

REPORT

ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA FINANCIAL MECHANISM
AND NORWEGIAN FINANCIAL MECHANISM 2009-2014
IN ESTONIA

Cut-off date 13th of April 2012



**RAHANDUS-
MINISTEERIUM**
MINISTRY of FINANCE of the REPUBLIC of ESTONIA

PREFACE

The purpose of the report on the implementation of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 in Estonia is to give updated information on the status of the preparation of the implementation of the financial mechanisms with the cut-off date of 13th of April 2012.

The report has been prepared by the Estonian National Focal Point.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIBA	National Agency for International Education Affairs (Liechtenstein)
BLD	Norwegian Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
CC	Cooperation Committee
DoRIS	Documentation, Reporting and Information System
DPP	Donor Programme Partner
EEA FM	European Economic Area Financial Mechanism
EE	Foundation Enterprise Estonia
ERC	Estonian Research Council
FHI	Norwegian Institute of Public Health
FMO	Financial Mechanism Office
IA	Implementing Agency
IN	Innovation Norway
KLIF	Norwegian Climate and Pollution Agency
KS	Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities
MC	Monitoring Committee
MoC	Estonian Ministry of Culture
MoE	Estonian Ministry of Environment
MoEAC	Estonian Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications
MoER	Estonian Ministry of Education and Research
MoF	Estonian Ministry of Finance
MoJ	Estonian Ministry of Justice
MoSA	Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
N/A	Not applicable
NFM	Norwegian Financial Mechanism
OEF	Open Estonia Foundation
PO	Program Operator
RA	Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage
RAI	Request for Additional Information
RANNIS	Icelandic Centre for Research
RCN	Norwegian Research Council
SIU	Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education
TA	Technical Assistance

I. INTRODUCTION

The Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 was signed on the 8th of June 2011 between the Republic of Estonia and the Kingdom of Norway.

The Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 was signed on the 10th of June 2011 between Iceland, the Principality of Liechtenstein, the Kingdom of Norway and the Republic of Estonia.

II. STATUS OF PREPARATION OF PROGRAMMES

According to the signed MoUs the following programmes will be implemented in Estonia:

Allocation of the EEA FM

ID-#	Programme name	Allocation in €	PO/IA	DPP	Submission to the FMO	State of play
EE01	Technical Assistance	345 000	MoF	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Bilateral Fund at National Level	115 000				
EE02	Integrated Marine and Inland Water Management	6 900 000	MoE	KLIF	23.02.2012	Under appraisal
EE03	Fund for Non-governmental Organisations	2 300 000	FMO/OEF	N/A	13.02.2012	N/A
EE04	Children and Youth at Risk	6 505 000	MoER in cooperation with MoSA and MoJ	KS	14.02.2012	Under appraisal
EE05	Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage	4 510 000	MoC	RA	02.03.2012	Under appraisal
EE10	Scholarships	600 000	MoER/ Foundation Archimedes	RANNIS, AIBA, SIU	13.02.2012	Under appraisal

Allocation of the NFM

ID-#	Programme name	Allocation in €	PO/IA	DPP	Submission to the FMO	State of play
EE01	Technical Assistance	384 000	MoF	N/A	N/A	N/A
EE01	Bilateral Fund at National Level	128 000				
EE06	Bilateral Research Cooperation	3 000 000	MoER/ERC	RCN	13.02.2012	Under appraisal
EE07	Green Industry Innovation	6 000 000	MoEAC/EE	IN	09.02.2012	Under appraisal
EE08	Public Health Initiatives	8 912 000	MoSA	FHI	16.03.2012	Under appraisal
EE09	Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance	2 000 000	MoSA	BLD	12.03.2012	Under appraisal
EE10	Bilateral Scholarship Cooperation	1 000 000	MoER/ Foundation Archimedes	RANNIS, AIBA, SIU	13.02.2012	Under appraisal
EE11	Domestic and Gender-based Violence	2 000 000	MoSA	The Norwegian Directorate of Health	04.04.2012	Under appraisal
	Global Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue	256 000	IN	N/A	N/A	N/A

As all the POs and also all the DPPs with one exception were appointed already in the MoUs, the programmes' drafting process could begin right after the signature of the MoUs. Nevertheless, the drafting process took longer than initially expected due to several reasons – major changes in the programme structure as a result of negotiation process between all the involved parties, changes in the PO personnel dealing with the preparation of the programmes, time-consuming formal conciliation process, problems with the submission of the programmes through DoRIS etc. However, the first programme proposal was submitted to the FMO on the 9th of February, altogether four programmes were submitted on time. The last programme proposal was submitted on the 4th of April.

At present all the programme proposals submitted by the FP are under appraisal. RAIs have been received for several programmes, the answers are being discussed and compiled. In some cases meetings between the different stakeholders have taken place to discuss the answers to RAIs.

Information on planned advance payment requests:

Programme	Advance payment request
EE01	€ 138 000
EE02	€ 856 445
EE04	€ 285 130
EE05	€ 93 166
EE06	€ 110 004
EE07	€ 2 032 602
EE08	€ 1 580 525
EE09	€ 331 384
EE10	€ 374 000
EE11	€ 468 870

III. STATUS OF THE PREPARATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GRANTS

As preparation for the implementation of the Grants the following activities have been carried out by the FP:

- Setting up of a Monitoring Committee – the MC for the 2009-2014 period will be established on the basis of the MC for the 2004-2009 period after the approval of the completion reports of the 2004-2009 period. The approval of the completion reports as well as discussions on the tasks of the new MC will take place at a meeting scheduled for the 27th of April.
- Description of Management and Control Systems – The setting up of the management and Control Systems of the FP will be based on the management and control systems for the Managing Authority of the Structural Funds so that all the directly applicable functions will be taken over and adjustments will be made where proportionally necessary.
- Preparation of the Communication Strategy – The preparation of the Communication Strategy was delayed due to putting emphasis on drafting the programmes and preparation of the festive launch of the grants. Still, the Communication Strategy was submitted on the 13th of April 2012.
- Organization of the Festive Launch of the EEA/Norway Grants 2009-2014 – the festive launch took place on the 27th of March 2012. Please find further information concerning the festive launch in chapter VI.
- Technical Assistance and the Fund for Bilateral Relations at national level - The FP presented the TA budget which amounts to € 972 000 under both FMs on the 6th of March 2012. The TA agreement is expected to be signed by the end of April 2012.

IV. INITIATIVES FOR STRENGTHENING OF BILATERAL RELATIONS

In the programme preparation phase the initiatives for strengthening of bilateral relations mainly focused on fostering contacts between the POs and DPPs – setting up of the CCs, organizing meetings and seminars in Estonia to discuss the content of the programmes between Estonian target groups and Norwegian experts as well as study trips to Norway to learn from local experience.

The following activities have been carried out to strengthen the bilateral relations:

Time	Programme	Event	
2011	05.08	EE04	Meeting with the DPP
	10.08	EE07	Meeting with the DPP
	30.08	EE06 and EE10	Meeting with the DPPs
	13.-14.09	EE04	Seminar for the preparation of the programme (PO, DPP, target groups, potential project partners); meeting of the CC
	20.-21.09	EE05	Meeting with the DPP + site visits
	30.09	EE02	Meeting of the CC
	3.10	EE11	Meeting with the DPP
	21.10	EE02	Meeting of the CC
	17.-19.10	EE05	Study trip to Norway, discussion of programme proposal + site visits
	25.10	EE04	Seminar in Tallinn for the target groups (PO, DPP, target groups, potential project partners)
	2.11	EE07	Meeting of the CC
	3.11	EE06 and EE10	Meeting with DPPs
	3.11	EE09 and EE11	Study trip to Norway, site visits + meeting of the CC for EE11
	7.11	EE04	Meeting of the CC
	9.-10.11	EE08	Meetings with target groups and the DPP
	28.11	EE07	Partner day in Tallinn for potential PPs and project partners from Estonia and Norway
	29.11	EE06 and EE10	Meeting with DPPs
	2012	2.12	EE02
8.-9.12		EE07	Study trip to Norway
18.01		EE02	Study trip to Norway (pre-defined project)
23.-25.01		EE08	Study trip to Norway
23.-27.01		EE04	Study trip to Norway
31.01		EE05	Meeting with the DPP
10.02		EE02	Meeting of the CC, signature of programme proposal
2012	2.-3.04	EE04	Meeting for the preparation of the pre-defined project with foreign experts
	3.04	EE07	Meeting of the CC

It is planned to continue with financing programme level initiatives for bilateral relations until the programmes are approved, and after that it is planned to have a more strategic approach on strengthening bilateral relations between Estonia and the donor countries.

By the donors' side two main topics have been proposed:

- promoting and strengthening of co-operation at municipal level
- promoting democratic values for the youth

One of the topics that the Estonian side has proposed is organizing a research management conference.

The topics together with possible additional activities as well as the whole strategy for strengthening bilateral relations will be further discussed by the MC.

A more detailed plan for bilateral fund at national level will be submitted in order to explain the ideas and planned activities under these topics.

V. RISK ASSESSMENT (main risk factors related to the implementation of the Grants)

The biggest risk in the preparatory phase is that the elaboration of large documents is concentrated on a very short time period and as quality has been the main priority, the risk has already appeared since several deadlines have been exceeded.

VI. PUBLICITY AND COMMUNICATION (communication strategy, publicity activities of the Grants)

Publicity and communication at the programme level is the responsibility of the POs. Each PO has drafted a Communication Plan that was attached to the Programme Proposal.

The Communication Strategy of the FP was submitted on the 13th of April 2012.

The biggest publicity activity of the FP in the reporting period was the Festive Launch of the EEA/Norway Grants. It took place on the 27th of March 2012. The event was organized in cooperation with the Norwegian Embassy in Tallinn. The seminar was divided into two – the first half of the day there were keynote speeches from the Ambassador of Norway Mrs Lise Kleven Grevstad and the Minister of Social Affairs of Estonia Mr Hanno Pevkur, a presentation from the NMFA about the importance of bilateral relations and speed presentations from all the POs, introducing their programme proposals. The second half of the day was divided into two panels to introduce the plans more specifically and also for the target groups to ask questions about the programmes. The interest towards the event was big – the number of participants was more than 200 people. The interest was big among all the target groups (local governments, research institutions, NGOs, etc) and this created a lively discussion on the programmes in the second half of the day. Also, many DPPs and potential project partners from Norway were represented, giving opportunity for discussions on bilateral cooperation.

For the Festive Launch several publicity materials were prepared, including notebooks and brochures containing information on the EEA/Norway Grants.

The next bigger communication activity will be restructuring of the website of the FP www.eeagrants.fin.ee.

VII. INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE NEXT PERIOD

The most important plan for the next period is getting all the programmes approved and starting of the actual implementation of the programmes. It is planned that all the programmes that will be approved in the next four months, will have their festive launches during 2012. It is also expected that the first open calls/ small grant schemes will be launched in 2012.

The FP's coming months will be occupied with advising the POs on answering the RAIs on the programmes, preparing the description of the management and control systems of the FP, also with adapting the Government Regulation no 140 "The requirements and procedures for applying for financing from the European Union and foreign assistance funds" of the 10th of May, 2007 to give proper framework for the implementation of the Grants.