comply with EU rules and regulations and with the formal requirements of the financial mechanisms. They must also be relevant to the priority sectors. If the Focal Point is positive to the proposal, it forwards the application to the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) in Brussels. The FMO, which acts as the secretariat for both mechanisms, makes a thorough appraisal of each project proposal. The European Commission also screens the applications. The application is submitted to a decision-making body for approval by the Financial Mechanism Committee or the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A positive decision will result in a detailed grant agreement for the project between the beneficiary state and either the Financial Mechanism Committee or the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Grants will require co-financing by the end recipient. There will be open calls for proposals in the beneficiary states. Potential applicants are advised to contact their Focal Point for more information.



More detailed information about the application procedure and the co-financing requirements as well as the application form is available on: <http://www.eegrants.org>

MORE INFORMATION

Financial Mechanism Office
 12-16, Rue Joseph II, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
 Tel: +32 (0)2 286 17 01 • Fax: +32 (0)2 286 17 89 • E-mail: fmo@efta.int

USEFUL LINKS

<http://www.eegrants.org> • <http://www.island.is> • <http://www.liechtenstein.li> •
<http://www.europaportalen.no> • <http://www.norway.info>

FOCAL POINTS

Contact details for Focal Points in all Beneficiary States available on: <http://www.eegrants.org/focalpoints>