

BASELINE STUDY
ON BILATERAL RELATIONS
EEA NORWAY GRANTS

Stein-Erik Kruse and Zozan Kaya

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Acronyms

CC	Cooperation Committee
DPP	Donor Programme Partner
DS	Donor States
EEA	European Economic Area
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
FMO	Financial Mechanism Office
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFP	National Focal Point
NGO	Non Governmental organisation
RBM	Results Based Management
PP	Project Promoter
PO	Programme Operator

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Executive Summary

Background and purpose

The new EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014 will involve an unprecedented number of individuals and institutions in new partnerships between Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein as donors and 15 beneficiary states. The Grants are aimed towards reducing social and economic disparities in Europe, but also strengthening political, professional, social and economic ties. All programmes under the Grants will contribute to these two objectives.

The total number of programmes in all the 15 countries is 147 out of which 89 (61%) have a Donor Programme Partner. There are altogether 27 such partners. A large number of partnerships with civil society and private companies will emerge during the first half of 2013 when the Open Calls are completed.

The lack of information on the status of bilateral relations has been a challenge. It was therefore decided to carry out a study in 2012 for establishing a baseline – a study to be replicated later (mid-term and at the end of the grants period) in order to measure change over time. The baseline study was meant to measure the “temperature” of bilateral relations at an early stage in the programme, based on perceptions and feedback from a broad range of stakeholders.

FMO’s “Guideline for strengthened bilateral relations” defines bilateral cooperation as *“Cooperation, joint results, and increased mutual knowledge and understanding between donor and beneficiary states as a function of the EEA and Norway Grants”*.

Methods

The baseline study included an online survey targeting programme and project participants from four programmes in seven countries (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia) and the donor countries. The survey was sent to 145 participants, out of which 93 responded. It sought to capture the scope of collaboration, but covered also qualitative aspects and participants’ perceptions and expectations

regarding the programme and project partnerships and results.

More in-depth, qualitative information was also collected through telephone interviews with National Focal Points, donors and policy makers and a selection of Donor Programme Partners and Programme Operators. They were carried out partly to certify findings from the survey and partly to obtain more in-depth information to understand and provide a more independent perspective on the partnerships and their achievements.

The main findings

The first aspects of bilateral relations cover scope and level of cooperation between partners. There are altogether 27 Donor Programme Partners. The total number of programmes in the 15 countries is 147. In 41% (20) of the institutions responding to the questionnaire only one person is involved full-time in the programme/project. He or she is also the person being paid by EEA and Norway Grants. There are two to three people involved in 26% (13) of the cases, between 2-3 people in 24% (12), while more than 10 people are registered in only 9% (4) of the cases. As such, relatively few people have been involved so far, but later, during implementation of projects, a much larger number of people will be involved.

The majority of the people interviewed claimed to have good knowledge of the programmes. However, there was a striking difference between senior managers at the ministerial level and the directorates and agencies being Donor Programme Partners. The latter are directly involved and their level of knowledge and insight is much higher than among representatives in their mother ministries. Overall, there was massive support for the programme, but the few questions and doubts came from ministry representatives.

When asked about the relevance and importance of the bilateral objective for their institution, the majority (67%) confirmed it was “very important”, 25% “to some extent” and 8%

“marginal”. A few indicated that international cooperation and partnership was interesting, but not so relevant for the core mandate of their ministry or sector. It was also mentioned that it could be more relevant for public sector institutions and civil society than private sector. Some respondents in the interviews underscored that the relevance and importance of the bilateral objective is more visible in larger programmes.

The interviews asked to what extent the programmes had become integrated or “anchored” within the institutions: 50 % said “to a great extent” and 47% “to some extent”. Most people claimed that there had been a process of integration in which the EEA and Norway Grants had catalysed and supported an internal process of change and internationalisation within their institutions. Some have established new International Departments or been able to recruit full time staff working with international bilateral programmes as a result of the EEA and Norway Grants.

The survey revealed also a broad range of joint activities. 76% had been involved in meetings in the Cooperation Committee, 75% in preparatory activities for the new programme by FMO, 49% in conferences and seminars, 45% in study tours and visits and 25% in technical cooperation and exchange between countries. 55 responded that the activities had been “very useful” or “useful” for broadening their knowledge about the EEA Agreement, 56 that they had increased their knowledge about the EEA and Norway Grants and 57 that they had contributed to a better understanding of the donor states efforts to solve European challenges. Only few said they had “not been useful” at all.

The expected relevance of the programmes and projects are perceived as high in relation to core activities of their institution – 70% as “very relevant” and 26% as “relevant”. Only one answered “not relevant”. Questions covered also expected relevance not only of the programme, but of the international partnerships. 93% considered the partnerships as either “very relevant” or “relevant” – in other

words – expectations to what could be achieved are high.

The belief that the programmes/projects would strengthen the bilateral relations between donor and beneficiary states were high – 63% “to a large extent” and 36% “to some extent”. Most respondents in the interviews thought that the partnerships would contribute to strengthened bilateral relations as it facilitates networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practices.

The majority of Programme Operators being interviewed expected significant results, ranging from achieving the programme objectives, as well as strengthening technical knowledge, mobilising additional funding to wider benefits from the bilateral input. The latter would include building a platform of cooperation and dialogue between countries, sharing experiences and best practices and gaining more knowledge about the sector policy in the other country.

The interviews of policy and decision makers underlined that the benefits would be mutual (“*This is not a donor beneficiary relationship, but an equal partnership*”). 42% claimed they would gain “to a great extent” and 46% “to some extent” from being involved in the EEA Norway Grants.

When asked about what particular benefits they anticipated, the responses varied. For the Norwegian institutions, international exposure and building long-term professional networks, closer cooperation with the EU system in general and specific EU countries, increased staff motivation and satisfaction (through country visits and exchange programmes) and access to new knowledge and expertise were all important. Addressing common cross-border challenges in areas like environment, climate and police cooperation were also mentioned as important mutual benefits.

Another aspect of mutuality is to what extent the programmes and projects will produce shared results in which both partners are active in planning and implementation and can claim credit for results. Only a few, namely 7% state that there are, or will be, no shared

results. 58% answers “to some extent”, but it is difficult to know how “shared” the results are. 27% claims that results will be shared “to a large extent”, 58% “to some extent” and only 7% “not at all”.

The institutions expected a broad range of benefits: “Dialogue and sharing of experience with other professionals (peer learning)” had the highest score with 80%, while “Increased administrative/managerial competence” was the second and “International exposure and participation” (professional networking) third 67%. “Additional funding” is important both for Programme Operators and Donor Programme Partners, but was rated lower with 46% together with “More insights into the EEA programmes” with 45%.

On the other hand, it is accepted that donors provide the funds and that there is an imbalance in human and financial resources between donors and beneficiary states. Some expressed in the interviews concern whether their partners would have preferred only receiving the financial resources and not the partnership. However, the people interviewed expected to gain institutionally - 42% “to a great extent” and 46% “to some extent” from being involved in the EEA Norway grants.

Another question directed to the beneficiary states concerned their image of the donor states and for the large majority this was equal to “Norway”. Almost 80%, considered the donor states as committed to assist and share knowledge and resources and as reliable and predictable partners. Few agreed that the three donor countries played an introverted role in Europe – being outside EU.

The interviewees thought that the partnerships established through the EEA and Norway Grants would contribute to strengthened bilateral relations – 54% “to a great extent” and 46% “to some extent”. The respondents had high expectations and ambitions. Altogether 98% (91) expressed “very positive” or “positive” expectations on long-term effects, no one believed that there would be any negative effects.

Almost half, 47% was of the opinion that the partner dialogue and cooperation will be

maintained beyond the participation in this programme/project (e.g. without EEA and Norway funding) and 49% believe it will happen “to some extent”. Only 1% states that dialogue and cooperation may come to an end, which is surprisingly low.

Among the policy and decision makers, 10% said that the dialogue and cooperation could be maintained beyond programme funding “to a great extent”, 60% “to some extent” and 27% possibly not. Some, but few, of the institutions would have funds to continue the cooperation on their own, so external funding would be needed. There is a strong belief that the EEA and Norway Grants will continue funding or that other donors (such as the EU) would provide future support.

There is also a belief that the established cooperation has a potential for growth that can be expanded into new programmes. 66% said “yes” and 28% “to some extent”. The effects of the programmes for other institutions in the respective countries are also expected to be positive. 62% agree that the programmes will have such effects while 32% believe “to some extent”. Only 4% remain negative and do not believe there will be spin-offs for and impact on other national institutions.

Finally, as much as 87% believe that the programmes could have results for other European countries, while quite a large number 17% admit that they do not know. The policy and decision makers expressed more doubt about the potential changes in their own institutions. 28% thought that the influence of the programme and partnerships would be marginal, 63% that it could have some influence, while only 3% expected significant impact.

It will be interesting to follow the changes in bilateral relations over time. The study has showed that the beginning was positive with high expectations among most partners. It is still an open question whether the programmes will reinforce and confirm such expectations or to what extent real life experiences in implementation of programmes may change people’s attitudes.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Purpose

The EEA and Norway Grants¹ represent the contribution of the three EEA/EFTA² states (“donor states”) towards reducing social and economic disparities in Europe. Over a five-year period (2004-2009), grant assistance was given to 15 countries in Central and Southern Europe (“beneficiary states”). The grants also to a certain extent contributed to strengthen the political, social and economic ties between the donor and the beneficiary states.

In the period 2009-14, €988.5 million in financial support will be provided through the EEA Grants, jointly financed by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, to the 15 beneficiary EU states in Central and Southern Europe. The Norway Grants, funded solely by Norway, makes available an additional €800 million to the 12 newest EU member states.

In the new programme (2009-14), the Grants have two overall objectives: i) to contribute to the reductions of social and economic disparities within the EEA; and ii) to strengthen bilateral relations between donor and the beneficiary states³. All programmes under the Grants shall contribute to these two overall objectives.

In order to reduce social and economic disparities in Europe, sector specific objectives are developed for the different programme areas supported by the EEA and Norway Grants. The rationale is that shared challenges require shared solutions, so working in cooperation through bilateral programmes and projects provides an arena for learning from exchange of good practice between the countries. Many pressing issues such as demographic trends, social inequalities, immigration, environment concerns and sustainability of resources do not stop at national borders and require joint initiatives and cooperation (EEA and Norway Grants Status Report 2011).

In the previous grants period, several project partnerships were established. However, the content and quality of cooperation varied. A programme approach has been introduced for the new period. Such approach requires greater focus on the assistance in pre-determined and agreed areas of intervention. It seeks to ensure a more strategic and predictable cooperation between donor state institutions’ competence and similar institutions in the beneficiary countries, in addition to improved achievement of results.

In the new regulations for the EEA and Norway Grants, separate bilateral funds are also established, contributing directly to the achievement of the bilateral objective. The bilateral funds shall be utilised for strengthening the collaboration between donor states and beneficiary countries through seminars, conferences, international travels, exchange programmes, etc. Parts of the funds could be used as seed money for project promoters and partners prior to start-up of the cooperation (“matchmaking”).

The term “Donor Programme Partner” (DPP) is used for the public institutions in the three donor countries involved in cooperation with “Programme Operators” (POs) in the beneficiary countries at programme level. The EEA Financial Mechanism Office (FMO in Brussels) has

¹ The EEA Financial Mechanism (2004-2009) and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism (2004-2009).

² Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

³ This was not an explicit objective in the first programme period (Meld.St 20).

entered into agreements with 24 Norwegian institutions. They are expected to be involved in 89 of the total 147 programmes covering all countries and sectors⁴. Iceland participates with two institutions (scholarships/research and thermal energy) and Lichtenstein with two (culture and scholarships).

In addition to the programme partnerships, a broad range of project partnerships are expected in the public and private sectors, and in civil society. There will for instance be NGO funds in 15 countries, funds for cultural exchange in eight, funds for research and/or scholarships in 12 countries, as well as programmes in Green Innovation partly managed by Innovation Norway.

Standard expected outcomes and indicators to measure whether the Grants are contributing to the two overall objectives have been developed and systems prepared on how information at different levels should be collected and reported on. However, the Result Based Management (RBM) framework is better developed for the objective of reduced social and economic disparities than for the objective of strengthened bilateral relations.

The lack of basic data and information on bilateral relations and methods on how to measure changes in such relations has been a challenge. A number of quantitative and qualitative indicators have been suggested, and DDPs and POs will report on these in annual and strategic reports during programme implementation. In addition, FMO will commission external studies/surveys/interviews to review the fulfilment of the objective of strengthened bilateral relations, and its complexity.

It was also decided to undertake a study in 2012 to provide a situation analysis and baseline information on bilateral relations – a study to be replicated later (mid-term and at the end of the grants period) in order to measure change in bilateral relations over time. The questions should relate to the proposed indicators and capture various aspects of bilateral relations as defined in the “Guideline on Bilateral Relations” (2012).

1.2. The Understanding of Bilateral Relations

Bilateral relations between countries refer to political, economic, cultural and historic ties and cooperation. Strong bilateral relations are characterised by close cooperation between institutions and persons at administrative and political level, as well as in the private sector, academia and civil society. It includes general knowledge, understanding and public awareness about the other country and the ties existing between them.

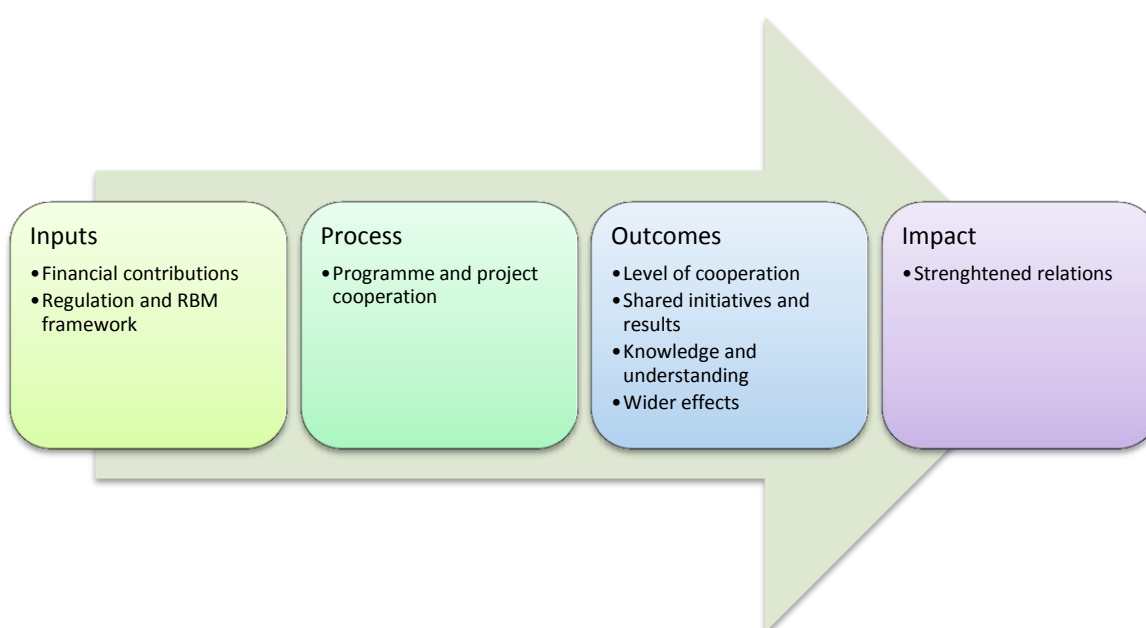
FMO’s “Guideline for strengthened bilateral relations” (March 2012) defines bilateral cooperation as “*Cooperation, joint results, and increased mutual knowledge and understanding between donor and beneficiary states as a function of the EEA and Norway Grants*” and suggests four broad outcomes:

1. *Extent of cooperation* – referring to the scope and level of cooperation between institutions within public sector, private sector and civil society.
2. *Shared results* - including evidence of joint results through sharing of experience, technical expertise and technology between partners in different countries.

⁴ In the previous period 298 projects had a partner in a donor country, being 25% of the projects. In addition, there were approximately 600 partnerships in smaller projects financed through funds and programmes. Meld.St.20, p. 16).

3. *Improved knowledge and mutual understanding* between partners – as a result of increased cooperation and joint initiatives that have brought people and institutions together.
4. *Wider effects* – intended or unintended long-term and catalytic effects beyond the specific project objectives that might happen as a result of institutions working together.

Cooperation is a prerequisite for strengthened bilateral relations. Such cooperation is facilitated and supported through the EEA and Norway Grants at the national, programme and project levels. There are expected results from such cooperation (outcomes), which together contribute to strengthened bilateral relations (impact) (“Guideline for strengthened bilateral relations”). A simplified programme logic would look as follows:



1.3. Mechanisms and Partners for Strengthening Bilateral Relations

There are several mechanisms for strengthening bilateral relations in the EEA and Norway Grants:

a) Bilateral funds at national and programme level

All programmes shall set aside a minimum of 1.5% of the eligible expenditure of the programme for a fund to facilitate (a) the search for partners for donor partnership projects, (b) networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practice.

b) Donor programme and project partnerships

Donor partnership programmes and projects are the key measures to strengthen bilateral relations. The partnership programmes promote professional cooperation between public authorities and is meant to be of mutual benefit. The donor programme partners (DPPs) are mostly public entities with national mandates within their respective fields and with extensive

international experience. The DPPs will be involved in the development of the strategy and design of the programme. The Cooperation Committee is the main vehicle for cooperation between the POs and DPPs and for strengthening of bilateral relations. It is meant to advise both on the development and implementation of the programme.

All programmes should also to the extent possible encourage and facilitate the establishment of donor partnership projects within each programme area.

Partnerships at different levels

The cooperation between the donor states and the beneficiary states, starts with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the donor states (DS) supported by the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) and the National Focal Points (NFPs) (working as coordinating authorities within relevant ministries or public agencies) at the national level in each of the beneficiary countries. Donor states' embassies in the beneficiary countries also play a role in the dialogue at national level. A Monitoring Committee consisting of stakeholders from National Focal Points, relevant ministries, NGOs and social partners, and programme authorities, further provide national coordination as an advisory body for the country programme.

At the programme level, stakeholders include Programme Operators (POs), mainly public institutions in the beneficiary countries that are in charge of developing the programmes and awarding funding to projects. The POs will also carry out monitoring and report on results. In more than half of the programmes, this is done in collaboration with Donor Programme Partners (DPPs) –public bodies in the beneficiary state. POs, DPPs and other relevant institutions are working through the Cooperation Committee (CC), which is meant to advise both on the development and the implementation of the programme, moreover, it works to strengthen bilateral relations.

A Project Promoter can be “a public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, as well as NGOs, having the responsibility for initiating, preparing and implementing a project”. Funds will be available through calls for proposals where beneficiary state entities can apply for funding, with or without partners from the donor state. In some programmes, the partnerships are mandatory, in others they are encouraged, but not mandatory.

A Project Partner is defined as “a public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial as well as NGOs, all of whose primary locations are either in the Donor States, Beneficiary States or country outside EEA that has a common border with the respective Beneficiary State, or an inter-governmental organisation actively involved in and contributing to, the implementation of a project.

c) Capacity building and institutional cooperation

The programme areas for “Capacity Building and Institutional Cooperation”, “Bilateral Research Cooperation” and “Bilateral Scholarship Programme” within the Norway Grants are the programme areas that provides for the clearest support for strengthening bilateral relations with mandatory partnership with Norwegian entities. Institutional cooperation between Norway and the beneficiary states should aim to assist in the development of modern and efficient administrations, support the development of networks and exchanges of knowledge and the dissemination of best practices with regard to the programme outcomes. Bilateral research will fund joint research projects, and the scholarship programmes will fund mobility between the donor and beneficiary states. Also the programme areas for cultural exchange and green innovation have a strong bilateral focus.

1.4. Methodology

The Terms of Reference⁵ specified what approach and methods should be used for carrying out the baseline study. A detailed Inception Report was prepared explaining further the methods of data collection including the survey instrument and questionnaires for the interviews. The Inception Report and instruments were discussed extensively with FMO and formally approved before being used.

The study has applied four methods for collecting data and information in order to triangulate and secure the validity of findings:

- (a) **A review of relevant documents** such as programme proposals and MoUs from the reference countries, progress reports from DPPs, Programme Operator's Manual, Regulation on the Implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014, in order to understand context, intentions and plans for bilateral cooperation. In addition, reputation reports/image surveys from countries such as for instance "Improving Norway's Reputation" by Synovate, "Norway's Image Survey in Latvia" by Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, "Europa utredningen" by Sentio Research are used to provide insights regarding measurements of a nation's reputation.⁶
- (b) **Compilation of information from the FMO database** in order to capture as much quantitative information as possible on the first level of results: Extent of cooperation.
- (c) **An online survey** targeting programme and project participants from four programmes in seven countries. This is the most important part of the baseline⁷. The selection of countries and programmes were based on the following criteria:
 - All sectors should be covered.
 - Both EEA and Norway Grants should be included.
 - Both programmes with and without a Donor Programme Partner (DPP) should be included.
 - All people who are directly involved in all the selected programmes and projects should receive the survey, such as: DPPs and project partners, Programme Operators and Project Promoters, as well as external institutions taking part in the Cooperation Committee.

The survey was tested among a small group of participants and then revised. It was later sent to 145 participants, out of which 93 responded (64% response rate). The survey sought to measure the scope of collaboration, but also qualitative aspects and participants' perceptions and expectations regarding the programme and project partnerships and potential/expected results. This is based on the assumption that people's expectations and motivation contribute significantly to the strengthening of bilateral relations.

It was not feasible within the limitations of this assignment to collect data from all programmes and countries. FMO selected seven beneficiary countries: Latvia, Lithuania,

⁵ See Annex 1: Terms of Reference

⁶ See Annex 5: References

⁷ See Annex 3: Baseline survey

Estonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia and all three donor countries: Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Four programmes were selected for each country.

The survey sought to cover the programme and project levels, because most of the measurable changes are expected to happen at these levels. The respondents have various backgrounds. Some respondents would not be able to answer all questions. It was therefore underlined in the introduction to the survey that some questions were not relevant for all respondents.

- (d) More in-depth, qualitative information were collected through **telephone interviews**⁸ with National Focal Points, donors and policy makers and a selection of DPPs and POs, in total 36 people. They were carried out partly to validate findings from the survey and partly to obtain more in-depth information to understand and provide a more independent perspective on the partnerships and their achievements⁹. The qualitative interviews were seen as a good way of capturing and describing the various programme processes as well as exploring individual differences between the actors involved and their experiences.

The interviews included a sample of those who had already responded to the survey and senior managers and policy makers not directly involved in planning and implementation, but with overall responsibility for the partnerships and projects – in Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein and the beneficiary countries.

1.4. Limitations

The response rate to the survey was relatively low (even after three reminders) and not all stakeholders being invited were available for interviews. There are a broad range of stakeholders at national, programme and project level and also different groups of stakeholders that have various degrees of exposure to the EEA and Norway Grants. Some of the programmes have donor programme partners and others do not. Some of the stakeholders have been involved in the 2004-2009 Financial Mechanisms. Programmes and projects are also at different stages of preparation within the programme cycle, where some have just started drafting the programme proposal and others are about to start implementing.

It should also be remembered that a survey and interviews measure people's opinions and perceptions about what has happened and is likely to happen. Such information is useful and important, but the subjective dimension of the response has its limitations.

The baseline study seeks to capture the "now" or "before" situation – in the early phase of the EEA and Norway Grants in order to trace changes in level of cooperation, shared results, improved knowledge and understanding during implementation. As such, this is a "before and after" study design in which external confounding factors are not taken into account – or in other words, we cannot know for certain that the observed changes come as a result of the specific interventions (the EEA and Norway Grants) or other influencing factors. It does not mean that the baseline represents zero-knowledge and experience. Many have been involved previously in cooperation, so in most cases we are trying to capture incremental and

⁸ See Annex 4: Questions for interviews

⁹ See Annex 2: People Interviewed

additional change. It is also important to emphasise that all the exact figures in the following figures and tables are approximate. Most important is what they tell about issues and trends and whether the interest and knowledge are low, medium or high. The percentages are not precise measures of how high or low.

There is a likely correlation between cause and effects, but the assessment of outcomes will have to take into account that most interventions are “contributory causes” to long-term achievements involving multiple partners and influencing factors. They are part of a causal package in combination with other factors such as stakeholder behaviour, related programmes and policies, institutional capacities, cultural factors and socio-economic trends. A more “robust” design would have required use of control groups to compare “with and without” the interventions. However, the survey collected data on important background variables such as type of sector, with/without Donor Partner, with/without previous programme/project experience, duration of partnership, etc., which are used to analyse, compare and discuss variation in responses between different groups of stakeholders.

CHAPTER 2: FINDINGS

2.1. Background of the Respondents

The survey collected background information on all respondents: data on their nationality, position, etc. Out of the 93 that responded, 88 represented a programme and 28 a project. 90% (74) had a programme or project partner in a donor country or beneficiary state while 11% (9) did not have any partner. 45% (38) were men, while 55% (47) women.

25% (22) are involved full-time in the programmes and 75% (66) were involved part-time. The interviews suggests that “part-time” varies significantly, but means often more than 50% of full work for those that took part in the planning phase.

The survey was sent to the three donor countries, seven beneficiary countries and four programmes in each country. Interestingly, most of the respondents (73%) come from Portugal (23%) followed by Norway (20%) Estonia (17%) and Latvia (12%). Countries with the lowest response rate were Slovakia (4%) and somewhat surprisingly, Poland (4%), even if the latter is the largest recipient country. Possible explanations for this result may be that Poland has experienced a larger staff turnover, and that people contacted did not feel qualified to answer. Another point that may be relevant is that Portugal listed a large number of contact persons for their programmes, which may or may not affect the number of people who have answered the online survey.

When contacting people for the in-depth interviews, the response was varying, some did not respond to our requests, but most people did. Contrary to the survey, the Polish contact persons were quick to reply. Likewise, Norwegian and Baltic counterparts generally replied positively to participate in the in-depth interviews. Slovakia only listed one person as eligible to participate.

Answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Norway	20%	18
Iceland	0%	0
Liechtenstein	0%	0
Estonia	17%	15
Latvia	12%	11
Lithuania	7%	6
Poland	6%	5
Portugal	23%	20
Romania	10%	9
Slovakia	4%	4

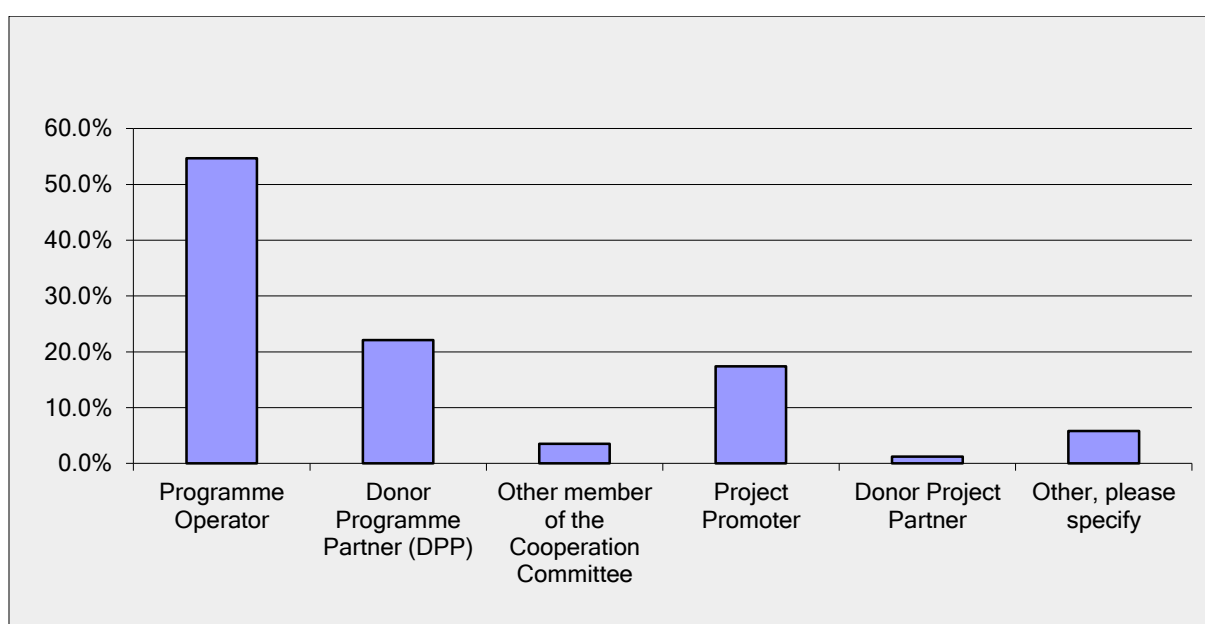
The large majority represents the public sector 96% (82) and only 2% (2) private sector and 1% (1) civil society – meaning there is very little feedback and information from the two last sectors in this survey.

Table 2: Which sector do you represent?

Answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Public sector	96%	82
Private sector	2%	2
Civil society	1%	1
Other (please specify)		3
Answered question		85

The large majority of the respondents were Programme Operators 55% (47), 22% (19) Donor Programme Partners, 17% (15) Project Promoters, 1% (1) Donor Project Partners and 8 others members of a Cooperation Committee.

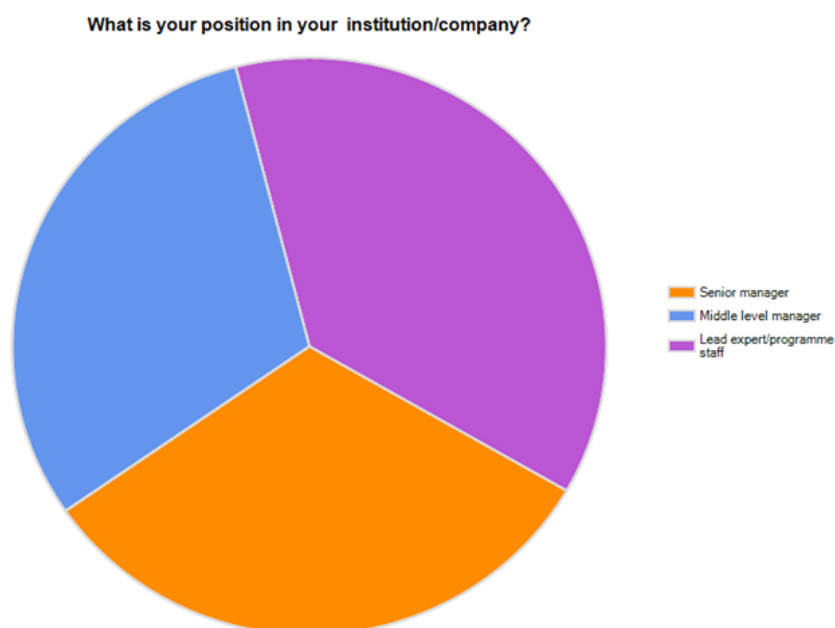
Figure 1: What is your role in the EEA programme/project under the 2009-14 Grants?



When it comes to the position of the respondents within their respective organisations, there is a relatively equal distribution between senior managers 32% (24), middle level managers 31% (23) and lead experts/programme staff 37% (28).¹⁰

¹⁰ Others include Financial manager, Project Development Manager, Coordinator for Financial Studies Office. Chief Specialist, Regional Director of Energy, Senior Advisor (Professor).

Figure 2: What is your position in your institution?



2.2. Extent of Cooperation

The first aspects of bilateral relations cover scope and level of cooperation between institutions within public and private sector and civil society. Level of participation is a basic measure for and a precondition for strengthened bilateral relations. The survey was conducted in a sample of countries and institutions so we do not have data on all EEA and Norway Grants programmes and partners. It is also important to keep in mind that some programmes are still being negotiated. The process of selecting project partners has not yet started in most programmes, so it is too early to get a complete overview of the scope of collaboration. As earlier explained, the large majority of respondents are from public sector institutions, hence private sector and civil society are not well represented.

Data from FMO shows that there are currently 27 Donor Programme Partners (including the Council of Europe). The total number of programmes in the 15 countries is 147 out of which 89 (57%) have a DPP. In the MoUs or programme proposals, there are currently 80 pre-defined project partnerships with a Donor State partner, but a larger number of project partnerships will emerge when the Open Calls are completed. Open Calls are included in 87 programmes. Some of the approved programmes have launched such calls already (January 2013), but the number of partnerships will increase substantially during the first half of 2013.

A robust monitoring and reporting system should be put in place for covering “extent of cooperation” – number of programme and project partnerships, but also how many people are involved in what types of activities (exchanges, scholarships, research, technical inputs, etc.) in all sectors and programmes. The scale of cooperation is not the only, but one important aspect of and condition for increased bilateral relations. It is when people are brought together around a common task/objective that they cooperate and may develop long-term relations.

Level of involvement

The survey and interviews captured level of involvement of staff within each institution, integration of the international programmes/collaboration and the commitment of senior management. In 41% (20) of the institutions only one person is involved full-time in the programme/project. He or she is also the person being paid by EEA and Norway Grants. There are two to three people involved in 26% (13) of the cases, between 2-3 people in 24% (12), while more than 10 people are registered in only 8% (4) of the cases. Later, during implementation of projects, a much larger number of people will be involved on a part time basis, but it is too early to estimate any figures.

Table 3: How many people in your institution/company are involved full time in the programme/project?

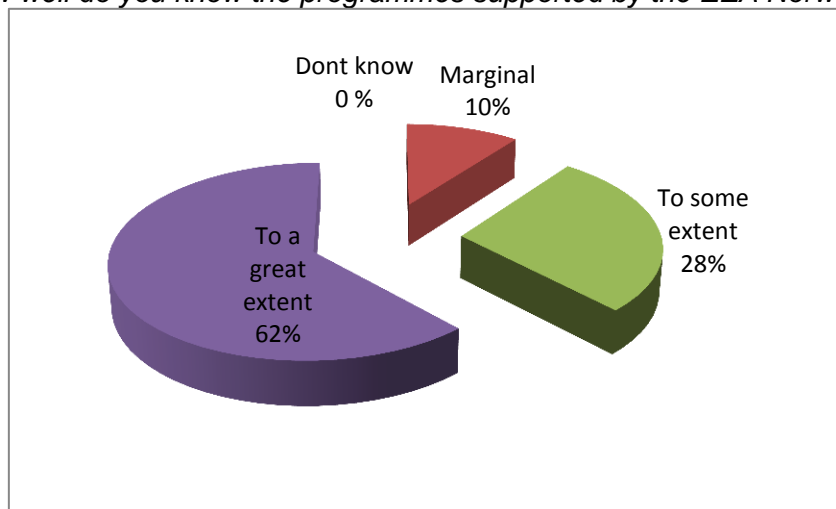
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	41%	20
2-3	26%	13
4-10	24%	12
More than 10	9%	4
<i>Answered question</i>		49

Qualitative aspects of cooperation

We have also tried to capture more qualitative aspects of cooperation, the depth and attributes of working together, through interviews with policy makers and senior managers not being directly involved in the planning and implementation processes.

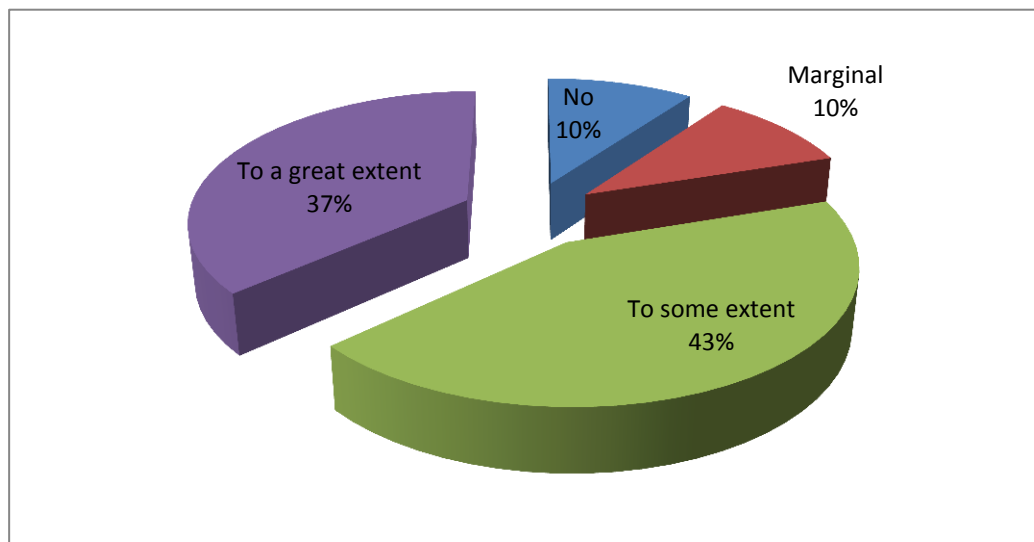
The majority of the people interviewed claimed to have good knowledge of the programmes. However, there was a striking difference between senior managers at the ministerial level in Norway and the directorates and agencies being DPPs. The latter are directly involved and their level of knowledge and insight is much higher than among representatives in their mother ministries. Overall, there was massive support for the new programme, but the few questions and doubts came mostly from ministry representatives.

Figure 3: How well do you know the programmes supported by the EEA Norway Grants?



A large group of respondents had also been involved during the preparation phase mostly in meetings, conferences, country visits and to some extent in programme discussions and negotiations.

Figure 4: Have you been involved in any meetings, conferences, visits or other events during the preparatory phase for the new programme period?



Relevance of the bilateral objective

How the respondents understand and interpret bilateral relations and the purpose of bilateral relations was quite well reflected through the interviews. Besides the more tangible perceived results on a micro level, most respondents understood the purpose as being more “virtual” or “holistic” - in the sense of creating a dialogue and enhancing mutual understanding between countries and participants. For instance, for one DPP, bilateral relations were seen as a way of bonding mutual understanding with sister-organisations at various European arenas. In other words, sharing knowledge and forming common standpoints and solving European challenges together. These interpretations were especially evident among people involved in the environmental sector, the health sector and within cross border cooperation. These are all areas where countries across Europe face similar challenges, as such it is more pressing to find common European solutions.

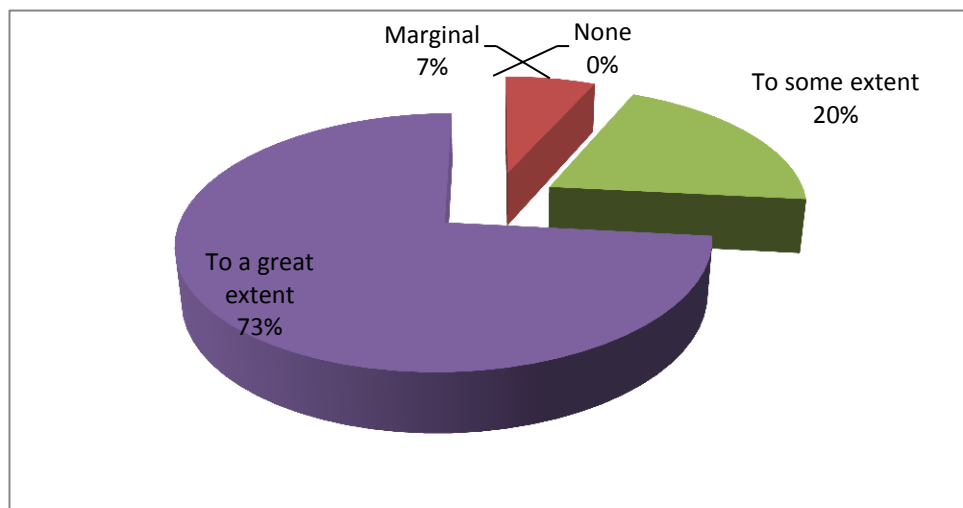
When asked about the relevance and importance of the bilateral objectives for their institution, the majority of the respondents; 67% confirmed it was “very important”, 25% “to some extent” and 8% “marginal”.

The impression was also that the majority of the interviewees found their roles in the partnership to be equally important and that gains from the partnership were mutual for both donor and beneficiary state. One DPP stated that, for innovation to be possible, it requires the export/import of models, methods and ways of thinking across countries. Some DPPs underscored that there would be mutual benefits, but admitted that they expected to have more to offer than they would receive. One DPP said that mutual benefits from cooperation were of varying degree and that the partnership caused more work than was expected.

A few indicated that international cooperation and partnership was interesting, but not so relevant for the core mandate of their ministry or sector. It was also mentioned that it might be more relevant for public sector institutions and civil society than private sector. Some

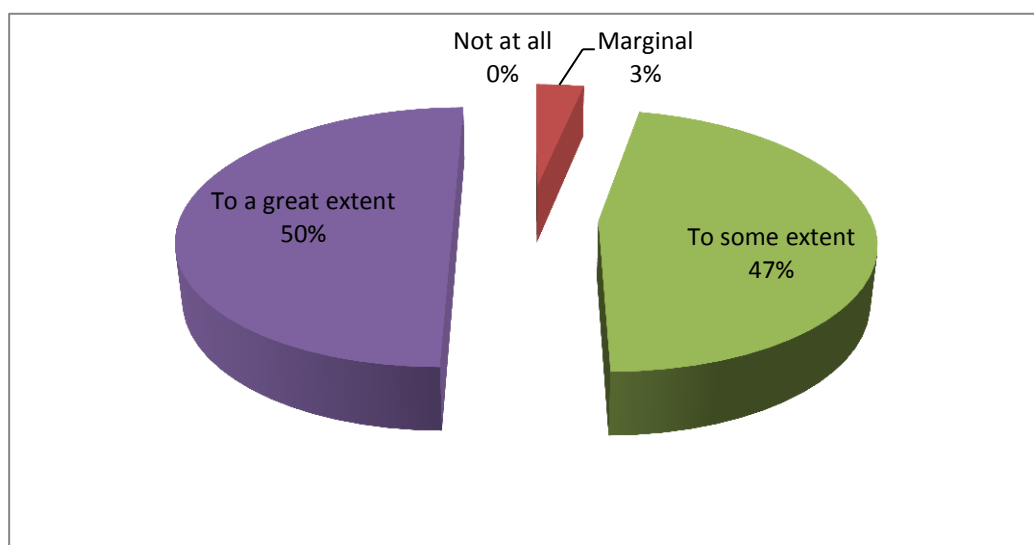
respondents in the interviews underscored that the relevance and importance of the bilateral objective is more visible in larger programmes.

Figure 5: What is the importance and relevance of the bilateral objective for your Ministry/Department/Institution?



We also asked in the interviews to what extent the bilateral cooperation had become integrated or “anchored” within the institutions: 50 % said “to a great extent” and 47% “to some extent”. Most interviewees claimed that there had been a continuous process of integration and that the EEA and Norway Grants had catalysed and supported such an internal process of change and internationalisation. Some have established new International Departments or been able to recruit full time staff working with international bilateral programmes. The cooperation often depended on a few active individuals, but there had clearly been a response and changes also at the organisational level as a result of the EEA and Norway grants.

Figure 6: To what extent is the international (bilateral) cooperation an integrated part of your Ministry/Department/Institution?



Communication and coordination

A few questions were directed specifically to Donor Programme Partners and covered also aspects of quality of communication and coordination. Overall, DPPs rated the dialogue and coordination with the Programme Operator as “excellent” or “good” 77% (43), 20% (11) as “fair” and only one characterised it as “poor”.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Excellent	36%	20
Good	41%	23
Fair	20%	11
Poor	2%	1
Don't know	2%	1
Other (please specify)		10
Answered question		56

There was also a question about the dialogue and coordination with FMO. 69% (41) assessed the dialogue with FMO during the preparation phase as either “excellent” or “good”, 20% (12) as “fair” and 3% (2) “poor” without giving any reasons.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Excellent	17%	10
Good	52%	31
Fair	20%	12
Poor	3%	2
Don't know	7%	4
Other (please specify)		2
Answered question		59

In the interviews with POs and DPPs, some problems with the bilateral fund was mentioned, mainly the level of bureaucratic work. As one respondent expressed: *“because it is a separate fund, rather than being an integral part of a project, it means that the people involved have to fill out various forms, applications and payment claims, yet may not go for partnership actions after all”*. In short, many respondents felt that creating a separate tool with different source of funding complicates the process.

Also, many expressed concern that the rules regarding the fund are not clear. In the words of one PO: *“what was eligible may turn out illegible because of the changing rules. On the one hand, this should be a flexible tool (and changeable), however, the details that have already been decided should not change, because this has financial consequences for us”*. One of the Norwegian DPPs underscored the point by saying that guidelines are being interpreted differently across countries. How the process is being dealt with may further vary according to the personnel within FMO itself. Thus, many urged the FMO to design more “clear” guidelines.

Other comments refer to the preparatory phase and approval process. Although some stated that this had gone relatively smooth and were satisfied with the dialogue and support from

FMO, others criticised the process, saying it was “exhaustive”, “too bureaucratic”, “long” and “uneasy”. To submit an application in January 2012 without a decision at the end of 2012, was found frustrating. The approval process should hence be speeded up as major delays can be an impediment to the quality of collaboration (both between the actors and FMO and between beneficiary and donor partners)¹¹ and final results.

2.3. Expected Shared Results

The other element of bilateral relations is represented by the outcomes – the shared results. The partnerships are instrumental and organised around programmes and projects producing results. However, the survey is a baseline and programmes and projects for this grant period had not yet started at the time of the survey and interviews. Several partners had previous experience, but the survey focused primarily to capture the level of joint activities during the preparation phase and also expectations about shared results for the new grant period. People’s expectations are important and reflect commitment and potentials for future achievements.

Joint activities

The survey shows that 76% (64) have been involved in meetings in the Cooperation Committee, 75% (63) in preparatory activities for the new programme by FMO, 49% (41) in conferences and seminars, 45% (38) in study tours and visits and 25% (21) in technical cooperation and exchange between countries.

Table 6: Which types of joint activities have been undertaken as part of the programme/project preparations?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Meetings in the Cooperation Committee	76%	64
Conferences and seminars on topics of common interest	49%	41
Joint side events at international meetings	18%	15
Technical cooperation and exchange of experts	25%	21
Secondments and internships	0%	0
Capacity building and short-term training	21%	18
Study tours and visits	45%	38
Data collection and studies	23%	19
Preparation of studies and reports	8%	7
EEA Programme/project planning and preparation	75%	63
Campaigns, exhibitions and promotional material	8%	7
Other (please specify)		8
Answered question		84

It was commented that only few joint activities had taken place at this early stage and most of them related to planning and preparation, such as meetings in Coordination Committees and with Programme Donor Partners, exchange of information with the Programme Donor Partners and workshops and information meetings organised by FMO.

When asked about number of exchange visits and joint meetings, 39% (39) reports between 1 and 3 meetings, 39% (30) 4-6 meetings and 8% (6) no meetings.

¹¹ Notably, FMO hired some temporary officers to assist in the internal appraisal process towards the end of 2012, in order to reduce the backlog in the office.

Table 7: How many exchange visits/joint meetings have been arranged so far?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
None	8%	6
1-3	39%	30
4-6	39%	30
7-9	5%	4
More than 10	9%	7
Answered question		77

There has also been quite regular communication between the partners – 42% (32) reports weekly contact and 39% (30) monthly contact, while 12% (9) only a few times a year.

Table 8: How frequent is the contact with the partner using e-mail, letters, telephone, Skype etc.?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Never	0%	0
Weekly	42%	32
Monthly	39%	30
A few times a year	12%	9
NA	7%	5
Answered question		76

Usefulness and relevance

The survey included questions whether these events were considered useful (on a scale from 0 to 4) for broadening their knowledge about:

- The EEA Agreement
- The EEA and Norway Grants
- The donor states contribution and policies to solving European challenges in the beneficiary states.

55 responded that the activities had been “very useful” or “useful” for broadening their knowledge about the EEA Agreement, 56 that they had increased their knowledge about the EEA and Norway Grants and 57 that they had contributed to a better understanding of the donor states efforts to solve European challenges. Only few said they had “not been useful” at all. These are the views of representatives from both donor and beneficiary countries.

Table 9: How useful were these events in broadening your knowledge about:

Answer Options	Very useful	Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful	Don'tk now	Rating Average
The EEA Agreement	19	36	13	6	7	2,33
The EEA and Norway Grants	19	37	14	3	3	2,13
The donor states' contribution and policies to solving European challenges in the beneficiary states	24	33	19	4	4	2,18
Answered question 87						

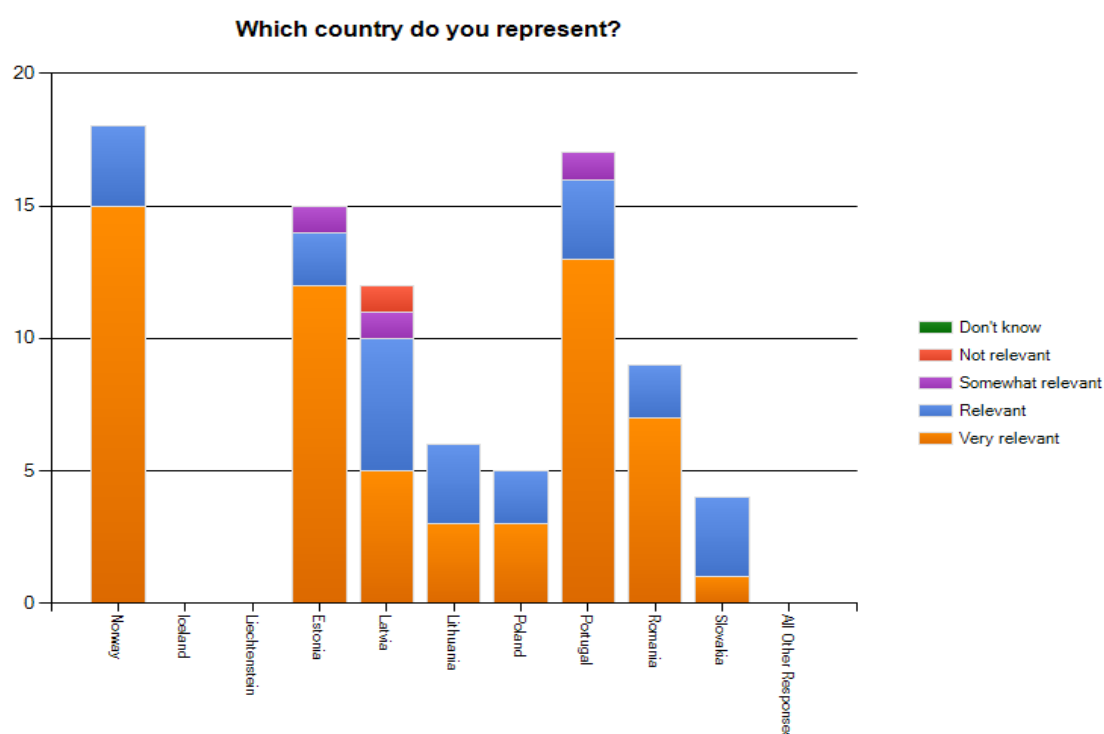
The expected relevance of the programmes and projects are perceived as high in relation to core activities of their institution and field of work – 70% (60) as “very relevant” and 26% (22) as “relevant”. Only one answered “not relevant”.

Table 10: How relevant is the programme/project in relation to the core activities of your department/field of work?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very relevant	70%	60
Relevant	26%	22
Somewhat relevant	3%	3
Not relevant	1%	1
Don't know	0%	0
Answered question		86

Looking at responses for each country, it appears that Norway as a donor country expects relevance to be higher than the beneficiary countries¹².

Figure 7: How relevant is the programme/project in relation to the core activities of your department/field of work per country?



Questions also covered expected relevance not only of the programme, but of the international partnerships as such. 93% considered the partnerships as either “very relevant” or “relevant” – in other words – expectations to what could be achieved are high.

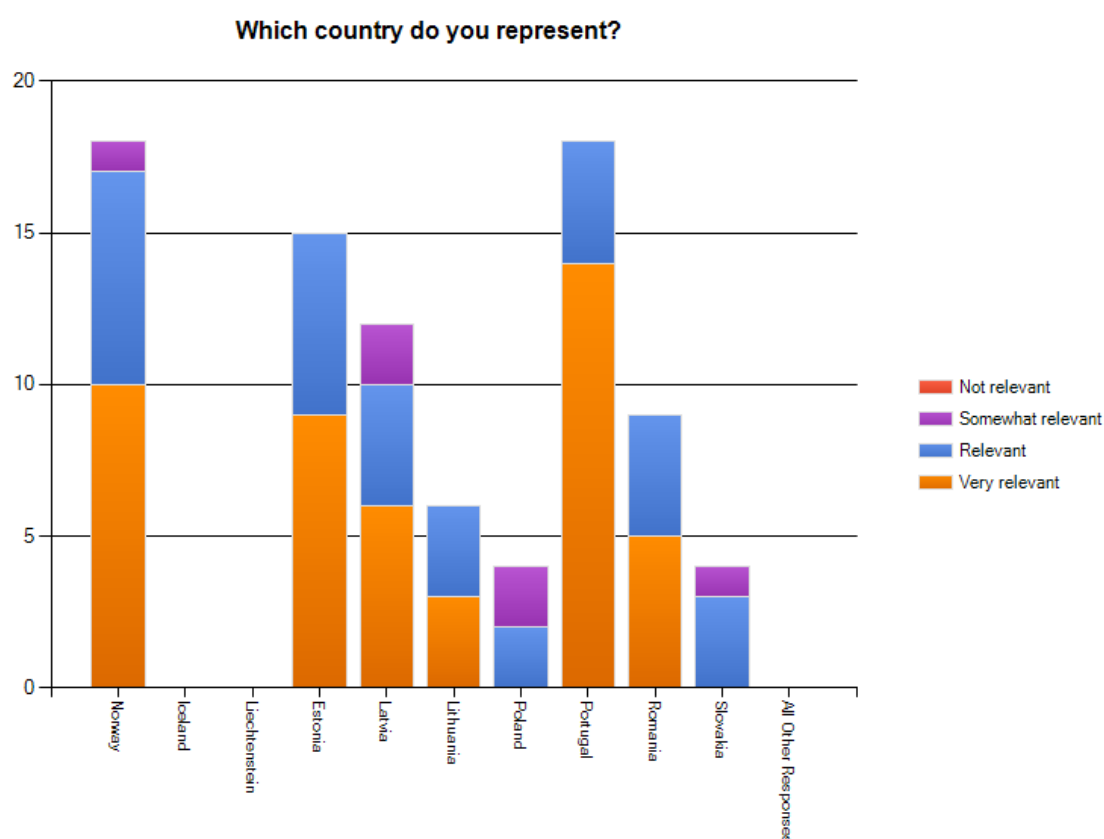
¹² The survey allows for such cross-tabulation, but it should be kept in mind that the number of respondents are small, so the findings are tentative.

Table 11: To what extent do you think that the partnership is relevant for your institution/company?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very relevant	54%	47
Relevant	39%	34
Somewhat relevant	6%	5
Not relevant	0%	0
Don't know	1%	1
Answered question		87

Looking at the responses for each country, Poland rates the value of partnership highest, followed by Norway and Estonia. However, we do not have any basis for explaining such differences.

Figure 8: Relevance of partnership for company/institution per country.



Awareness and expectations

In order to get a better understanding of the impact of the preparation and planning phase on knowledge and awareness, the survey included a question on whether the EEA and Norway Grants so far have strengthened their awareness of the donor states efforts to assist beneficiary states. 65% (38) confirmed “yes”, 14% (8) said “no” and 17% (10) partly or “somewhat”.

Table 12: Has the involvement in the programme raised your awareness of the donor states efforts to assist beneficiary states?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	65%	38
No	14%	8
Somewhat	17%	10
Don't know	3%	2
Answered question		58

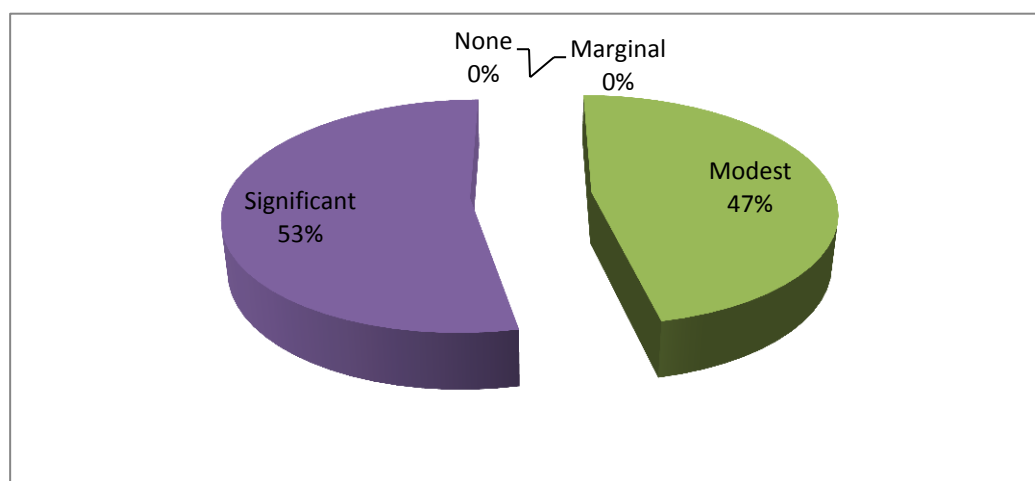
The expectation that the programmes/projects would strengthen the bilateral relations between donor and beneficiary states were also high – 63% (54) “to a large extent” and 36% (31) “to some extent”. Most respondents in the interviews also believed that the partnerships would contribute to strengthened bilateral relations as it facilitates networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology and best practices.

Table 13: To what extent do you believe that the programme/project will strengthen bilateral relations between the donor and your country?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
To a large extent	63%	54
To some extent	36%	31
Not at all	0%	0
Don't know	1%	1
Answered question		86

A majority of the respondents in the interviews expressed high expectations to what would be achieved – 53% expected results to be “significant” and 47% “modest”.

Figure 9: Expected results



The majority of PO's interviewed expressed that they expected significant results, ranging from achieving the objectives formulated in the respective programmes, as well as strengthening technical knowledge and additional funding to wider benefits from the bilateral input. This would include building a solid platform of cooperation and dialogue between countries, sharing experiences and best practices and gaining more knowledge about the sector policy in the other country.

At the DPP level, expectations were first and foremost that the beneficiary countries would achieve their objectives, but also mutual learning and capacity building. Sector competence may for instance be high in the beneficiary country, but the capacity to implement a programme/project and the administrative and managerial competence lower. Know-how can be transferred on both sides. It was clear that the areas of cooperation within the Grants were seen as relevant and that exchange of ideas was of mutual benefit. In addition, some DPPs mentioned that a positive spin-off effect has been that DPPs meet on a national arena, arranging meetings, discussing experiences and networking.

Ownership

To obtain a measure of ownership, the respondents in the survey were asked to what extent the partnerships and programmes were of mutual interest or if one external partner or donor had been driving the initiative. Such questions were asked only to those programmes with donor partners. The first question dealt with who initiated the programmes. The answers were mixed, as 26% (20) said that the initiator was a donor and 21% (16) the National Focal Point, while in the majority of the cases the initiative emerged from the two partners.

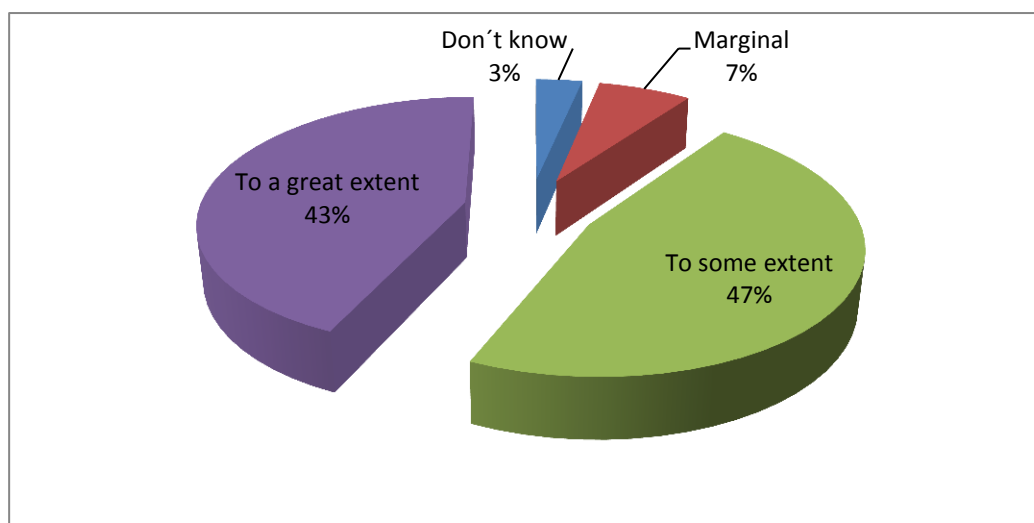
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Your institution/company	51%	39
The partner institution/company	23%	18
The National Focal Point	21%	16
Donors	26%	20
Someone else (third party)	5%	4
Don't know	13%	10
Answered question		77

When looking at the answers from donors only, 8 initiatives emerge from their partner institutions (35%) or National Focal Points (12%), a similar number refers to donors, but only 3 to their own institution. 3 are not aware who took the initiative.

Answer Options	Donors	Response Percent	Response Count
Your institution/company	3	18%	3
The partner institution/ company	6	35%	6
The National Focal Point	2	12%	2
Donors	8	47%	8
Someone else (third party)	1	6%	1
Don't know	4	23%	4
Answered question			17

The interviews of policy and decision makers also underlined that the benefits are expected to be mutual (*"This is not a donor beneficiary relationship, but an equal partnership"*). 42% expected to gain "to a great extent" and 46% "to some extent" from being involved in the EEA Norway Grants.

Figure 10: To what extent do you expect to gain as a Ministry/Department/Institution from being involved in the EEA Norway Grants?



When asked about what particular benefits they expect, the responses become more varied and complex. For the Norwegian institutions, the following were mentioned as important: International exposure and building long-term professional networks, closer cooperation with the EU system in general and specific EU countries, increased staff motivation and satisfaction (through country visits and exchange programmes), and access to new knowledge and expertise. Common cross-border challenges in areas like environment, climate and police cooperation were also mentioned as mutual benefits.

The direct financial incentives were not seen as important for several of the DDPs – except for international travel and permanent staffing of international departments/units in the Norwegian institutions. It is the non-financial incentives that make it worthwhile participating – interest and commitment from staff for international cooperation and exchange. Some DDP representatives were also convinced that they had important contributions to make often in terms of norms and values, as for instance in the perceptions and treatment of prisoners. They underlined that such changes are long-term and difficult to achieve. There are also costs for DDP in terms of additional work not included in their mandate and terms of reference. Access to large research grants is a direct benefit for the Norwegian research community.

The beneficiary countries benefit from Norwegian technical expertise, dialogue and sharing of experiences and best practices with other professionals (“peer learning”) and gaining more knowledge about the sector policy and culture in the other country. Norway seems to be an attractive partner and there is considerable interest in the “Norwegian model” and specific sector expertise. The downside is the high cost of having Norwegian partners. The expenses of Norwegian partners (salaries and travel costs) are included and visible in programme and project budgets and beneficiary countries find the costs high. On the other hand, foreign students on Norwegian scholarships are paid very well compared to other countries and international travel provides benefits.¹³

¹³ A future evaluation will have to assess to what extent expected mutual benefits have been achieved and also the effects of financial incentives.

Participation in planning

It was also interesting to know the level of participation from both partners in the preparation of the proposals. 47% (36) reports to have been participating to a great extent and 43% (33) to some extent. Only 6% (5) said that there had been no joint preparation. In the interviews, it was underscored that the fact that partners (without prior partnership) meet and prepare proposals is enriching and valuable. It also requires people to look at things differently, despite various cultural backgrounds.

Table 16: To what extent have bilateral partners actively participated in the preparation of the proposal?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
To a great extent	47%	36
To some extent	43%	33
Not at all	6%	5
Don't know	4%	3
Answered question		77

Another aspect of mutuality is to what extent the programmes and projects expect to produce shared results in which both partners will be active in planning and implementation and can claim credit for results. Only a few, namely 7% (5) state that there are, or will be, no shared results. 58% (44) answers “to some extent”, but it is difficult to know what that means precisely – in other words how “shared” the results are. 27% (21) claims that results are expected to be shared “to a large extent”, 58% (44) “to some extent” and only 7% (5) “not at all”.

Table 17: Is the programme or project expected to produce shared results (partners from two countries involved in planning and implementation and able to claim credit for achieved results)?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
To a great extent	28%	21
To some extent	58%	44
Not at all	7%	5
Don't know	8%	6
Answered question		76

2.4. Knowledge and Mutual Understanding

The next dimension is the level of knowledge and mutual understanding between partners as a result of increased cooperation and joint initiatives. People were first asked what they expect to gain from the programmes and projects. “Dialogue and sharing of experience with other professionals (peer learning)” had the highest score with 79% (66), while “Increased administrative/managerial competence” was the second and “International exposure and participation” (professional networking) third 67% (56). “Additional funding” is important both for POs and DPPs, but was rated lower with 46% (38) together with “More insights into the EEA programmes” with 45% (37).

Table 18: What do you expect to gain from the programme/project?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Additional funding	46%	38
Technical knowledge	60%	50
Increased administrative/managerial competence	70%	58
Dialogue/sharing of experience with other professionals (peer learning)	79%	66
International exposure and participation (professional networking)	67%	56
More knowledge about the other institution (structure, work programme, policies, etc.)	54%	45
Better understanding of the other country's cultural, political and socio-economic situation.	60%	50
More insights to the EEA programme (donor states contribution to solving European challenges).	45%	37
Other (please specify)		3
Answered question		83

Other additional responses from the interviews, not included in the questions were: Capacity building for supporting other activities and more Norwegian enterprises active in the beneficiary states.

Partner capacity and competence

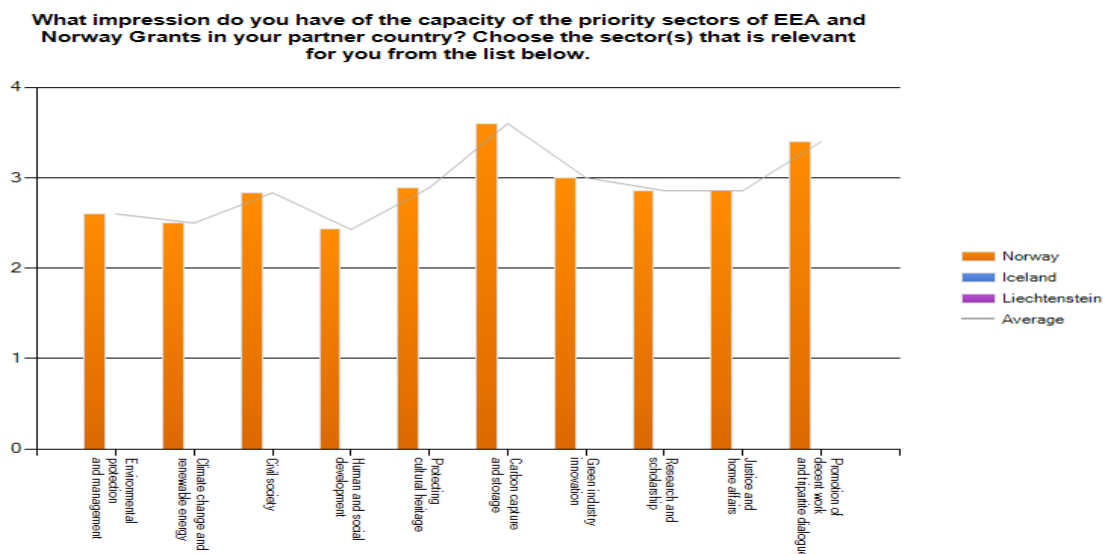
The respondents were also asked about their impression of their capacity in the priority sectors for the EEA and Norway Grants. Below are the answers from donor and beneficiary states. The “strongest” sectors were considered as “carbon capture and storage”, “Promotion of decent work and tripartite dialogue”, “Green industry innovation” and “Protection of cultural heritage”.

Table 19: What impression do you have of the capacity of the priority sectors of EEA and Norway Grants in your partner country?

Answer Options	Very good	Good	Poor	Don't know	Response Count
Environmental protection and management	21	9	1	8	39
Climate change and renewable energy	12	12	1	8	33
Civil society	12	9	0	8	29
Human and social development	19	12	0	6	37
Protecting cultural heritage	7	13	4	10	34
Carbon capture and storage	1	7	4	13	25
Green industry innovation	5	9	3	10	27
Research and scholarship	11	9	1	8	29
Justice and home affairs	13	15	2	7	37
Promotion of decent work and tripartite dialogue	6	7	2	11	26

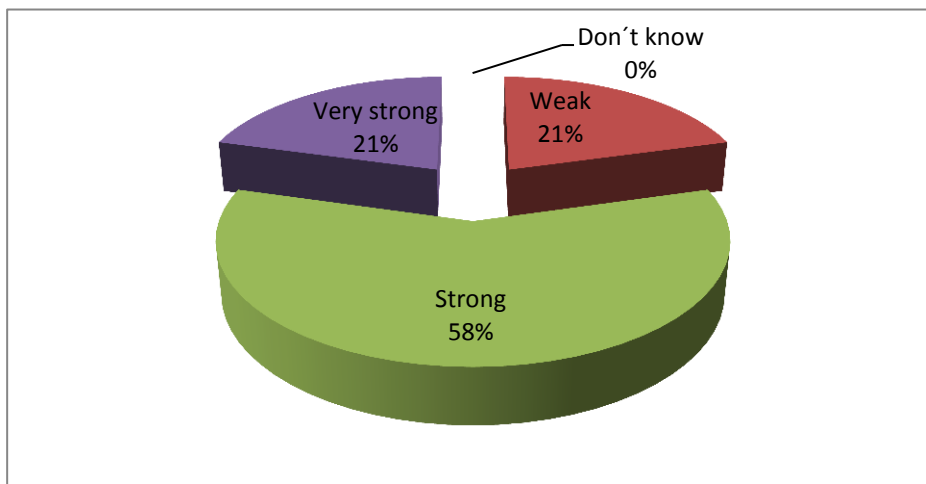
By looking at the answers from the donors only, the capacity among partners in beneficiary countries was considered high, but variable. The three highest sectors were “Carbon capture and storage”, “Promotion of decent work and tripartite dialogue” and “Green industry and innovation”.

Figure 11: Donor impressions of partner capacity



It was also emphasised by Norwegian informants that the sector competence and capacity vary significantly between countries and sectors, but these are perceptions to a large extent influenced by professional and cultural differences. The individual technical competence could be strong, but the organisational and managerial capacity weaker. 21% assessed the capacity of partners to be very strong, 58% as strong and 21% as weak.

Figure 12: What impression do you have of the capacity of the sector?



The people interviewed from beneficiary countries had a generally strong impression of the capacity of the sector in the partner country. For instance, one respondent involved in “Mainstreaming Gender Equality and promoting life balance”, emphasised the importance of having a Norwegian partner, as “Norway is recognized for its high level of gender equality and high capacity”.

On the other hand, most realise that Norway remains the donor and that there is an imbalance in human and financial resources between donor countries and beneficiary states. Some also expressed in the interviews concern whether their partners would have preferred

only receiving the financial resources and not the partnership. On the other hand, the interviewees expected to gain institutionally: 42% “to a great extent” and 46% “to some extent” from being involved in the EEA Norway grants.

Figure 13: Do you expect to gain as a Ministry/Department/Institution from being involved in the EEA Norway Grants?

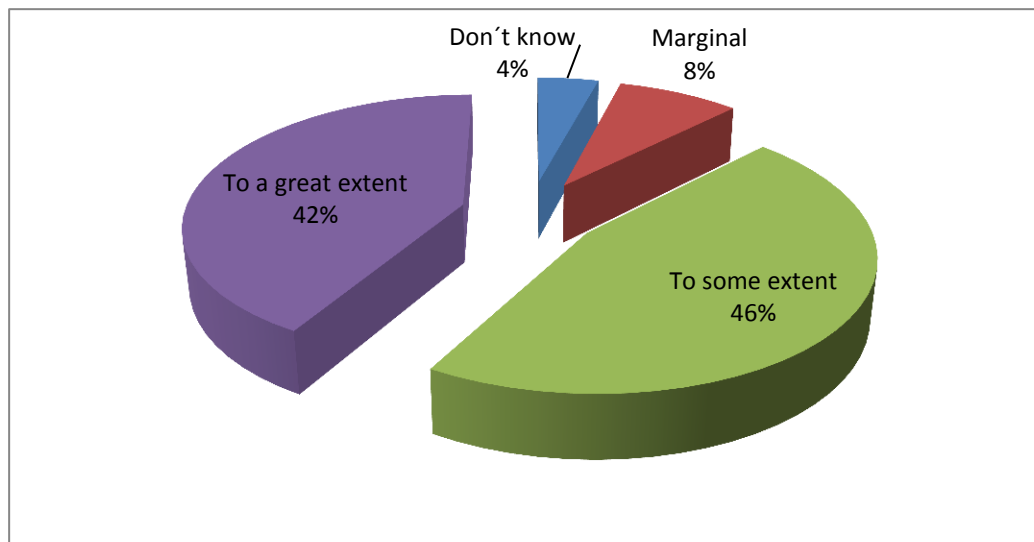


Image of donor states

Another question directed to the beneficiary states concerned their image of the donor states and for the large majority this was equal to “Norway”. Almost 80%, considered the donor states as committed to assist and share knowledge and resources and as reliable and predictable donors and partners. In the interviews, it was pointed out that the partnerships support transparency and Norwegian partners are generally seen as “more reliable”. In this sense, the level of general public trust is perceived to be higher when international organisations/donors are involved. Few respondents agreed that the three donor countries played an introverted role in Europe – being outside EU.

Table 20: What is your image/view of the donor states?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Reliable - a predictable donor and expected long term partner	78%	57
Resourceful in terms of expertise and financial resources	64%	47
Committed to assist and share knowledge and resources	79%	58
Introverted role in Europe being outside the EU	10%	7
Other (please specify)		2
Answered question		73

Change in knowledge

The survey showed that the initial level of knowledge of the partner institution (and countries) was relatively low – even if several had previous contact and shared experience. For 5% (4) it was seen as “excellent”, 19% (14) “good”, 28 (21) “fair”, but “poor” for as much as 43% (32).

Table 21: How would you rate your level of knowledge of your partner institution prior to the start of the programme/project?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Excellent	5%	4
Good	19%	14
Fair	28%	21
Poor	43%	32
Don't know	5%	4

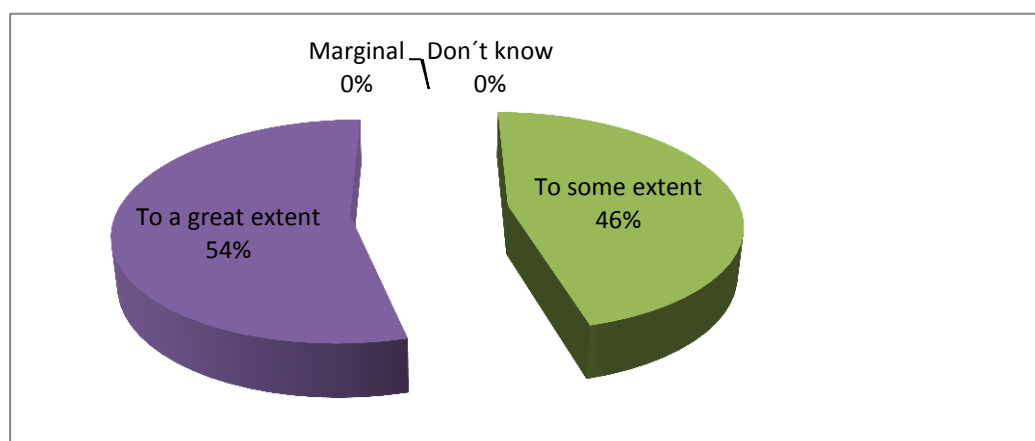
The level of knowledge had increased as a result of the planning and preparation process. In the interviews many pointed out that the possibility to meet with DPPs personally was an advantage as it clarified expectations and roles between at an early stage of the partnership. In the survey, 61% state that their knowledge of the partner institution at present was either excellent or good. Only 3% (3) say it is poor.

Table 22: How would you rate your level of knowledge of your partner institution at present?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Excellent	13%	10
Good	48%	36
Fair	32%	24
Poor	3%	2
Don't know	4%	3
Answered question		75

The interviewees expect that the partnerships established through the EEA and Norway Grants will contribute to strengthening bilateral relations: 54% “to a great extent” and 46% “to some extent”. Among PO's, over 50% believed such bilateral programmes and partnership support improved mutual understanding between countries to a great extent.

Figure 14: To what extent do you think that the international partnerships established as part of the EEA/Norway Grants will contribute to strengthened bilateral relations?



2.5. Long-term and Wider Effects

The last dimension in bilateral relations is the expected wider effects or intended or unintended long-term and catalytic effects, which go beyond the agreed programme/project objectives and might happen as a result of organisations working together.

The respondents had high expectations and ambitions on behalf of their programmes and partnerships. Altogether 98% (91) expressed “very positive” or “positive” expectations on long-term effects, no one believed that there would be any negative effects.

Table 23: What are your overall expectations about the long-term effects of the programme?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very positive	51%	42
Positive	47%	39
Both positive and negative	2%	2
Negative	0%	0
None	0%	0
<i>Answered question</i>		83

Almost half, 47% (39) is of the opinion that the partner dialogue and cooperation will be maintained beyond the participation in this programme/project (e.g. without EEA and Norway funding) and 49% (41) believe it will happen “to some extent”. Only 1% (1) states that dialogue and cooperation will come to an end.

Table 24: Do you believe the partner dialogue and cooperation will be maintained beyond the participation in this programme/project?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	47%	39
To some extent	49%	41
No	2%	2
Don't know	1%	1
<i>Answered question</i>		83

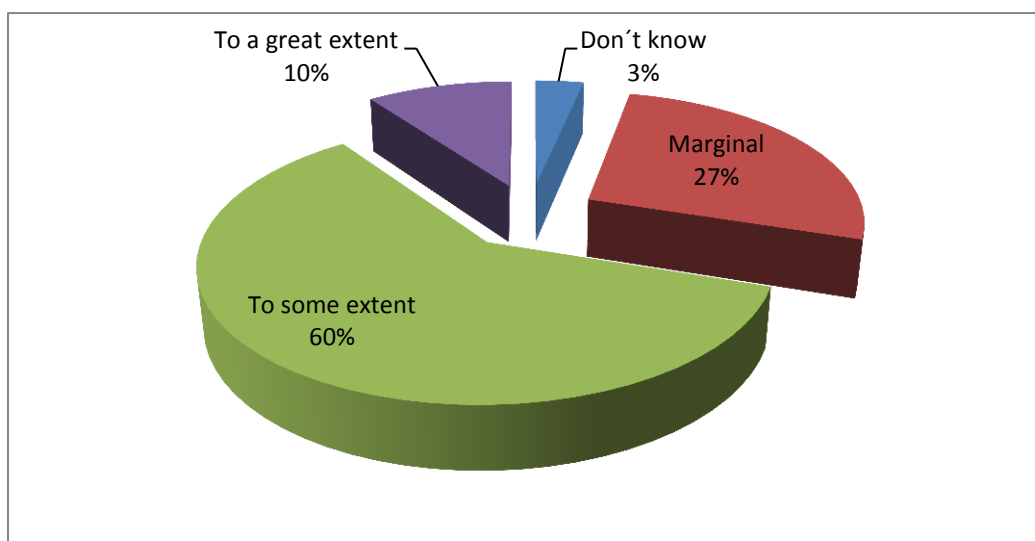
To the questions on long-term and wider effects, the respondents in the interviews were hesitant. The questions may have appeared speculative at this stage of the process. Will partner dialogue and cooperation be maintained beyond the participation in this programme? The answers were diverse. Among the PO's, there were hopes for cooperation also after financing ended. DPPs on the other hand were somewhat more sceptical. In larger environmental programmes, it was clear that external financing is essential, however, respondents still hoped that dialogue between the parties would continue after completion even if the projects didn't. People involved in bilateral research cooperation on the other hand, were more positive that cooperation would continue, without funding from the EEA and Norway grants.

More specifically, among the policy and decision makers, 10% believed that the dialogue and cooperation could be maintained beyond programme funding “to a great extent”, 60% “to some extent” and 27% possibly not. However, there are reasons for such a finding: Some, but few of the institutions would have funds to continue the cooperation on their own, so

external funding would be needed. There is a strong belief that the EEA and Norway Grants will continue beyond the current programme period and/or that other donors (such as the EU) could provide funding in the future. *“Once having established a platform of cooperation, it will be easier also to jointly apply for EU schemes as well, one of the interviewees claimed, and this is good for the research sector”.*

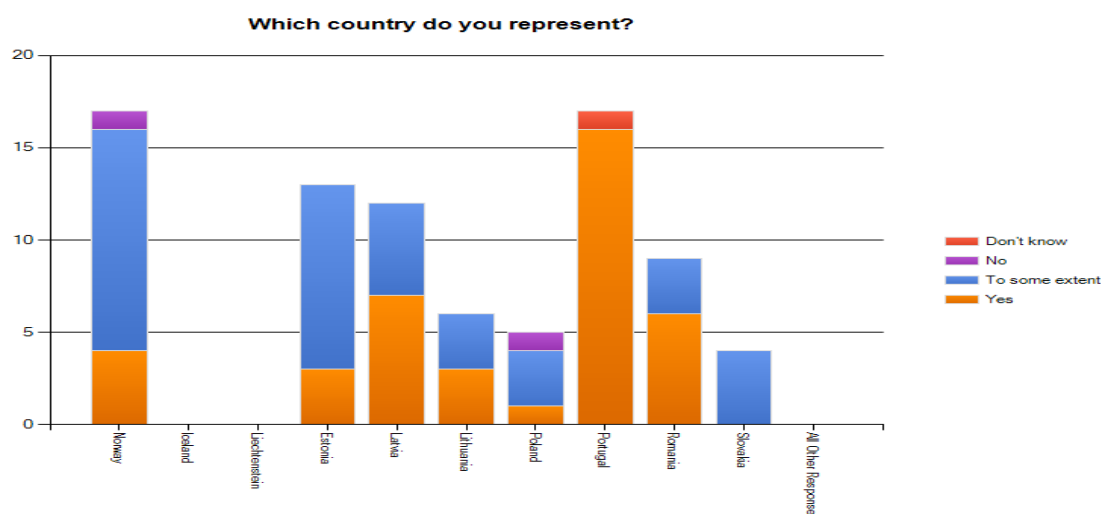
There is also a major difference between scholarships and research cooperation in terms of sustainability. Scholarships depend on continued funding, while there are several incentives for researchers to collaborate beyond a specific project. Researchers are interested and benefit from working with well-qualified researchers in other countries, so the professional cooperation may continue, but not necessarily the specific programme or project. Arguably then, there is already a tradition for shared strategies and cooperation on a more long-term basis in research.

Figure 15: Do you believe the partner dialogue and cooperation will be maintained beyond the participation in this programme (and after the external financing ends)?



Looking at the answers for each country, it seems that the beneficiary countries have a more positive view, but the donor view is also optimistic.

Figure 16: Do you believe that the partnership and dialogue will continue per country?



There is similar conviction that the programmes and projects will be sustained beyond EEA and Norway Grants period. 85% (71) answered “yes” or “to some extent”.

Table 25: Do you think that the programme/project will continue?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	49%	41
To some extent	36%	30
No	7%	6
Don't know	7%	6
Answered question		83

There is also a strong belief that the established cooperation has a potential for growth that can be expanded into new programmes and projects. 66% (55) said “yes” and 28% (23) “to some extent”.

Table 26: Do you think it could be expanded further into new programmes/projects?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	66%	55
To some extent	28%	23
No	1%	1
Don't know	5%	4
Answered question		83

The consequences of the programmes for other institutions in the respective countries are also expected to be positive. 62% (51) agree that the programmes will have such effects while 32% (26) believe “to some extent”. Only 4% (2) remain negative and do not believe there will be spin-offs for and impact on other national institutions.

Table 27: Do you think it could have effects for other institutions/companies in your country?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	62%	51
To some extent	32%	26
No	4%	3
Don't know	2%	2
<i>Answered question</i>		82

Most of the respondents also believe that the programmes could influence national policies – 31% (26) says “yes” and 47% “to some extent” while 16% (13) is sceptical.

Table 28: Do you think it could influence national policies in your country?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	31%	26
To some extent	47%	39
No	16%	13
Don't know	6%	5
<i>Answered question</i>		83

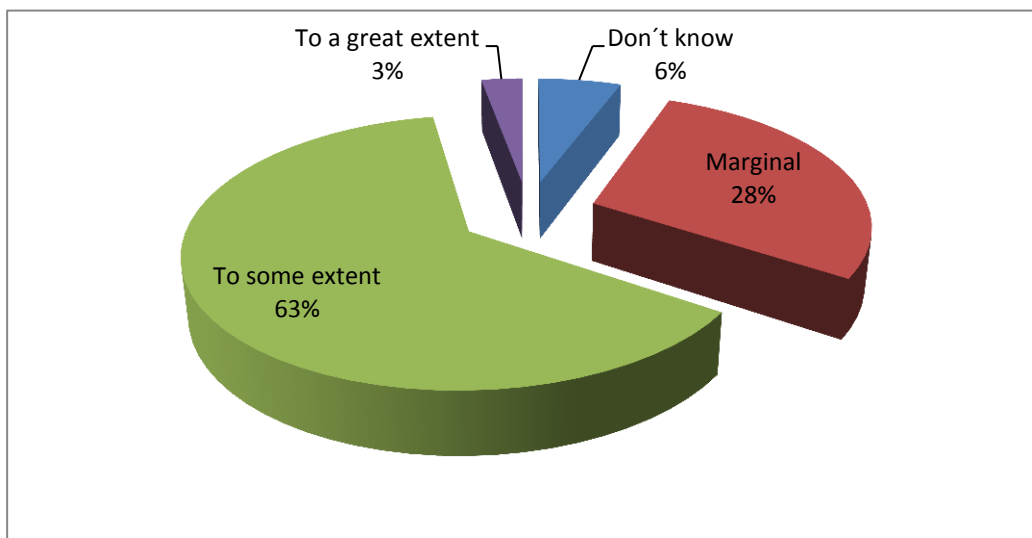
Finally, as much as 87% (55) think that the programmes could have consequences for other European countries, while quite a large number, 17% (14) admit that they do not know.

Table 29: Do you think it could have consequences for other European countries?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	24%	20
To some extent	43%	35
No	16%	13
Don't know	17%	14
<i>Answered question</i>		82

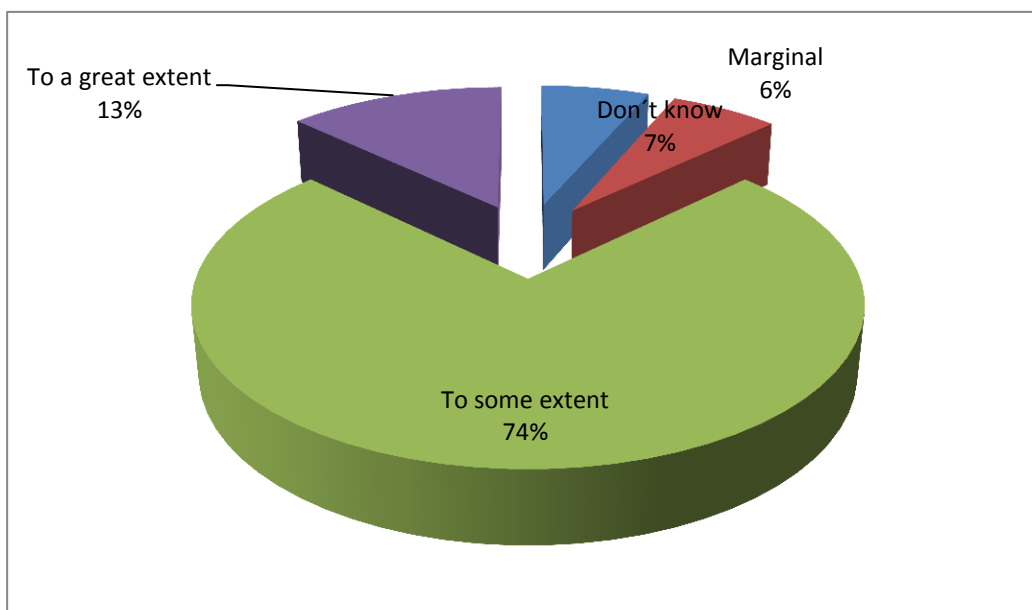
The policy and decision makers expressed more doubt about the potential changes in their own institutions. 28% believed that the influence of the programme and partnerships would be marginal, 63% that it could have some influence, while only 3% significant impact. Their more critical attitude could be influenced by a more distanced involvement to the programmes and processes or possibly a more independent perspective.

Figure 17: Do you think it could influence and make changes in your own Ministry/Department/institution?



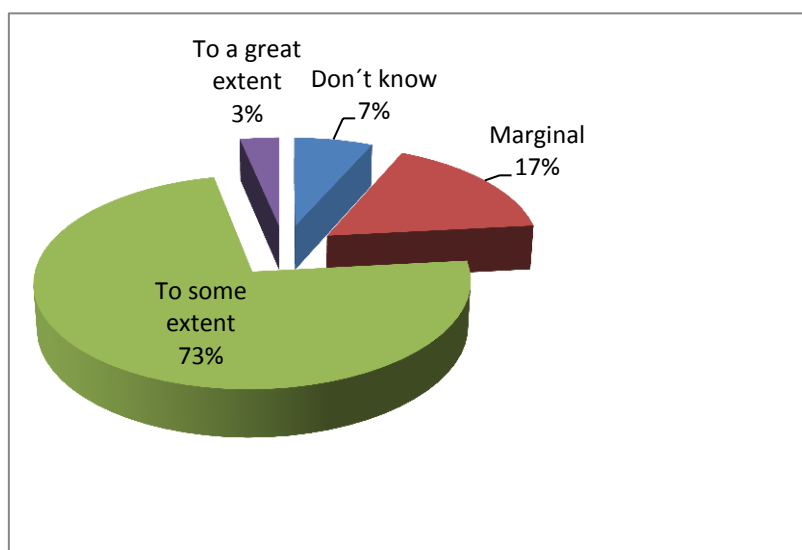
There was also uncertainty to what extent the programme could have spin-offs for other institutions in their own country. 13% was of the opinion that the programme could have such spin-offs “to a great extent”, 74% “to some extent” and 6% marginal.

Figure 14: Could the programme have positive spin-offs for other institutions or programmes in your country?



73% said that the programme could be of international importance and interest “to some extent”, 3% “to a great extent” while 27% either did not know or thought that the international importance would be marginal.

Figure 18: Do you think the programmes could be of international importance?



2.6. Assessment of Previous Experience

A few questions were also included in the survey covering the experience of those institutions that also participated in the previous 2004-2009 grant. As many as 56% (41) confirmed that they had been part of the previous grant.

Table 30: Did your institution participate under the 2004-2009 grants?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	56%	41
No	44%	32
Answered question		73

Of those responding, 45% (27) did personally participate in a programme or project as a Fund Operator 38% (13), and Project Promoter 23% (8) and Donor Project Partner 6% (2).

Table 31: Did you personally participate in any of the projects or the financial mechanism?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	45%	27
No	55%	33
Answered question		60

When cross-tabulating this question with the expected relevance of the projects to the core mandate of their institutions, it seems that those without previous experience have the most positive assessment of relevance. However, the number of respondents is small, so the figures are only tentative.

Table:32 How relevant is the programme/project in relation to the core activities of your department/field of work for those with and without experience?

Answer Options	Yes	No	Response Percent	Response Count
Very relevant	16	22	61%	38
Relevant	8	13	34%	21
Somewhat relevant	2	0	3%	2
Not relevant	1	0	2%	1
Don't know	0	0	0%	0
Answered question				62

The three major achievements were considered as:

- Shared results: sharing experience, knowledge, know-how and technology and working together for joint results 78% (25).
- Improved knowledge and mutual understanding between individuals, institutions, states and the wider public 69% (22).
- An increase in cooperation between public sector entities, private sector entities and within civil society 62% (20).

The people interviewed with previous experience with the financial mechanism arguably had more nuanced and long-term positive beliefs about the perceived results. One of the DPPs mentioned the importance of creating a platform for social dialogue, that is, the exchange of information on issues of common interest related to economic and social policy. In this context, the “Norwegian model” was perceived as a good example in the beneficiary countries, as many countries do not have experience with social dialogue.

Table 33: If yes on the above questions, what were the main achievements and lessons learnt from the bilateral cooperation?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
An increase in cooperation between public sector entities, private sector entities and within civil society.	62%	20
Shared results: sharing experience, knowledge, know-how and technology and working together for joint results.	78%	25
Improved knowledge and mutual understanding between individuals, institutions, states and the wider public.	69%	22
Wider effects such as extending cooperation beyond the projects and programmes into sector-wide initiatives, work to address common European challenges and or joint initiatives in inter-governmental organizations.	16%	5
Other (please specify)		1
Answered question		32

At the end of the survey, there were two open questions asking what had functioned particularly well and what did not work so well. The answers were as follows:

What functioned particularly well?

- “Sharing experience, knowledge, know-how and technology and working together for joint results”.
- “Cooperation within the project”.
- “Major part of processes functioned well”.

- *Mutual understanding between individuals.*
- *"The systems were less bureaucratic compared to the new period - the level of bureaucracy affects the bilateral relations as well. At the project level, I believe cooperation was effective and new relationships were created, some of which will be useful for this period also (new project applications, "old" partners from the last period involved).*
- *Improved knowledge and mutual understanding.*
- *An increase in cooperation between public sector entities and shared results: sharing experience, knowledge, know-how and technology and working together for joint results.*
- *Cooperation between public sector entities and civil society.*
- *Improved knowledge and mutual understanding.*
- *The cooperation and information supplied by the people from Norwegian Institute of Public Health (FHI) was very helpful.*
- *Cooperation with beneficiary state NFP.*
- *Private sector awareness.*
- *Good contacts established that will help further cooperation.*

What if anything did not work well?

- *Lack of infrastructures and platforms that would enable follow up small-scale processes during the project execution.*
- *Long decision making process for the project proposal approval.*
- *Much time was spent getting to understand the partners' differing bureaucracies, and the bureaucratic processes created, at times, difficult cooperation environments.*
- *Too much emphasis on outputs and procedural aspects of project implementation, instead of putting emphasis on outcomes.*
- *Huge amount of useless papers were produced which don't provide reliable information about what's actually happening in the project.*
- *Lack of interest from supervising authorities to meet face-to-face with project promoter to discuss progress/problems of project implementation.*
- *Due to the administrative deficiencies - lack of transparency, wide dispersion of funds to diverse entities, and the like - in our opinion, the above-mentioned results were not achieved in LT.*
- *As we did not have a formal mandate as a Donor Programme Partner our role as a facilitator and advisor was limited.*
- *Norwegian enterprises were looking for easy grants.*
- *We have revealed administration problems on national level and refused to continue.*

Some comments can be made regarding the variations between the responses from the people who answered the survey and those who were interviewed. A web survey is useful in capturing many responses in a short period of time, on the other hand, we experienced that respondent completion rates were lower than expected.

In depth interviews are more time consuming. Yet, the advantage with in depth interviews is that response rates are better and allows probing for more details and ensuring that the respondents are interpreting the questions the way they are intended. When comparing the survey with interview responses, the overall impression is that the majority of the respondents remain very positive, seeing the EEA and Norway Grants as a valuable tool. As much as 67% of the survey respondents expected significant results of the programme cooperation. Among the interviewed 63% believed that the programme/project would strengthen bilateral relations between the donor and their country to a great extent.

It is possible to discern some variations between the responses from the people who answered the survey and those who were interviewed. To the questions on wider effects the overall expectations about the long-term effects of the programme are arguably greater in the survey responses than in the interview responses. 51% in the survey claim they are very positive, and 47% positive, while 60 % of the interviewees believe the sustainability to be “to some extent”, and only 10% to a “great extent”. In the survey, the respondents are generally more positive regarding changes in other institutions and spin off- effects. A majority of the people interviewed believe this will happen only to a “certain extent”.

As regards expected gains, the most frequently cited in the interviews were technical knowledge and dialogue/sharing of experience with other professionals. In the survey, the highest ranked expected gains included dialogue/sharing and increased administrative/managerial competence. As mentioned earlier, there were also variations among the interviewees who had previous experience with the Grants, this group often looked at expected gains and perceived results in a more holistic way.

CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSIONS AND FOLLOW UP

The survey included a sample of respondents from the three donor states and seven beneficiary countries and four programmes in each country. The interviews covered policy makers and senior managers in all the 10 countries. A large majority of the informants represented public sector.

The EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014 will involve an unprecedented number of institutions and individuals at programme and project level in new partnerships between Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein as donor states and 15 beneficiary states. The survey was conducted too early in the grants period to capture the magnitude of cooperation (programmes and projects are still being negotiated), but the survey confirmed that an increasing number of people are involved in DPPs and POs in the new programmes. The level of knowledge about the programmes and involvement during the preparation phase was high.

The objective of strengthening bilateral cooperation was considered important and the new partnerships and programmes are increasingly being integrated and anchored within the institutions involved. The survey documented a broad range of joint activities during the preparation phase and regular communication between partners. The preparatory events were mostly considered useful for broadening their perspectives on the EEA and Norway grants and in relation to core activities of their institution. The expectation that programmes and projects will strengthen bilateral relations is also high.

It was emphasised that the partnerships and programmes would be of mutual benefit and not a donor – recipient relationship, still recognising that the funding comes from three donor states. However, the expected benefits varied considerably between countries and sectors. It is a positive sign that beneficiary countries have taken a lead in forging new partnerships together with the donors. The involvement of partners from both sides during the planning phase has also been relatively balanced. There is considerable mutual respect for the capacity and competence existing in the partner institutions.

The initial level of knowledge and awareness of the partner institution was low, but increased as a result of the planning and preparation process. The intended and unintended long-term and catalytic effects are expected to be significant amongst the partners. Almost half expect that the partner dialogue and cooperation could continue beyond the current funding, but taking into consideration differences between countries, sectors and programmes. It is also expected that the programmes could have important spin-off effects nationally and internationally.

In sum, a large international partnership programme is being established involving three donor countries and 15 beneficiary countries and several hundred individuals. There are high expectations that such programmes and partnership will contribute to strengthening bilateral relations – the level of cooperation, increased shared results, improved awareness and knowledge, and wider effects.

The baseline study has measured the “temperature” of bilateral relations at an early stage in the programmes, based on the perceptions and feedback from a broad range of stakeholders. A positive picture emerges from the survey and interviews suggesting that

there is a potential for considerable growth in institutional and individual relations across countries.

A similar survey should be repeated after two years and at the end of the grants period. This would reveal interesting information either more scaled down expectations and critical reflections after planning has moved to implementation or a steady progress in the selected performance indicators.

We suggest additional measures for documenting changes in bilateral relations:

- (a) *A monitoring and reporting system* (as part of the regular monitoring system) covering “extent of cooperation” – numbers of programme and project partners in all sectors, joint processes and events, scholarships, research projects, exchange visits and number of people involved in each of them. It is important to document the magnitude of cooperation and the increased human interface between countries.
- (b) *Case studies* from selected countries and programmes looking more systematically at levels, types, intensity, processes and effects of bilateral cooperation. Only such studies will be able to document the complexities and nuances, the strengths and weakness of programmes. They will also be required for learning about what works and what does not.
- (c) Finally, researchers could be encouraged to carry out focused and selected *impact studies* of changing knowledge, awareness and attitudes from being involved in exchange programmes, international scholarships, etc.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Baseline study on Bilateral Relations for the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO)

1 INTRODUCTION

This document relates to services procured by the Financial Mechanisms Office (FMO) for the preparation of a baseline study for the EEA and Norway Grants 2009-14.

1.1 Contracting authority

The Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) is the contracting authority. FMO is part of the EFTA Secretariat located in Brussels, Belgium. The office is responsible for the administration of the EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014.

2. BACKGROUND

The EEA/Norway Grants¹⁴ represent the contribution of the three EEA/EFTA¹⁵ states (“donor states”) towards reducing the social and economic disparities in the European Economic Area. Over a five-year period (2004-2009) grant assistance was given to 15 beneficiary states in Central and Southern Europe (“beneficiary states”). The grants also aim to strengthen the political, social and economic ties between the donor and the beneficiary states. Some funding will last until April 2012.

In the period 2009-14, €988.5 million in financial support is provided through the EEA Grants, jointly financed by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, to 15 beneficiary states in Central and Southern Europe. The Norway Grants, funded solely by Norway, makes available an additional €800 million to the 12 newest EU member states.

These mechanisms have two overall objectives: The first is to contribute to the reductions of social and economic disparities within the EEA and the second one is to strengthen bilateral relations between donor and the beneficiary states.

In the context of the EEA and Norway Grants, the operational definition of “strengthened bilateral relations” is: ***Cooperation, joint results, and increased mutual knowledge and understanding between donor and beneficiary states as a function of the EEA and Norway Grants.***

The Grants will finance programmes to be developed by entities in the beneficiary states (“Programme Operators”), in line with the principles of result-based management.

Some programmes will be developed and implemented in cooperation with donor state public agencies acting as strategic advisors (“Donor Programme Partners”). All programmes shall facilitate strengthened bilateral relations and partnership projects with donor state entities and earmark funding for networking and exchange of experience with donor state entities.

Standard expected outcomes and indicators to measure whether the Grants are contributing to the two overall objectives have been developed and an overview has been created on how the different level information will be collected and reported on. The result based management framework is however more developed for the objective of reduced of social and economic disparities than for the objective of strengthened bilateral relations, where no expected outcomes have been defined.

The Programme Operators will on the other hand be asked to identify an output and select at least one indicator related to the objective of strengthened bilateral relations.

¹⁴ The EEA Financial Mechanism (2004-2009) and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism (2004-2009).

¹⁵ Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway

A number of quantitative and qualitative indicators have been developed and Programme Operators will report on these in annual and strategic reports. In addition, FMO will commission external studies to capture the complexity of the objective of strengthened bilateral relations. These studies will be undertaken through surveys and interviews.

A key challenge, however, is the inadequate information about the situation now when it comes to bilateral relations and how to assess the quality and value added of the relations built within the EEA and Norway Grants.

The consultant should develop a tool (survey/questionnaire) and undertake a baseline study to provide baseline information for further studies (mid-term and end review). The questions should relate to the indicators that have been developed and should capture knowledge and attitudes.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

Foreseen tasks are:

1. Inception meeting with team at FMO in Brussels
 - Estimated time: 1-2 days
2. Assess existing documents, including the Bilateral Guideline
 - Estimated time: 2-3 days
3. Prepare a draft list of questions for the online survey
 - Estimated time: 4-5 days
4. Finalise list of question based on FMO/donor comments
 - Estimated time: 1-2 days
5. Pilot online survey among a few different groups of stakeholders
 - Estimated time: 8-10 days
6. Finalise online survey based on feed-back from stakeholders
 - Estimated time: 2-4 days
7. Launch online survey in 7 countries (4 programmes in each)
 - All sectors should be covered
 - Both EEA and Norway grants
 - Both programmes with and without a Donor Programme Partner (DPPS)
 - Criteria's for selection of the 28 programmes will be developed in cooperation with the FMO and donors
 - Estimated time: 2-4 days
8. Prepare and implement follow up interview questions for key stakeholders
 - Decision makers in the donor and partner states should be interviewed over the phone for more in-depth information
 - Estimated time: 10 days
9. Analyse responses from survey and from interviews to provide baseline data on the bilateral indicators and prepare draft and final report
 - Estimated time: 10 days

4. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

1. A visit to Brussels to attend inception meeting
2. A methodology and set of draft questions for the online survey
3. A set of finalised questions for the online survey
4. An online survey system where all our stakeholders can participate
5. A set of draft follow-up questions for the interview guide
6. A final set of questions for the interviews
7. Interviews with key stakeholders in 7 countries (covering 28 programmes)
8. A draft report that includes the data, an analysis of the situation now when it comes to bilateral relations and data for the selected indicators
9. A final report and ownership of online database

It is estimated that the team will spend between 60-70 person days on the assignment spread over 6 months. Offer must provide a reasonable balance between senior and junior consultants to ensure the quality required.

The baseline study will be followed by a mid-term review (in 2014) and an end review (in 2016) to measure progress on the relevant indicators. Separate contracts will be developed for these foreseen tasks.

5. TEAM

All members of the team are expected to have relevant academic qualifications and experience with surveys.

Communication and questions

The contact person is the recipient for all communications to the FMO.

Contact person

Name: Trine Eriksen; e-mail ter@efta.int; office phone +32 2 211 18 15

Language

All communication between the tenderer and the FMO shall be in English. All tender documents must be written in English.

Your response should be sent in electronic form to ter@efta.int by noon, 4 June 2012. For more information on the grants: <http://www.eeagrants.org/id/2981.0>

Annex 2: People interviewed

Agnieszka Ratajczak, Head of Unit for Bilateral Programmes and EUREKA Department of Management of Research Programmes, National Centre for Research and Development, Poland

Aina Holst, Directorate for Natural Resources Management, Norway

Algirdas Klimavičius, EU Assistance Department - Ministry of Environment, Lithuania

Andre Kammerud, Climate and Pollution Agency, Norway

Anne Kivimae, Head of Youth Affairs Department, Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, Estonia

Dominik Marxer, Counsellor, Mission of Liechtenstein to the EU

Elita Cakule, Head of International Projects Department, KS, Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, Norway

Harald Føsker, Ministry of Justice, Norway

Janne Stang Dahl, Arts Council Norway

Jaroslav Mojzis, Director of EEA and Norway Grants management and implementation department at the Government office of the Slovak Republic (National Focal Point/Programme Operator), Slovakia

Jesper W. Simonsen, Norwegian Research Council, Norway

Johan Vetlesen, Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, Norway

Jovita Seiliute, Chief Specialist Regional Policy Department, Lithuania

Käthlin Sander, Ministry of Social Affairs, Estonia

Kristina Kezutyte, EU Assistance Department - Ministry of Environment, Lithuania

Kristjan Andri Stefansson, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Iceland

Liina Kanter, Ministry of Social Affairs, Estonia

Liliana Vasilescu, Executive Director of the Romanian Social Development Fund, Romania

Lillian Solheim, Norwegian Helsinki Committee, Norway

Magne Ødelien, Innovation Norway, Norway

Malgorzata Strózyk-Kaczynska, Deputy Director, Department for EU Funds, Ministry of Regional Development, Poland

Maria Matilde Crespo Fontes da Cunha, Head PO PA6 EEA Grants, Electricity of the Azores (EDA), Portugal

Marianne Haaland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

Maya Teodoroiu, State Secretary within the Romanian Ministry of Justice, in charge of European and International Affairs

Morthen Berthelsen Johnsen, Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate, Norway

Nina Horg Thoresen, Ministry of Health and Care Services, Norway

Øydis Monsen, Ministry of Health and Care Services, Norway

Paul Serbanescu, Head of Programmes Strategies Division, Environment Fund Administration, Romania

Paulo Vasconcelos, Central Administration of Health (ACSS), Portugal

Per Kristen Brekke, Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection, Norway

Solfrid Foss, Ministry of Environment, Norway

Steinar Hagen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

Thea Bull Skarstein, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, Norway

Torstein Lindstad, Ministry of Education and Research, Norway

Vibeke Greni, Ministry of Trade and Energy, Norway

Vidar Helgason, Senior Adviser, Center for Research, Iceland

Vidar Pedersen, Centre for International Cooperation in Education, Norway

Willy Nettet, Norwegian Courts Administration, Norway

Annex 3: Survey bilateral relations

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of survey

The purpose of the survey is to elicit information about the status of bilateral relations in a selected group of programme countries in order measure changes in over time. The questions are based on the expected outcomes of bilateral cooperation (level of cooperation, shared results, knowledge and wider effect), as stated in the EEA and Norway Grants Guidelines for strengthened bilateral relations, 2009-2014.

Confidentiality: The survey is strictly confidential.

It is important to answer as many questions as possible. However, some of the questions may not be relevant for your work and thus not possible for you to answer. If so, please disregard and move to the next question.

The last part of the questionnaire (F) is only relevant for those with experience from the previous 2004-2009 grants.

(A) BACKGROUND

1. Which programme/project are you involved in?
 - a) Programme:
 - b) Project:
 - c) N/A

2. Do you have a programme/project partner in a donor country / beneficiary state?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

3. Gender:
 - a) Male
 - b) Female

4. To what extent are you involved in the programme?
 - a) Full time
 - b) Part time

5. Which country do you represent?
 - a) Norway
 - b) Iceland
 - c) Liechtenstein
 - d) Estonia

- e) Latvia
- f) Lithuania
- g) Poland
- h) Portugal
- i) Romania
- j) Slovakia
- k) Czech Republic
- l) Spain

6. Which sector do you represent:

- a) Public sector
- b) Private sector
- c) Civil society

7. What is your role in the EEA programme/project under the 2009-14 grants

- a) Programme Operator
- b) Donor Programme Partner (DPP)
- c) Other member of the Cooperation Committee
- d) Project Promoter
- e) Donor Project Partner
- f) Other, please specify

8. What is your position in your institution/company?

- a) Senior manager
- b) Middle level manager
- c) Lead expert/programme staff
- d) Other please specify:

(B) EXTENT OF COOPERATION- To be answered by DPP's:

9. How would you rate the dialogue and coordination with the Programme Operator in the preparation/proposal phase?

- a) Excellent
- b) Good
- c) Fair
- d) Poor
- e) Don't know

10. How would you rate the dialogue and coordination with FMO in the preparation/proposal phase?
- a) Excellent
 - b) Good
 - c) Fair
 - d) Poor
 - e) Don't know
11. Has the involvement in the programme raised your awareness of the donor states efforts to assist beneficiary states?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Somewhat
 - d) Don't know

EXTENT OF COOPERATION- To be answered by all:

12. How many people in your institution/company are involved full time in the programme/project?
- a) 1
 - b) 2-3
 - c) 4-10
 - d) More than 10
13. How many people in your institution/company are involved part time?
- a) 1
 - b) 2-3
 - c) 4-10
 - d) More than 10
14. How many staff (full and part time combined) are women?
- e) 0
 - f) 1-2
 - g) 3-4
 - h) More than 4

(C) EXPECTED SHARED RESULTS- All programmes/projects:

15. Which types of joint activities have been undertaken as part of the programme/project preparations?

- a) Meetings in the Cooperation Committee
- b) Conferences and seminars on topics of common interest
- c) Joint side events at international meetings
- d) Technical cooperation and exchange of experts
- e) Secondments and internships
- f) Capacity building and short-term training
- g) Study tours and visits
- h) Data collection and studies
- i) Preparation of studies and reports
- j) EEA Programme/project planning and preparation
- k) Campaigns, exhibitions and promotional material
- l) Others, please specify

16. How useful were these events in broadening your knowledge about:

- a) The EEA Agreement
 - b) The EEA and Norway Grants
 - c) The donor states' contribution and policies to solving European challenges in the beneficiary states
- (On a scale from 0 to 4)

17. How relevant is the programme/project in relation to the core activities of your department/field of work?
(On a scale 0 to 4)

18. To what extent do you think that the partnership is relevant for your institution/company?
(On a scale from 0 to 4)

19. To what extent do you believe that the programme/project will strengthen bilateral relations between the donor and your country?

- a) To a large extent
- b) To some extent
- c) Not at all
- d) Don't know

Programmes/projects with donor partners

20. Who expressed interest in initiating the programme/project?

- a) Your institution/company
- b) The partner institution/company

- c) The National Focal Point
- d) Donors
- e) Someone else (third party)
- f) Don't know

21. To what extent have bilateral partners actively participated in the preparation of the proposal?

(On a scale from 0 to 4)

22. Is the programme or project expected to produce shared results (partners from two countries involved in planning and implementation and able to claim credit for achieved results)?

(On a scale from 0 to 4)

23. How many exchange visits/joint meetings have been arranged so far?

- a) None
- b) 1-3
- c) 4-6
- d) 7-9
- e) More than 10

24. Where have the visits/meetings taken place?

- a) In your country
- b) In the donor country
- c) Somewhere else

25. How frequent is the contact with the donor partner using e-mail, letters, telephone, Skype etc.?

- a) Never
- b) Weekly
- c) Monthly
- d) A few times a year
- e) NA

(D) KNOWLEDGE AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING - All programmes/projects:

26. What do you expect to gain from the programme/project (on a scale from 0 to 4):

- a) Additional funding
- b) Technical knowledge
- c) Increased administrative/managerial competence
- d) Dialogue/sharing of experience with other professionals (peer learning)
- e) International exposure and participation (professional networking)
- f) More knowledge about the other institution (structure, work programme, policies, etc.)
- g) Better understanding of the other country's cultural, political and socio-economic situation.

- h) More insights to the EEA programme (donor states contribution to solving European challenges).
- i) Other, please specify

27. What impression do you have of the capacity of the priority sectors of EEA and Norway Grants in your partner country? Choose the sector(s) that is relevant for you from the list below.

- a) Environmental protection and management
- b) Climate change and renewable energy
- c) Civil society
- d) Human and social development
- e) Protecting cultural heritage
- f) Carbon capture and storage
- g) Green industry innovation
- h) Research and scholarship
- i) Justice and home affairs
- j) Promotion of decent work and tripartite dialogue

28. What is your image/view of the donor states?

- a) Reliable - a predictable donor and expected long term partner
- b) Resourceful in terms of expertise and financial resources
- c) Committed to assist and share knowledge and resources
- d) Introverted role in Europe being outside the EU
- e) Other, please specify

Programmes/projects with a donor partner

29. How would you rate your level of knowledge of your partner institution prior to the start of the programme/project?
(On a scale from 0 to 4)

30. How would you rate your level of knowledge of your partner institution at present?
(On a scale from 0 to 4)

(E) LONG TERM AND WIDER EFFECTS

31. What are your overall expectations about the long-term effects of the programme/project?

- a) Very positive
- b) Positive
- c) Both positive and negative
- d) Negative
- e) None

32. Do you believe the partner dialogue and cooperation will be maintained beyond the participation in this programme/project?
- a) Yes
 - b) To some extent
 - c) No
 - d) Don't know
33. Do you think it could be expanded further into new programmes/projects?
- a) Yes
 - b) To some extent
 - c) No
 - d) Don't know
34. Do you think that the programme/project will continue?
- a) Yes
 - b) To some extent
 - c) No
 - d) Don't know
35. Do you think it could have effects for other institutions/companies in your country?
- a) Yes
 - b) To some extent
 - c) No
 - d) Don't know
36. Do you think it could influence national policies in your country?
- a) Yes
 - b) To some extent
 - c) No
 - d) Don't know
37. Do you think it could have consequences for other European countries?
- a) Yes
 - b) To some extent
 - c) No
 - d) Don't know

(F) ASSESSMENT OF PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

(For those with experience from the previous 2004-2009 grants.)

38. Did your institution participate under the 2004-2009 grants?

- a) Yes
- b) No

39. Did you personally participate in any of the projects or the financial mechanism?

- a) Yes
- b) No

40. What was your role in the block grant/project?

- a) Fund Operator
- b) Project Promoter
- c) Donor Project Partner
- d) Other, please specify

41. If yes on the above questions, what were the main achievements and lessons learnt from the bilateral cooperation?

- a) An increase in cooperation between public sector entities, private sector entities and within civil society.
- b) Shared results: Sharing experience, knowledge, know-how and technology and working together for joint results.
- c) Improved knowledge and mutual understanding between individuals, institutions, states and the wider public.
- d) Wider effects such as extending cooperation beyond the projects and programmes into sector-wide initiatives, work to address common European challenges and or joint initiatives in inter-governmental organizations.
- e) Other, please specify.

42. What, (of the above) in your opinion functioned particularly well?

43. What if anything did not work well?

Annex 4: Questions for interviews

GENERIC QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH POLICY MAKERS AND SENIOR MANAGERS

A. Background

1. Country:
2. Name and position:
3. Name of Ministry/Department/Institution:

B. Extent of cooperation (depth and qualitative aspects)

4. How well do you know the programmes supported by the EEA Norway Grants through (refer to the relevant PO or DDP)?
5. Have you been involved in any meetings, conferences, visits or other events during the preparatory phase for the new programme period?
6. The EEA and Norway Grants have two overall objectives – reduce social and economic disparities and strengthen bilateral relations. From your perspective, what is the importance and relevance of the second objective for your Ministry/Department/Institution?
7. Do you have a policy for such international bilateral cooperation? If so – what does it say?
8. To what extent is the international (bilateral) cooperation an integrated part of your Ministry/Department/Institution (or is it limited to those staff/units directly involved in the programme)?

C. Expected results

9. What results do you expect from the suggested programme of cooperation?
10. To what extent do you think that the international partnerships established as part of the EEA and Norway Grants will contribute to strengthened bilateral relations?
11. What do you expect to gain as a Ministry/Department/Institution from being involved in the EEA Norway Grants?
 - Additional funding
 - Technical knowledge
 - Increased administrative/managerial competence
 - Dialogue/sharing of experience with other professionals
 - International exposure and participation
 - More knowledge about the sector policy in the other country
 - Better understanding of the other country's cultural, political and socio-economic situation.
 - Better understanding of the EEA Norway Grants

D. Knowledge and mutual understanding

12. How well informed are you about other programmes supported by the EEA Norway Grants?
13. To what extent can such bilateral programmes and partnerships support improved mutual understanding between two countries?
14. What impression do you have of the capacity of the sector..... (refer to relevant sector) in the partner country (ies)?
15. What is your image of the donor/beneficiary country? (Don't like this question – too broad and the answer is too much given....)

E. Long-term and wider effects

16. Do you believe the partner dialogue and cooperation will be maintained beyond the participation in this programme (and after the external financing ends)?
17. Do you think it could influence and make changes in your own Ministry/Department/institution? What changes?
18. Could the programme have positive spin-offs for other institutions or programmes in your country? What sort of spin-offs?
19. Do you think the programmes could be of international importance?
20. Any other comments or questions to us?

Annex 5: References

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