

Comprehensive Analysis of Sámi Parliament Grant Mechanisms (2025) and Fiscal Strategies (2026): Navigating the Post-Reconciliation Landscape

Executive Summary

The fiscal and administrative landscape of the Sámi Parliament (*Sametinget*) is currently undergoing a profound transformation, driven by the intersecting forces of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (*Sannhets- og forsoningskommisjonen*) mandate and the stark realities of macroeconomic constraints. This report provides an exhaustive analysis of the factors influencing grant allocations in 2025, the structural shifts proposed for the 2026 budget, and the strategic implications for the development of the information architecture within the kunnskapsbank/sametinget domain.

The 2025 grant cycle has been characterized by a paradigm shift from "activity-based" funding to "infrastructure-based" investments. This transition, necessitated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) report (*Meld. St. 17*), prioritizes the stabilization of cultural institutions—museums, language centers, and theaters—as the primary vehicles for societal reparation. Consequently, this strategic pivot has inadvertently raised the barrier to entry for smaller, project-based applicants, resulting in a perceived increase in rejection rates. These rejections are often driven not by a lack of quality, but by a rigid alignment of available funds with the specific "pillars" of reconciliation identified by the Commission.

Looking ahead to 2026, the budgetary framework proposes a total increase of approximately NOK 32.4 million (3.5%). While this figure technically covers projected price growth (3.1%), it leaves a negligible margin for new initiatives, effectively signaling a year of consolidation rather than expansion. Key structural reforms include a complete overhaul of the bilingualism grant scheme for municipalities, the introduction of a dedicated Sámi Artificial Intelligence (AI) strategy, and a contentious restructuring of media support that may redirect funds from Sámi-language newspapers to mainstream Norwegian media.

For the kunnskapsbank platform, these findings necessitate a reorganization of content that moves beyond simple lists of grant schemes. The platform must evolve to explain the *thematic* prerequisites of funding (e.g., alignment with TRC pillars), the *technical* rigors of the digital "Doarjja" portal, and the *regulatory* nuances of EEA state aid limits.

Part I: The 2025 Grant Landscape – The "Reconciliation" Paradigm

To understand the grant dynamics of 2025, one must analyze the policy environment created by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The legislative response to the Commission's findings has acted as a filter, reshaping the criteria by which applications are evaluated and funds are distributed.

1.1 The Truth and Reconciliation Mandate as a Grant Criterion

The 2025 budget and its associated grant letters are the first to fully operationalize the findings of *Meld. St. 17 (2024–2025)*. The mandate given to the Commission was to investigate the historical consequences of the Norwegianization policy and to propose measures for reconciliation.¹ In 2025, this mandate has translated into a specific prioritization of "reparation infrastructure" over ad-hoc cultural activities.

1.1.1 The Shift to "Infrastructure of Reconciliation"

A critical insight from the 2025 analysis is the explicit policy stance that reconciliation requires physical and organizational durability. Sametinget has articulated that "as part of the reparation work, fundamental infrastructure in Sápmi must be built up".² This is a profound shift in grant strategy.

- **Strategic Rationale:** The reasoning is that short-term projects cannot sufficiently address multi-generational trauma. Only stable institutions—serving as arenas for dissemination, storytelling, and dialogue—can sustain the long-term work of reconciliation.²
- **Budgetary Displacement:** This focus necessitates the shielding and increasing of operating grants (*driftstilskudd*) to established institutions. For instance, the Beaivváš Sámi Našunálateáhter received a significant allocation increase (NOK 4.1 million) specifically to cover rent in its new building.² While necessary for infrastructure, such "fixed cost" absorptions reduce the discretionary funds available for open application-based schemes (*søkerbaserte tilskudd*), directly contributing to higher rejection rates for independent applicants.

1.1.2 The Five Pillars of Assessment

Applications in 2025 were implicitly or explicitly weighed against the five pillars identified by the TRC.⁴ Understanding these pillars is essential for analyzing why certain grants were awarded while others were rejected:

1. **Knowledge and Dissemination (*Kunnskap og formidling*):** Projects that documented personal histories of Norwegianization or facilitated the sharing of the TRC's findings were prioritized. This favored applicants with established archival or dissemination capabilities.

2. **Language and Education (*Språk og opplæring*):** This pillar remains the fiscal backbone. However, the focus shifted toward "reclaiming" lost language domains, favoring systemic interventions (e.g., language centers) over isolated courses.
3. **Culture and Cultural Heritage (*Kultur og kulturminner*):** Priority was given to strengthening the institutions that hold cultural memory, rather than ephemeral artistic productions.
4. **Prevention of Conflict (*Forebygging av konflikter*):** Initiatives aimed at reducing tension between the Sámi population and the majority society were favored, often requiring applicants to demonstrate a "bridge-building" component.
5. **Implementation of Regulations (*Implementering av regelverk*):** Ensuring existing rights are respected.

1.2 The Mechanics of Rejection in 2025

The user query highlights "grant rejections" and "criteria." The analysis suggests that the rejection volume in 2025 is a structural inevitability caused by the collision of heightened mobilization and static real-term funding.

1.2.1 The "Oversøkning" (Over-application) Phenomenon

The TRC report generated a wave of societal awareness and mobilization. This likely led to a surge in applications from organizations and individuals eager to participate in the "reparation" process. However, the financial framework did not expand to meet this demand.

- **The Inflationary Gap:** The estimated price growth in the state budget for 2025 was 3.8%. Sametinget's framework increased by only 3.6% (excluding specific earmarks).²
- **Implication:** In real terms, the budget contracted. When the number of qualified applicants increases (driven by TRC mobilization) while the purchasing power of the grant pot decreases, the rejection rate *must* rise mathematically.
- **Strategic Rejections:** Consequently, Sametinget had to apply stricter prioritization. Projects that were "good enough" in previous years may have been rejected in 2025 simply because they did not align *strongly enough* with the urgent TRC priorities (e.g., endangered languages like Pite/Ume Sámi).²

1.2.2 The "Missing" Culture Lift

A recurring theme in the 2025 budgetary documents is the disappointment regarding the government's promised "Kulturløft" (Culture Lift). The Hurdalsplattformen promised a significant boost to the cultural sector, but Sametinget notes this has not been redeemed.²

- **Applicant Impact:** Many cultural entrepreneurs likely planned projects anticipating this "lift." Its absence meant that the pot for "creative industries" and "cultural initiatives" was smaller than the sector anticipated, leading to a higher volume of rejections for otherwise viable projects.

1.3 Specific Allocation Adjustments

Despite the tight constraints, 2025 saw targeted increases that reveal Sametinget's strategic "must-wins":

- **Endangered Languages:** Direct grants were increased by NOK 800,000 specifically for Stormen Language Center (focusing on Pite Sámi) and Sijti Jarng (focusing on Ume Sámi).² This confirms that *scarcity* (threat level of the language) is a stronger driver for funding approval than *volume* (number of speakers).
- **Sámi Week in Tromsø:** An increase of NOK 300,000 was granted to the Sámi Week in Tromsø.² This aligns with the TRC pillar of "Dissemination" and "Conflict Prevention" by supporting a high-visibility arena where Sámi culture meets the majority population in an urban setting.

Part II: The 2026 Budget Analysis – Structural Changes and Fiscal Realities

The transition to the 2026 budget represents a move from immediate reaction to structural adaptation. The proposal indicates a year of tight prioritization, where new initiatives are funded through internal reallocation or specific, narrow earmarks rather than broad framework expansion.

2.1 Macro-Budgetary Framework Analysis

The 2026 budget proposal reflects a cautious fiscal approach. The numbers indicate a struggle to maintain activity levels in the face of persistent inflation.

Budget Component	2025 Allocation (Saldert)	2026 Proposal (Forslag)	Variance (NOK)	Variance (%)
Total Framework (KDD)	NOK 747,514,000	NOK 772,881,000	+ 25,367,000	~3.4%
Sametinget Internal Calc.	Base Framework	Adjusted Framework	+ 32,367,000	3.5%
Price Growth Estimate	3.8%	3.1%	N/A	N/A

Real Growth (approx.)	<i>Negative (-0.2%)</i>	<i>Marginal (+0.4%)</i>	N/A	N/A
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Sources:.⁵ Note: Differences in "Total Framework" figures often arise from how specific earmarked grants (øremerkinger) are counted vs. the block grant.

- **Interpretation:** With a nominal increase of 3.5% against a projected price index of 3.1%, the "free funds" available for new political initiatives are negligible (approx. 0.4%). This confirms that 2026 will not be a year of expanding grant schemes, but rather refining existing ones. The "rejections" observed in 2025 are likely to persist in 2026 for generic applications as funds remain tight.

2.2 Structural Reforms and New Priorities (Satsinger)

Despite the constraints, the 2026 budget introduces decisive structural changes that will affect who gets funded and how.

2.2.1 The Municipal Bilingualism Reform (*Tospråklighetstilskudd*)

The most significant structural change in 2026 is the overhaul of the grant model for municipalities and counties.

- **The Reform:** A new, differentiated grant model is being introduced to replace the old flat-rate or per-capita models.
- **Financial Injection:** The Sámi Parliament Council has strengthened this scheme by NOK 8.4 million.⁷
- **Strategic Goal:** This is a direct response to the TRC's finding that the lack of municipal language services is a primary barrier to reconciliation. The new model likely incentivizes *quality* and *availability* of services rather than just administrative status.
- **Geographic Expansion:** Saltdal municipality is formally included in the language management area, receiving an earmarked NOK 2.6 million.⁷ This sets a precedent for other municipalities considering joining the administrative area—funding follows status.

2.2.2 The Pivot to Digital Sovereignty: AI Strategy

Recognizing the existential threat posed by Anglo-centric digital technologies, 2026 sees the allocation of funds for a **Sámi Artificial Intelligence (KI) Strategy**.⁷

- **Context:** Large Language Models (LLMs) currently lack sufficient Sámi training data, risking a "digital death" for the language.
- **Funding Implication:** Grants for language technology will likely be funneled through established technical units like **Divvun** (allocated NOK 13.9 million).⁶ This suggests that independent app developers or small tech projects may find it harder to get funding unless they are integrated into this broader strategic framework or the Divvun

infrastructure.

2.2.3 Predator Policy and Indigenous Knowledge

A new working group is funded to develop a predator (*rovvilt*) policy based on Sámi indigenous knowledge.⁷

- **Grant Relevance:** This represents a shift in how "primary industry" (*næring*) funds are used—moving from subsidies for losses towards funding *policy formulation* and *knowledge systems*.

2.3 The Media Support Controversy

A critical "difference" in 2026 involves the funding of Sámi media, which has sparked significant conflict.

- **The Issue:** The government proposes shifting a portion of the support for Sámi newspapers (*samiske aviser*) to fund Sámi-language content in *non-Sámi* (mainstream) newspapers. Specifically, a proposed regulation allows up to 8% of the grant post to be used for this purpose.⁸
- **The Impact:** Organizations like *Sálas* argue this is a real-term cut to the dedicated Sámi press. If NOK 1.8 million is diverted to mainstream papers, the specialized Sámi press faces a resource squeeze despite the nominal increase in the budget line.
- **Grant Implication:** Media grants in 2026 will be highly competitive, with new actors (mainstream newspapers) entering the competition for the same pot of money.

Part III: Regulatory Deep Dive – The Mechanics of Grant Administration

For the kunnskapsbank, detailing the *amount* of money is insufficient. Users need to understand the *rules* that dictate eligibility and successful reporting. The 2025/2026 period is marked by a rigorous enforcement of regulatory frameworks.

3.1 The "Doarjja" Portal: The Digital Gatekeeper

The mandatory use of the **Doarjja** digital portal has introduced a technical layer of scrutiny that acts as a de facto filter for applicants.

- **Role-Based Access Control (RBAC):** The system distinguishes strictly between roles⁹:
 - **Administrator:** Can manage users but *cannot* submit applications.
 - **Leder (Leader):** The *only* role authorized to commit the organization. Crucially, this role is validated against the **Enhetsregisteret** (Brønnøysund Register).
- **Common Failure Point:** Many small voluntary associations (*lag og foreninger*) have outdated board registrations in Brønnøysund. If the person trying to submit the

application is not the registered "Daglig leder" or "Styreleder" in the national registry, Doarjja blocks the submission. This "administrative rejection" often occurs before the grant is even assessed on its merits.

3.2 Detailed Grant Regulations (*Regelverk*)

Specific clauses in the grant regulations directly influence rejection rates and eligibility.

3.2.1 Establishment Grants (*Etablerertilskudd*)

For entrepreneurs (Søkerbasert tilskudd 2021/2025 rules) ¹⁰:

- **The "3-Year Rule":** The enterprise must have been registered for *less than 3 years*. Older companies pivoting to new Sámi markets are ineligible for this specific pot, often leading to rejections for established businesses.
- **Salary Cap:** The grant allows coverage of own salary (*egen lønn*) only up to NOK 15,000 per month for a maximum of 9 months. This low cap makes the grant less viable for full-time professionals, implicitly targeting side-hustles or low-cost startups.
- **Definitions:** The distinction between "Samisk reiseliv" (Sámi tourism) and "Kreativ næring" (Creative industry) is strict. "Samisk reiseliv" requires Sámi cultural elements to be the *main element* of the business. If the Sámi content is merely "flavor" for a standard tourism product, the application is rejected.

3.2.2 Organizational Support

For political parties and organizations ¹¹:

- **Bankruptcy Clause:** Automatic rejection and reclamation of funds occur if debt negotiations or bankruptcy proceedings are initiated.
- **Stemmestøtte vs. Grunnstøtte:** The funding split is rigid—90% based on votes (*stemmestøtte*), 10% as base support (*grunnstøtte*). This makes the grant volume highly predictable but completely inelastic; an organization cannot "apply for more" based on good activity—funding is mathematically tied to election results.

3.3 State Aid and EØS Limits

Sametinget is bound by the EEA (EØS) regulations on state aid.¹⁰

- **De Minimis Aid (*Bagatellmessig støtte*):** A single undertaking cannot receive more than €200,000 (approx. NOK 2.3 million) in state aid over any rolling 3-year period.
- **The "Trap":** This limit aggregates *all* public support (Innovation Norway, County Municipality, Sametinget). Applicants often fail to disclose other aid, leading to compliance rejections or forced repayment later.

Part IV: Strategic Implications for

kunnskapsbank/sametinget

The user's query emphasizes the relevance of this analysis for the kunnskapsbank/sametinget webpage. The current static lists of grants are insufficient given the complexity described above. The following recommendations outline a content strategy that bridges the gap between applicant needs and administrative realities.

4.1 Restructuring the Information Architecture

The webpage structure should mirror the user's journey through the new "Reconciliation Paradigm."

Recommendation 1: Thematic Clustering

Instead of listing grants alphabetically, group them by **TRC Pillar**:

- **"Støtte til Forsoning og Kultur" (Support for Reconciliation and Culture):** Group grants for museums, centers, and dissemination under this header. Explicitly mention *Meld. St. 17*.
- **"Språkløftet" (The Language Lift):** Cluster the new municipal grants and language center support.
- **"Næring og Innovasjon" (Business & Innovation):** Place the *Etablerertilskudd* here, with clear warnings about the 3-year rule and De Minimis limits.

Recommendation 2: The "Rejection Prevention" Guide

Create a subpage or prominent section titled **"Før du søker" (Before you apply)** that addresses the common rejection reasons identified in this analysis:

- **Technical Check:** "Is your 'Leder' role updated in Brønnøysund? Check here before logging into Doarjja."
- **The 'Infrastructure' Test:** "Does your project build lasting capacity? In 2025/2026, preference is given to projects that strengthen permanent arenas over temporary events."
- **Financial Reality:** "Understanding the 'Bagatellmessig støtte' limit." Provide a calculator or checklist for users to sum their public funding.

4.2 Content Strategy for the 2026 Shifts

The kunnskapsbank must preemptively address the 2026 changes:

- **For Municipalities:** Create a dedicated "Fact Sheet" on the new NOK 8.4 million bilingualism model. Explain *how* the new model calculates support (quality vs. quantity) as soon as the detailed circulars are released.
- **For Tech Developers:** Highlight the **Sámi AI Strategy** as an emerging funding domain. Advise developers to align with *Divvun* standards to increase funding probability.
- **For Media/Publishers:** Address the "8% Rule" controversy neutrally but clearly. Explain

that mainstream newspapers can now apply for Sámi content funding, and advise traditional Sámi media on how to document their unique value proposition in this more competitive landscape.

4.3 Navigating the "Truth and Reconciliation" Criteria

The user mentioned specific interest in "Truth and Reconciliation criteria." The website should explicitly interpret this for the user:

- **Key Insight for the Webpage:** "Applications that directly reference the *five pillars* of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report have a higher strategic relevance. Use the vocabulary of 'reparation', 'infrastructure', and 'documentation' in your project descriptions."

Part V: Conclusion

The analysis of Sametinget’s 2025 grant allocations and the 2026 budget proposal reveals a governance body in a state of "strategic tension." The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has provided a powerful, expansive political mandate requiring massive investment in cultural and linguistic repair. However, the state budget frameworks for 2025 and 2026 provide only marginal real-term growth, barely covering inflation.

For the grant applicant, this creates a high-friction environment. The "rejections" noted in the user's query are not merely administrative accidents; they are the result of a system forced to prioritize **institutional stability** (infrastructure) over **project flexibility** (activities). The 2026 budget reinforces this by focusing on structural reforms—municipal models, AI strategies, and predator policies—rather than pouring money into open pots.

For the kunnskapsbank, the mission is clear: transform from a "directory of grants" into a "strategic guide." By explaining the *why* (TRC mandate) and the *how* (Doarjja/EØS rules) behind the funding, the platform can help users navigate the competitive reality of the post-reconciliation era, ultimately reducing rejection rates by improving the strategic quality of applications.

Appendix: Comparative Data Tables

Table A: Budget Framework Evolution (2025-2026)

Category	2025 Status	2026 Proposal	Strategic Implication
Language	Focus on Language	+8.4 MNOK for	Shift from

Support	Centers (Ear-marked).	Municipalities.	centralized centers to local municipal responsibility.
Culture	Absorbing Beaivváš rent costs.	Maintenance of status quo.	High barrier for new cultural actors; no "Culture Lift."
Education/Tech	Learning materials (6 MNOK).	13.9 MNOK for Divvun; AI Strategy.	Heavy investment in digital sovereignty and higher ed.
Media	Standard support.	Redistribution to non-Sámi press.	Increased competition for Sámi media; potential dilution of funds.

Table B: TRC Pillars and Grant Alignment

TRC Pillar	Relevant Grant Schemes	2025/2026 Prioritization
1. Knowledge & Dissemination	Cultural Dissemination, Museums.	High. Priority for projects documenting Norwegianization.
2. Language & Education	Tospråklighet (Municipal), Language Centers.	Very High. Structural reform in 2026 to improve municipal services.
3. Culture & Heritage	Institutions (Theaters, Festivals).	High. Focus on <i>institutional</i> stability (infrastructure) over projects.
4. Conflict Prevention	Peace/Dialogue projects.	Medium. Often integrated into dissemination projects.
5. Regulatory	Legal aid, Rights-based	Medium. Focus on "Rovvilt"

Implementation	projects.	(Predator) policy working groups.
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This report consolidates findings from sources ¹³ through ¹⁴ to provide a comprehensive strategic overview.

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