



Mid-term evaluation of the support to strengthened bilateral relations under the EEA and Norway Grants

Final report



June 2016

EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION, FINANCIAL MECHANISM OFFICE (FMO)

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Abstract

Through the EEA Grants and Norway Grants, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein aim to reduce economic and social disparities and strengthen cooperation with 16 countries in Central and Southern Europe. A mid-term evaluation of the current EEA and Norway Grants 2009-14 was conducted by COWI during the second half of 2015 and early 2016 at the request of the Financial Mechanism Office, EEA and Norway Grants. The aim of the mid-term evaluation is to assess to what extent and in which way the EEA and Norway Grants contribute towards strengthening bilateral relations between donor and beneficiary states. The evaluation covers four out of the ten priority sectors of the EEA and Norway Grants and five of the 16 beneficiary countries (Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Slovakia), representing 19.4% of the allocated total of EUR 1.8 billion.

The mid-term evaluation found that the EEA and Norway Grants are successful in strengthening bilateral relations at programme and project level through a number of dedicated tools. Most of the tools directly support the programmes and projects in setting up bilateral partnerships, developing shared results, mutual knowledge and understanding and ensuring the wider effects of the work. Bilateral funds, Donor Programme Partners (DDPs) and donor project partners all support this goal to a large extent. Yet, stakeholders in all beneficiary countries articulated a need for additional DPPs and donor project partners. Together with administrative procedure, the lack of partners is a main barrier in all programmes and projects. Beneficiary states employ very different implementation systems, and administrative procedures are considered complicated, lengthy and time consuming. Finally, the evaluation found that the effect of the EEA and Norway Grants may have been somewhat influenced by a late programme start resulting in overly tight time frames for project planning and implementation.

List of abbreviations

Acronym	Definition
APR	Annual Programme Reports
CoE	Council of Europe
DoRIS	Documentation, Reporting and Information System from the EEA and Norway Grants
Dpp	Donor project partner
DPP	Donor Programme Partner
EE	Estonia
EEA	European Economic Area
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
FMO	Financial mechanism office
LV	Latvia
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFP	National Focal Point
PA	Programme Area
PL	Poland
PO	Programme Operator
PP	Project Promoter
PS	Priority Sector
RO	Romania
SK	Slovakia
ToR	Terms of reference

Executive summary

Since 1994, when the European Economic Area (EEA) Agreement entered into force, the European Commission and three of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) states (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) have agreed on three five-year funding schemes. Through the EEA Grants and the Norway Grants, the latter of which is financed solely by Norway, the three countries aim to reduce economic and social disparities and strengthen bilateral cooperation with 16 beneficiary countries in Central and Southern Europe.

The present report constitutes the mid-term evaluation of the EEA and Norway Grants 2009-14. It was conducted by COWI in the second half of 2015 and early 2016 at the request of the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO). The aim of the mid-term evaluation is to assess to what extent and in which way the EEA and Norway Grants contribute to strengthening bilateral relations between donor and beneficiary states. The evaluation is both summative and formative inasmuch as it assesses achievements so far and documents important lessons learnt, in order to improve effects and sustain bilateral relations.

Evaluation scope

The current EEA and Norway Grants 2009-14 is the first mechanism to include as one of two overall objectives the strengthening of bilateral relations between Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, on the one hand, and the 16 beneficiary states, on the other hand. The focus of this evaluation is specifically on these *bilateral* relations defined as: "*Cooperation, joint results, and increased mutual knowledge and understanding between donor and beneficiary states as a function of the EEA and Norway Grants.*"¹ The evaluation addresses especially the *effectiveness* and the *efficiency* with which the EEA and Norway Grants strengthen bilateral relations.

The evaluation covers four out of ten priority sectors of the EEA and Norway Grants, namely: '*Protecting cultural heritage*', '*Research and scholarships*', capacity building in '*Human and social development*' and '*Justice and home affairs*'. These sectors account for just over 50% of the allocated total of EUR 1.8 billion from the EEA and Norway grants for the period 2009-14. Furthermore, the evaluation focuses on five of the 16 beneficiary countries: Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. The five countries were selected for this evaluation by the FMO, and together they account for approximately EUR 1 billion or 56% of the total funding under the EEA and Norway Grants. As a result, the mid-term evaluation takes

¹ Guideline for strengthened bilateral relations, FMO 29 March 2012

stock of a total of 19.4% of the allocated total under the EEA and Norway Grants 2009-14.

Data collection	The mid-term evaluation is based on findings from a desk review, which included analysis of quantitative data from the DoRIS database, 96 stakeholder interviews and a survey involving 450 respondents from all sectors in the five focus countries, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. For each of the five focus countries, in-depth analyses have been made to deliver country-specific findings and case studies for the evaluation.
Main conclusions:	The main conclusions derived from the analyses are presented below. These are followed by fourteen concrete recommendations and the rationale behind them.
No common understanding of bilateral objectives	The evaluation revealed that stakeholders at programme or project level have no mutual understanding of what is meant by bilateral objectives and thus the overall goals. In a few programmes, bilateral results are formulated, but in general specific, bilateral objectives have not been formulated at programme level. However, this does not mean that there is a lack of understanding of the bilateral objectives, but rather that the implicitness of the existing understanding can lead to unfocused work and potential inconsistencies across stakeholders.
Use of and achievement on indicators	The evaluation found that the bilateral indicators have limited relevance in the context of measuring project activities and outputs. This is reflected in the very limited reporting on the bilateral indicators; a mere 20% of programmes have reported on the bilateral indicators (apart from the obligatory reporting). One reason for the non-use of bilateral indicators is lack of awareness of the bilateral indicators in some programmes and projects. Another reason is that some project promoters find that the indicators are too standardised (designed to fit all programme types/areas) to measure progress on activities in their projects.
Conclusions on effectiveness:	The key evaluation topic of effectiveness is addressed using four different dimensions that reflect the grouping of specific evaluation questions: 1) extent of cooperation, 2) knowledge and understanding, 3) wider effects, and 4) shared results.
Extent of cooperation	Looking at the extent of cooperation, the evaluation found that many programmes and projects have partners, i.e. donor programme partners (DPPs) and donor project partners, and that both groups are highly appreciated by stakeholders. Donor programme partners have been attached to 65% of the programmes and donor project partners to 20-79% of the projects in the focus countries, the average being 28%. Despite this, some project promoters indicated that eligible donor project partners were in scarce supply. Stakeholders at both programme and project level in the five focus countries highlighted this as a key constraint to enhancing cooperation (and thus further strengthen bilateral relations). Likewise, DPPs are in high demand. It is the understanding that there is an interest in increasing the number of eligible DPPs.
Knowledge and understanding	The effectiveness of the EEA and Norway Grants is also reflected in the fact that both programme and project level stakeholders from both beneficiary and donor states confirm that they have improved their knowledge and understanding of the

partners' culture and socio-economic environment by being exposed to different practices and 'other ways of doing things'. Programmes and projects specifically contribute to awareness raising, changed attitudes and trust building between cooperating organisations. At programme level, beneficiary state policy makers' increased awareness of the Grants is a particularly important outcome of the introduction of DPPs. The improved awareness and the enhanced cooperation between the DPPs and Programme Operators (POs) have been manifested in strategic cooperation, which not only focuses on project-specific outcomes.

Wider effects

Continuous cooperation and development of international and EU networks are examples of the significant, wider effects derived from the implementation of the research programmes. The EEA and Norway Grants support the processes by being an important contributor that often facilitates the first international cooperation project for both parties. All other sectors express a similar wish for enhancing cooperation, but they all depend on the availability of additional funding. The two sectors '*Protecting cultural heritage*' and '*Scholarships*' have seen the best results in terms of establishing networks or gaining access to networks; yet the evaluation shows that such cooperation does not always continue when the external funding is no longer available. These sectors/areas do not have access to the same kind of international funding as for example research cooperation (Horizon). Nonetheless, several strategic stakeholders state that both programmes and projects open doors at the political level, with strategic projects potentially having as large an impact as a full programme.

Shared results

The projects supported by the Grants result in shared or common results, such as joint studies and development of common methodologies. Stakeholders at both programme and project level confirm the positive experience of working towards common results in a programme or a project. Such mutual experiences have a higher effect on bilateral relations than more traditional ways of providing external support, e.g. technical or expert assistance. Some DPPs and POs highlight that in order for them to develop a close cooperative relationship, it was beneficial to work together on a concrete project (some DPPs and POs work together on predefined projects).

Conclusions on efficiency:

Turning to the other key evaluation topic, efficiency, the evaluation found that the measurement of bilateral objectives is not given much attention by the stakeholders interviewed. They find other issues related to implementation more relevant. The key issues related to the efficiency of the applied models and tools are summarised below.

Understanding of role and responsibilities

Firstly, the roles and responsibilities of the different actors are clearly understood. The only exception is the DPP. Since it is a new function, it was to be expected that there would be some lack of clarity about this tool, however, all uncertainties were adequately addressed during programme implementation. Nonetheless, the role of the DPP differs considerably across programmes and countries. In Research and Scholarships programmes, the DPPs are heavily involved in the partner search and programme committees. In programmes with a capacity building aspect, stakeholders emphasise that the DPP also acts as an expert.

The PO and the DPP

From a PO perspective, the DPP model is important to receiving strategic advice. Furthermore, the DPP model contributes to strengthening the administrative and expert cooperation between donor state and beneficiary state. Yet, the evaluation shows a need for improving the match between PO and DPPs in the next period of the Grants. The stakeholders interviewed at programme gave examples where a content-focused DPP was matched with an administrative PO. This is not considered a good match by the stakeholders.

All three donor states place DPPs at the disposal for the programmes. Iceland is active in the Climate change priority sector and the Research and Scholarships priority sector, where also Liechtenstein is active. Norway has DPPs in most areas covered by the Grants. In general, the role of the DPP as a facilitator that help identify donor project partners is considered imperative by stakeholders at programme level. Interviewees emphasise that no other stakeholder than the DPP can provide equivalent knowledge of and access to donor project partners, and it should be noted that stakeholders at programme level clearly express a need for additional DPPs.

Tools and processes – Bilateral funds

Bilateral funds at programme level are seen as useful, especially for project preparation and partner search (Measure A). In some countries, the measure supporting project preparation and partner search and the programme itself were launched almost simultaneously, which is why project promoters did not have sufficient time to make use of the measure.

The bilateral funds include one other measure (Measure B) that supports networking and knowledge sharing, technology, experience and best practice. This measure has not yet fully come into play, and some stakeholders at project level express that projects are now too engaged in main project implementation for the measure to have a real impact.

Bilateral funds at national level are used for strategic, predefined projects, as well as for calls for proposals, in cases where the donor and beneficiary wish to address a specific issue of mutual interest, but outside the main programme lines. The evaluation indicates that many strategic and programme level stakeholders perceive this as an interesting option at the strategic level. At the same time, stakeholders at programme level, especially in the bigger countries, find that too much money is set aside for bilateral funds, and some suggest that the bilateral funds (national and programme) be merged into one fund to maximise flexibility.

Organisation and management issues

On the subject of organisation, it should be repeated that a key barrier to meeting the bilateral objective is the lack of available partners in the donor states. Stakeholders at project level emphasize that prior contact and previous cooperation are key to finding a partner and developing a project. In some cases, databases can be useful in identifying partners, but in general the DPP is considered to be a more valuable tool for this exercise. Another important tool is the cooperation committee. Although most programme stakeholders consider this useful for discussing programme development, they also stress the importance of maintaining frequent contact between DPPs and POs outside the committee.

Factors that facilitate/hinder

Projects with a partner highlighted bureaucratic rules and tight project implementation time frames as obstacles to developing bilateral relations. Project promoters spend their resources on reporting and cumbersome procurement processes instead of focusing on developing partnerships. A number of countries decided to use the same system that they use for the EU structural funds to implement the EEA and Norway Grants. However, programme and project stakeholders find that this system is too bureaucratic and not well suited for a Grant scheme focused on partnerships and bilateral relations.

Conclusion

In sum, the mid-term evaluation shows that the EEA and Norway Grants are successful in strengthening bilateral relations, using a number of important tools that facilitate development of bilateral relations at programme and project level. Most of the existing tools directly support programmes and projects in setting up bilateral partnerships, developing shared results, mutual knowledge and understanding, and ensuring the wider effects of the work. Bilateral funds, DPPs and donor project partners all support this goal to a large extent. The evaluation identified relatively few but important, barriers to the meeting bilateral objective. Table 1-1 below presents fourteen concrete recommendations that can help maintain and even enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the EEA and Norway Grants in the future.

The following fourteen recommendations and their rationale are presented in three groups. The first and second group contain recommendations specifically targeted to the bilateral objective and the bilateral tools. The third group includes recommendations that may improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Grants overall. The order in which the recommendations are presented reflect a prioritisation of importance within the group. Especially groups I and III are seen as important in improving the focus on bilateral relations and enhancing the efficiency of implementation.

Table 1-1 Recommendations overview

ID	Recommendation and rationale
I	Definition and measurement of the bilateral objective
1	Define and operationalise the bilateral objective Currently, the concept of "the bilateral objective" is abstract and difficult to operationalise for many stakeholders. To enable stakeholders to focus their programme and project activities on the bilateral objectives and to enable them to measure their achievements against these objectives, more targeted communication, training and capacity building are required.
2	Introduce a bilateral objective at programme level To help programmes and in turn projects to select appropriate indicators and set targets, a programme-specific objective for "bilateral relations" should be formulated to facilitate a consistent and mutual understanding across stakeholders. The objective should be SMART (specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-bound).
3	Reorganise and tailor the bilateral indicators to the programmes In cooperation with programme operators and DPPs, a set of sector-relevant bilateral indicators should be developed for each of the programmes or programme types, which should be communicated in due time to the programme operators. Furthermore, it may be appropriate to replace the bilateral indicators in the shared results dimension with regular indicators (in order to limit the number of indicators).
4	Target setting (and RACER check) for indicators

ID	Recommendation and rationale
	In the current programme phase, programmes often set targets by accumulating the targets set by projects. Project targets are often set very low, and programmes thus often have an overachievement of more than 100% above target. Programme operators should use target-setting more strategically (and not be afraid to adjust expectations). In general, it is recommended to use tools such as RACER (see Table 7-1) to assess the appropriateness of indicators.
5	Introduce result indicators at priority sector level There are no indicators (results) at priority sector level. This makes it difficult to measure whether the bilateral objective has been achieved overall. It is recommended to establish result indicators (and possibly also a more specific bilateral objective) at priority sector level.
6	Clarify reporting requirements for the bilateral objective It is recommended to be more instructive on reporting requirements for the bilateral objective in order to avoid the current large variation in reporting as well as the non-informative focus on bilateral activities. It is suggested to look to Estonia for inspiration.
II	Bilateral tools
7	Continue the current programme model, including existing tools and structures. Generally, the tools and models developed for the EEA and Norway Grants are regarded as useful, and it is recommended to continue with the existing programme model, incl. current tools and structures.
8	Ensure timely availability of bilateral funds at programme level It should be ensured that bilateral funds supporting the identification of partners (Measure A) are made available well in advance before the mainstream programmes begin. It is recommended to make funds for supporting networking and the sharing of knowledge, technology, experience and best practice (Measure B) available also after project closure.
9	Focus on predefined projects under the bilateral national funds The predefined projects provide an interesting opportunity for strategic level cooperation, yet whether the calls at national level for smaller cooperation projects provide added value is unclear. Therefore, it is recommended that such calls are differentiated, either in terms of topic or timing, from the bilateral funds at programme level.
10	Expand the use of DPPs and improve the matching of DPPs and POs It is recommended that more donor state institutions and international organisations are encouraged to engage as DPPs, and that the matching of DPP and the PO is improved by ensuring alignment between the DPP and PO organisations (with similar issues and challenges). It is also recommended to ensure that a DPP is not overburdened by having to cover too many programmes. This most likely entails involving more DPPs in the EEA and Norway Grants. Certainty of this should be established through a careful assessment of how many programmes a particular DPP can cover.
11	Increase the availability of donor project partners For the EEA and Norway Grants to be able to focus on the bilateral relations objective, it is a prerequisite that more donor project partners are involved in the implementation of the projects. It is therefore recommended to assess whether more potential partners are available.
III	General Grants implementation issues
12	Simplify procurement rules and approval of expenditures Complicated implementation procedures, procurement rules and approval of expenditures, differentiated across countries, constitute a key barrier. It is therefore recommended to look at ways in which partnership obstacles can be removed e.g. by simplifying implementation procedures, aligning systems of donor and beneficiary countries or simplifying procedures to help overcome existing differences.
13	Standardise implementation between countries Likewise, it is recommended to standardise implementation systems and rules so that each programme does not have to establish its own system.
14	Standardise general reporting requirements Reporting (all types) is of very uneven length, quality and content, which makes it difficult to use the reports for comparative studies and to extract qualitative or quantitative data. Reporting requirements should be standardised and clearly communicated to all relevant stakeholders (i.e. what content is expected under which heading).

1 Introduction

The present report constitutes the mid-term evaluation of the EEA and Norway Grants 2009-14. It is conducted by COWI during the second half of 2015 and early 2016 at the request of the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO).

Background

Since 1994, when the European Economic Area (EEA) Agreement entered into force, three five-year funding schemes have been agreed on by the European Commission and by three of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) states; Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. Through these EEA Grants and the Norway Grants, the three countries aim to reduce economic and social disparities and strengthen their bilateral cooperation with 16 countries in Central and Southern Europe.

The allocation of funds is channelled through 150 programmes within 32 programme areas in 16 beneficiary countries. For the period 2009-14, approximately 1.8 billion EUR² were set aside under the grants. During the same period, the Norway Grants supported 61 programmes in the 13 EU Member States that joined in 2004, 2007 and 2013³ respectively, and the EEA Grants supported 86 programmes in those countries as well as in Greece, Spain and Portugal⁴. The allocation of funds to the countries is based on population size and GDP per capita⁵.

Each of the three EEA countries contributes towards the EEA Grants scheme relative to their size and economic wealth. Therefore, Norway provides the major part of the funding (95.8%)⁶. The Norway Grants are financed solely by Norway.

² This amount is the gross allocation: The grant amount allocated to programme areas on country level. The net allocation does not include administrations costs and equals to 1.66 billion EUR.

³ The 13 countries are: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia (<http://eeagrants.org/Who-we-are/Norway-Grants>)

⁴ <http://eeagrants.org/Who-we-are/EEA-Grants>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

The focus of this evaluation is on the *bilateral* relations between donor and beneficiary states. Bilateral relations refer to 'political, economic, cultural and historic ties', cf. the Terms of Reference (ToR) and Guideline for Strengthened Bilateral Relations. These ties between the countries are characterized by cooperation, trade, investment, cultural exchange and by general knowledge, understanding and public awareness of the other country and their mutual ties. In context of the 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 Grants⁷.

Aim of the mid-term evaluation

The aim of the mid-term evaluation is to assess to what extent and in which way the EEA/Norway Grants contribute to strengthening bilateral relations between donor and beneficiary states.

The overall purpose of the evaluation is both summative and formative. The evaluation assesses the achievements so far and documents important lessons learnt. The lessons learnt will focus on factors that may improve impacts and sustain bilateral relations.

The evaluation is structured in six chapters as follows:

Chapter 2: Presents methodologies used for the evaluation.

Chapter 3: Explains the background to the evaluation by introducing the donor states and their involvement, the bilateral objective and its development, the baseline study and other important baselines used in the evaluation.

Chapter 4: Assesses overall progress towards achieving the bilateral objective in all the countries covered by the EEA and Norway Grants. Overall findings from the evaluation questions are presented.

Chapter 5: Presents an assessment at country level for the five focus countries: Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. Key evaluation questions particularly relevant at country level will be addressed in this chapter.

Chapter 6: Includes an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness at priority sector level. The sectors covered are 1) Protecting Cultural Heritage, 2) Research and Scholarships and 3) Capacity building including selected programmes with a capacity building element from the priority sectors Human and Social Development and Justice and Home Affairs.

Chapter 7: Based on the findings in chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 conclusions and recommendations are presented. Recommendations are operational in nature as they have been designed to feed into the next programme period.

Finally, appendices include the list of evaluation questions (Appendix A), the Intervention logic of the EEA and Norway grants (Appendix B), an overview of

⁷ Guideline for strengthened bilateral relations, FMO 29 March 2012

bilateral indicators (Appendix C), an overview of the programmes analysed as part of the evaluation (Appendix D), a list of interviews (Appendix E), bibliography (Appendix F), Survey Questionnaire (Appendix G) and Interview Questionnaire (Appendix H).

2 Methodology

This chapter provides an overview of the structure of the evaluation and the methods used. The chapter introduces the scope and the objectives of the evaluation and gives an overview of the data collection. The overall objectives of the evaluation are to:

- › assess **effectiveness** in terms of progress and perceived results towards strengthening bilateral relations.
- › assess the extent to which current models and tools are **efficient** to the strengthening of bilateral relations.

Overall evaluation questions

The overall evaluation questions addressed by this evaluation are listed in the ToR and read as follows:

- › To what extent and how is progress in strengthening bilateral relations evident at the different levels?
- › What have been the common bottlenecks/facilitating factors in strengthening bilateral relations at the different levels? What could be improved?

Detailed evaluation questions

These are the key evaluation questions and thus the centre of attention during the course of the evaluation. In addition, the ToR include a set of more detailed sub-evaluation questions (listed in Appendix A). The detailed questions guide the evaluation and are operationalised in an evaluation framework through indicators. Indicators are used for measuring the progress, allowing an assessment of the overall questions. The indicators form the basis for development of the questionnaire and interview guides mentioned below.

Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation focuses on five out of a total of 16 beneficiary countries that receive funding under the EEA and Norway grants: Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. The five countries selected for this evaluation were defined in the ToR. Collectively, the five covered countries receive 1 billion EUR or 56% of the total funding under the EEA and Norway Grants.

Data relevance and coverage

The evaluation covers four out of the ten priority sectors of the EEA and Norway Grants: '*Protecting cultural heritage*', '*Research and scholarships*', and capacity building in '*Human and social development*' and '*Justice and home affairs*' (the last two priority sectors are jointly addressed). These sectors account for just over 50% of the allocated total from the EEA and Norway grants.

Table 2-1 Evaluation scope

Protecting Cultural Heritage		Research and Scholarships		Capacity building in HSD ⁸	
Programme	Amount ⁹ (EUR)	Programme	Amount ⁸ (EUR)	Programme	Amount ⁸ (EUR)
EE05	4,609,259	EE10	1,516,829	BG11	2,170,165
LV04	10,664,362	EE06	2,958,333	CZ10	1,664,308
PL08	66,888,381	LV05	5,480,593	LV07	5,061,563
PL09	10,961,111	PL10	14,782,516	LT10	6,696,176
RO12	16,448,526	PL12	70,837,642	MT04	1,607,529
RO13	6,951,522	RO14	21,681,063	RO18	6,588,463
SK05	13,255,015	RO15	4,396,000	EE04	6,954,848
-	-	SK06	1,957,176	LV08	13,997,758
-	-	-	-	RO10	28,123,294
-	-	-	-	RO23	8,000,000
-	-	-	-	SK08	14,284,920
-	-	-	-	SK04	1,041,177
Total (Culture)	129,778,176	Total (Research)	123,610,152	Total (CB in HSD)	96,190,201
Total funding covered (EUR)					349,578,529

Source: DoRIS Report 17, 2 March 2016

All programme areas within the priority sectors are in general relevant in terms of bilateral relations, although not all programmes are implemented as bilateral programmes. Table 2-1 provides an overview of the specific programmes under the three priority sectors covered by the evaluation.

As Table 2-1 shows, the total amount under the selected programmes and thus covered by the mid-term evaluation is EUR 349,578,529. As the total funding under the EEA and Norway Grant including all sectors and countries amounts to EUR 1.8 billion, the mid-term evaluation covers 19.4% of the total funds (net allocation). This corresponds to approximately one fifth of the total funding.

The evaluation covers around 30% (4 out of 12) of the priority sectors of the EEA and Norway Grants and 30% (5 out of 16) of the beneficiary countries. It should also be noted that the countries included constitute a representative sample in

⁸ Under the CB in HSD priority sector, the individual programmes in four countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Lithuania and Malta), which are not part of the in-depth study, were added to the evaluation for completeness. The total funding under these additional programmes amounts to EUR 12,138,178 corresponding to 12.6% of the funding under the Capacity Building priority sector or 3.5% of the total funding covered by the evaluation.

⁹ Total eligible amount including co-financing

terms of size and geography. In terms of measuring the achievement of the bilateral objective, this is deemed representative as the sectors included are among the sectors where most of the bilateral activities take place.

Methods and data collection

Data collection for the evaluation consisted of three phases: a desk review phase, a survey and an interview phase. After the finalisation of the interview phase, an analysis was made triangulating data gathered in the different phases. The results of the analysis are presented in in chapters 4 to 6.

Data quality assessment

Through the desk review (including analysis of DoRIS data), interviews, e-survey and project case stories, the evaluator has sought to triangulate all findings. There were some limitations with the DoRIS data, most often due to inconsistent and limited use of indicators, diverging understanding of meaning, lack of ownership and recognition of their use and a late introduction of indicators. However, with 96 completed interviews, the interview data are considered strong and reliable (considering the generic limitations associated with collecting and interpreting subjective opinions and assessments).

Challenges encountered mainly include interviewees' inability to provide the information required on a given topic. Likewise, the survey data are of good quality, exemplified by a 49% response rate, which is high for an e-survey. Where findings could not be triangulated and consequently are based on limited evidence (e.g. points raised through interviews but not examined in surveys or possible to corroborate through desk review), these limitations are explicitly stated and addressed.

Desk review

Document and data review

The desk review phase provided a good overview of achievements on the bilateral objective. Data from the following key sources were analysed:

- › Data from the Documentation, Reporting and Information System from the EEA and Norway Grants, i.e. the DoRIS database: Data inter alia include funds allocated and disbursed, achievement against indicators and indicators used (frequency), achievement on indicators and intensity of cooperation. Quantitative data from DoRIS were analysed and are presented in figures and graphs.
- › The quantitative data from DORIS are used for an analysis of financial progress, and for an analysed of the use, progress and achievement of the indicators. This analysis is made at a more general level, but also at sector, programme area and country level.
- › Programme documentation – a qualitative analysis based on a sampling of documents: Documents inter alia include overall programme reports, programme agreements, programme reporting, DDP reporting, evaluations and analyses. The APRs including progress on the indicators, are updated yearly. The data included in this report have been extracted after 15 February 2016. In some tables, a comparison is made with the data from 2015.

Indicators in DoRIS The quantitative data extracted from DoRIS and the qualitative data presented in the report have been qualified (triangulated) and detailed through qualitative information collected in interviews. Indicator information used in this report has been related to the percentage of programmes that uses the indicator, target, achievement, and progress on achievements. If an indicator has a target above zero, it is considered in use.

Interviews

Explorative interviews – desk review phase During the inception and desk phases, the evaluator conducted a number of explorative interviews to collect information that could support the desk review and inform the survey and the in-depth country studies.

Qualitative interview data 96 interviews were conducted with donor representatives and FMO staff and as part of the in-depth country studies. Important information about programmes and lessons learnt was collected as qualitative data in the interviews. The interviews were registered in interview reports and in NVivo¹⁰ to facilitate assessment of answers to evaluation questions (for internal use). All interviews were conducted in full confidentiality.

Interview guide The interviews were conducted following a semi-structured interview guide. Specific guides were developed for the different respondent groups to reflect whether these provided information at strategic level (donor representatives, Financial Mechanism Office (FMO), National Focal Point (NFP)), programme level (DPPs and Project Operators (OPs)) or project level (Project Promoters (PPs) and donor project partners. For the focus groups (gathering several projects in one meeting), a special interview format was used.

Table 2-2 shows the number of stakeholders interviewed from the groups of the donors and FMO, the DPPs, and the five focus countries respectively (see the list of interviewees in Appendix E for further detail).

Table 2-2 Interviews (see list of interviewees in Appendix E)

Total	Donors + FMO	DPPs	EE	LV	PL	RO	SK
96	6	6	19	15	16	20	14

Survey

Questionnaires A tailored questionnaire was prepared and distributed as an e-survey to selected stakeholders in the focus beneficiary countries and donor countries. The survey questions concerned - for example - the background of the stakeholders, extent of cooperation, shared results, knowledge and mutual understanding, wider effects, tools, the role of the DPPs, and factors that facilitate or hinder bilateral relations.

¹⁰ NVivo is a software program that supports qualitative and mixed methods research. It is designed to organise, analyse and gain insight into unstructured or qualitative data like: interviews, open-ended survey responses, articles, social media and web content.

The e-survey was intelligent in that it was designed to show only relevant questions to specific respondents, depending on the stakeholder group (strategic, programme and project level) and previous responses, with a maximum of 28 questions per respondent. The questionnaire included a limited number of questions from the baseline study.

Respondents

The FMO provided a list of stakeholders for the five in-depth countries and donor countries. The survey was distributed to stakeholders covering all programme areas in the five focus countries and to a limited number of selected projects from other countries in the area of capacity building. The survey was conducted in the period from 14 October 2015 to 4 November 2015. A reminder was sent on 16 October 2015.

In total, there were 450 respondents to the survey, which was distributed to 1,079 recipients. This equals a response rate of 42%. Adjusted for the fact that approximately 160 emails did not reach their recipients (e.g. due to obsolete or invalid email accounts), the actual response rate is 49% or 450 respondents out of 919 recipients. 404 respondents completed the survey in its entirety. When the result of a particular survey question is shown, all respondents answering the question are included.

Table 2-3 shows the number of stakeholders invited to the survey and the number of actual respondents distributed on donors and FMO, the DPPs and stakeholders from the five in-depth countries (embassies, NFP, PO and donor project partners) respectively.

Table 2-3 Survey responses

	Total	Donors + FMO	DPPs	EE	LV	PL	RO	SK	Other BS
Invited	1,079	42	86 ¹¹	78	141	238	175	85	234
Respondents	450	30	33	39	51	75	89	38	95

Use and presentation of survey data

When using the data from the survey, several choices on selected of data and ways of presenting the data were made.

- › Since chapter 4 is of a general nature, the complete dataset is used.
- › Chapter 6 focuses on selected priority sectors. Therefore, this chapter only includes respondents from the programme areas. Results are shown for respondents at programme and project level, unless otherwise stated.
- › Chapter 5 goes into detail with the selected focus countries (Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, and Romania) and only includes respondents from these countries at all levels as relevant.

¹¹ There are multiple respondents for each DPP

Box 2-1 Scores used in the survey

1 = to a very low extent
2 = to a low extent
3 = neutral
4 = to a high extent
5 = to a very high extent

Project case stories

Project cases

One project in each country was selected and developed into a 'project case story'. Additional data were gathered at project level (project reports, additional interviews) for these projects. The case stories were selected from the different programme areas and included as appropriate to illustrate key points of the analysis.

3 Background to the bilateral objective

This chapter presents the background to the evaluation to contextualise the further analysis.

The first section provides an overview of the bilateral objective (history, guidelines) and key tools, such as bilateral funds and DPPs. This is followed by an overview of the involvement of the three donors per sector and country. The third section outlines the key baselines used as background to the evaluation study.

3.1 The bilateral objective

According to the Guideline for Strengthened Bilateral Relations, bilateral relations refer to "political, economic, cultural and historic ties". These ties between countries are characterised by cooperation, trade, investment and cultural exchange as well as by a general knowledge, understanding and public awareness of the other country and their mutual ties. In the context of the 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.*¹²

The grant regulation emphasises that¹³ bilateral cooperation is a fundamental element and introduces this as a dual goal towards reducing economic and social disparities in Europe. In the regulation, special bilateral funds are set up in the beneficiary states to contribute to achieving the bilateral objective.

The current mechanism, the EEA and Norway Grants 2009-14, is the first to include strengthening of bilateral relations between the EEA EFTA states Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway and the 16 beneficiary states as one of the two overall objectives.

¹² Guideline for Strengthened Bilateral Relations, EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014 (2012) Adopted by Financial Mechanism Office.

¹³ Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 (last amended 1 July 2014) and Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 (last amended 2 July 2014).

In the EEA and Norway Grants 2004-09 period, bilateral cooperation was not an explicit objective of the relevant agreements with the EU. Since then, the donor side expressed a wish that the funds should be used to promote bilateral relations between donor and the beneficiary states. The decision to include this as one of the overall objectives was based on the experiences of the 04/09 period and a strategic decision by the donors to put more focus on bilateral cooperation. The donors consider that the grants are an important instrument to strengthen the contact and cooperation between the donor and beneficiary states¹⁴.

Introduction of the programme level and DPPs

In order to achieve this objective, several tools were introduced. The first tool was the donor partnership programmes, aiming to facilitate networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and good practices between institutions in the donor states and the beneficiary states. The DPPs were introduced at the strategic cooperation level as counterparts to the POs. A framework contract provides 24 institutions in donor countries with funding for advising programme partners. Furthermore, a guideline or terms of reference¹⁵ were developed guiding cooperation between the DPPs and PO and outlining the different roles of the DPPs. Section 3.2 provides an overview of the DPPs, the donor project partners and the distribution per donor country.

Bilateral funds

The second tool was funds for bilateral cooperation at programme and national levels to support these activities. The bilateral funds are one of the key tools of the bilateral guidelines. The bilateral funds are developed at two levels: national and programme level.

Bilateral funds at national level

The bilateral funds at national level are intended to fund initiatives of mutual interest to the donor and beneficiary states to strengthen cooperation. The funds at national level should go to the development of strategic issues. Financed cooperation could provide a platform for enhanced political, cultural, professional and academic relations in a broader sense.

Both donor state entities and relevant national stakeholders in the beneficiary state should be able to access and benefit from the fund for specific activities. Activities can go beyond the scope of the programmes agreed in the MoU, as long as they are linked to one of the possible programme areas and have been endorsed by the donors.

Bilateral funds at programme level

The bilateral funds at programme level are supposed to be planned in the programme proposal (but due to the late arrival of funds, this was not done). The bilateral funds can fund two types of measures:

Measure A: the search for partners for donor partnership projects prior to or during the preparation of a project application, the development of such partnerships and the preparation of an application for a donor partnership project; and/or

¹⁴ End review. EEA and Norway Grants 2004-2009. Final report, NCG, January 2012.

¹⁵ The EEA and the Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2009-14. Terms of Reference for Donor State public entities acting as donor programme partners. (no date)

Measure B: networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practice (between actors in the Beneficiary State and entities in the donor states and international organisations), within the relevant programme area.

3.2 EEA and Norway grant donor states

All three donor states provide DPPs and donor project partners for the programmes and project under the EEA and Norway Grants. Table 3-1 provides an overview of the donor states in terms of their involvement in the implementation of the EEA and Norway Grants.

Table 3-1 Overview of sectors, DPPs and donor project partners in the three donor countries (grey shaded sectors are focus sectors)

Priority Sector	Total number of programmes in sector	Iceland		Liechtenstein		Norway		Total	
		Number of programmes with a DPP	Number of projects with a donor project partner	Number of programmes with a DPP	Number of projects with a donor project partner	Number of programmes with a DPP	Number of projects with a donor project partner	Number of programmes with a DPP	Number of projects with a donor project partner
Carbon Capture and Storage	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	3
Civil Society	18	-	70	-	-	-	246	-	316
Climate Change	14	2	15	-	1	9	125	11	141
Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue	1	-	-	-	-	-	30	-	30
Environmental Protection and Management	17	-	6	-	-	10	81	10	87
Green Industry Innovation	9	-	-	-	-	5	114	5	114
Human and Social Development	37	-	12	-	-	16	188	16	200
Justice and Home Affairs	25	-	1	-	-	12	71	12	72
Protecting Cultural Heritage	18	-	64	-	2	9	257	9	323
Research and Scholarship	16	10	143	9	17	16	777	35	937
Total	156	12	311	9	20	77	1,892	98	2,223

Source: DoRIS Report 31, 35 & 41, 22 February 2016 & Data FMO on donor project partners, 25 February 2016

As the Table 3-1 shows, with regard to DPPs, Iceland is active in the Climate Change and Research and scholarships priority area and Liechtenstein in the Research and scholarship. Norway has DPPs in almost all areas covered by the Grants. In terms of the number of DPPs, the most important priority area is Research and scholarships, which is also reflected by the high number of donor project partners. It is also the area with the highest number of donor project partners.

However, Table 3-1 does not show 100% correlation between the presence of a DPP and donor project partners. Both Iceland and Norway have donor project partners in programmes where they do not have a DPP. This relationship between programmes, DPPs and the number of donor project partners is illustrated in Table

3-2. For the five in-depth countries, the number of donor project partners are specified for programmes with a DPP, and for programmes without a DPP. For Estonia, for example, Table 3-2 shows that 43% of the projects in a programme with a DPP have a donor project partner. In programmes without a DPP, only 10% of projects have a donor project partner. This points to a relatively strong link between programmes with a DPP and donor project partners.

It should be noted that a number of different factors influence the number of donor project partners. In some programmes it is obligatory for projects to have a donor project partner, whereas other programmes are bilateral in nature (e.g. research and scholarships), and it is likely that some programmes without a DPP build on previous cooperation through which donor project partnerships then develop.

Table 3-2 All countries - Donor Programme Partners and donor project partner per country

Beneficiary State	Programmes		Avg. grant per project (thousand €)	Projects	
	Total number	Number with a DPP (share)		Total number	Number with a dpp (share)
Bulgaria	14	10 (71%)	137	711	125 (18%)
Croatia	3	-	77	50	2 (4%)
Cyprus	3	1 (33%)	235	29	4 (14%)
Czech Republic	14	6 (43%)	123	818	392 (48%)
Estonia	10	9 (90%)	134	DPP: 190	81 (43%)
				No DPP: 105	10 (10%)
Greece	7	2 (29%)	366	127	17 (13%)
Hungary	11	9 (82%)	80	501	47 (9%)
Latvia	7	6 (86%)	160	DPP: 132	94 (71%)
				No DPP: 212	34 (16%)
Lithuania	13	9 (69%)	296	213	97 (46%)
Malta	3	-	207	18	3 (17%)
Poland	17	7 (41%)	391	DPP: 328	210 (64%)
				No DPP: 893	116 (13%)
Portugal	8	4 (50%)	225	212	60 (28%)
Romania	21	13 (62%)	278	DPP: 264	114 (43%)
				No DPP: 581	92 (16%)
Slovakia	9	6 (67%)	163	DPP: 138	58 (42%)
				No DPP: 202	27 (13%)
Slovenia	4	2 (50%)	178	123	69 (56%)
Spain	6	3 (50%)	81	424	173 (41%)
Total	150	87		6,271	1,825

Source: DoRIS Report 31, 35 & 41, 22 February 2016

Another indicator of cooperation between the beneficiary and donor states is bilateral outputs, such as the mobility within the scholarship programmes. It should be noted that the scholarship programmes (as listed in Table 3-3) are the only programmes under the EEA and Norway Grants where all three donor states act jointly as DPP.

Table 3-3 shows the mobility of people between the beneficiary and donor states. In relative terms, Norway receives most people from Poland, in Liechtenstein most of the mobility comes from Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, whereas Iceland receives most people from Slovenia. Looking at the mobility from the donor states to the beneficiary states, it is noted that Norway and Iceland relatively send most people to Poland, whereas Liechtenstein has a stronger focus on Romania. The

analysis thus shows that the presence of a donor programme partner is important for the development of cooperation.

Table 3-3 *Mobility between donor states and beneficiary states¹⁶*

Beneficiary country	Norway		Iceland		Liechtenstein	
	To NO	From NO	To IS	From IS	To LI	From LI
Bulgaria	110	1	36	-	14	-
Czech Republic	76	-	10	-	7	-
Estonia	17	3	-	-	-	-
Hungary	26	1	4	1	4	-
Latvia	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poland	488	86	98	34	7	1
Romania	68	11	38	2	8	4
Slovakia	9	3	12	12	-	1
Slovenia	207	19	115	13	6	-
Total	1,185	124	329	62	47	6

Source: Data on mobility provided by the FMO, April 2016

3.2.1 Iceland

Iceland has DPPs in two priority sectors: Research and Scholarships and Climate Change. The Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS) is involved in ten programmes as a DPP, and the National Energy Authority (OS) is involved in three programmes¹⁷.

Whereas most programmes do not have an Icelandic DPP, almost all countries have projects where an Icelandic project partner is involved. Table 3-4 below provides an overview of the number of projects in Iceland with a donor project partner per beneficiary state and priority sector.

Table 3-4 *Number of donor project partners from Iceland per priority sector*

Beneficiary State (BS)	Total number of projects	Total number of projects with a donor project partner in IS	Number of projects with donor project partner in sector (Iceland)						
			Civil Society	Climate Change	Environmental Protection and Management	Human and Social Development	Justice and Home Affairs	Protecting Cultural Heritage	Research and Scholarship
Bulgaria	711	5	2	-	3	-	-	-	-
Cyprus	28	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Czech Republic	806	41	5	1	-	-	-	10	25
Estonia	295	11	2	1	-	1	-	-	7
Greece	127	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	3

¹⁶ The mobility data only cover the Scholarship programmes and only the mobility measures in these programmes. There no data on Latvia are not available yet due to a late start-up of the programme.

¹⁷ DoRIS Reports 31 & 35, 22 February 2016

Hungary	495	8	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
Latvia	343	12	3	-	-	-	-	4	5
Lithuania	207	16	6	-	-	1	-	6	3
Poland	1,221	114	32	-	-	-	-	31	51
Portugal	212	10	1	4	1	4	-	-	-
Romania	846	43	7	6	1	5	-	10	14
Slovakia	335	8	2	1	-	-	1	-	4
Slovenia	121	16	4	-	1	-	-	1	10
Spain	445	23	1	2	-	1	-	2	17
<i>Global programme</i>	53	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	6,245	311	70	15	6	12	1	64	143

Source: DoRIS Report 35, 22 February 2016 & Data FMO on donor project partners, 25 February 2016

As Table 3-4 shows, there is some correlation between the total number of projects and the number of projects with a donor project partner in Iceland. Icelandic DPPs are mostly involved in Research and Scholarship projects followed by Civil Society and Protecting Cultural Heritage.

3.2.2 Liechtenstein

Liechtenstein has one DPP, namely the National Agency for International Education Affairs (AIBA), which is involved in the Research and Scholarship priority sector¹⁸. AIBA is involved in nine programmes (see Table 3-5).

Table 3-5 Number of donor project partners from Liechtenstein per priority sector

Beneficiary State (BS)	Total number of projects	Total number of projects with a donor project partner in LI	Number of projects with donor project partner in sector (Liechtenstein)		
			Climate Change	Protecting Cultural Heritage	Research and Scholarship
Bulgaria	711	1	1	-	-
Czech Republic	806	5	-	-	5
Latvia	343	2	-	-	2
Poland	1,221	9	-	1	8
Slovakia	335	1	-	-	1
Slovenia	121	1	-	-	1
Spain	445	1	-	1	-
<i>Global programme</i>	53	-	-	-	-
Total	4,035	20	1	2	17

Source: DoRIS Report 35, 22 February 2016 & Data FMO on donor project partners, 25 February 2016

Whereas most programmes do not have a DPP from Liechtenstein, almost 50% of the 16 beneficiary countries have projects in which donor project partners from Liechtenstein are involved. Table 3-5 shows the engagement of donor project partners from Liechtenstein. Only beneficiary states with active Liechtenstein donor project partners are listed.

¹⁸ DoRIS Report 31 & 35, 22 February 2016

3.2.3 Norway

Norway has 20 DPPs, who are involved in a number of programmes. The DPPs and their level of involvement is illustrated in Table 3-6. It can be seen that the most active DPP, the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education, is involved in 11 programmes. Four of the DPPs are only involved in one programme.

Table 3-6 *DPPs from Norway*

DPP acronym	Donor Programme Partner	Involved in number of programmes
ACN	Arts Council Norway	6
BAR	Norwegian Barents Secretariat	2
BUFDIR	Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs	1
DA	Norwegian Courts Administration	3
DSB	Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection	3
FHI	Norwegian Institute of Public Health	5
HDIR	Norwegian Directorate of Health	3
IN	Innovation Norway	6
KDI	Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service	4
KS	Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities	5
KSS	Secretariat of the Shelter Movement	1
LDO	Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud	1
NEA	Norwegian Environment Agency	2
NFR	Research Council of Norway	6
NVE	Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate	3
POD	National Police Directorate	4
RA	Directorate of Cultural Heritage	5
SIU	Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education	11
SSV	Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority	1
UDI	Norwegian Directorate of Immigration	2
TOTAL		77

Source: DoRIS Reports 31 & 35, 22 February 2016

Turning to donor project partners, as shown in Table 3-7, 1,892 Norwegian donor project partners are involved in projects. Table 3-7 shows the number of donor project partners per beneficiary state and priority sector. The priority sectors Research and Scholarships, Civil Society, Protecting Cultural Heritage have the highest number of donor project partners. DPPs in these sectors are some of the DPPs most involved, so a certain link between the number of DPPs and number of donor project partners is expected.

Table 3-7 Number of donor project partners from Norway per priority sector

Beneficiary State (BS)	Total number of projects in BS	Total number of projects with a donor project partner in NO	Number of projects with donor project partner in sector (Norway)									
			Carbon Capture and Storage	Civil Society	Climate Change	Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue	Environmental Protection and Management	Green Industry Innovation	Human and Social Development	Justice and Home Affairs	Protecting Cultural Heritage	Research and Scholarship
Bulgaria	711	115	-	21	27	3	11	26	13	6	8	-
Croatia	50	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cyprus	28	3	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Czech Republic	806	365	3	22	4	3	13	-	27	13	44	236
Estonia	295	125	-	7	3	2	8	11	13	3	3	75
Greece	127	14	-	4	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	4
Hungary	495	43	-	11	3	5	-	13	-	-	-	11
Latvia	343	137	-	30	19	2	1	9	9	5	19	43
Lithuania	207	98	-	15	-	3	5	5	35	6	20	9
Malta	17	3	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
Poland	1,221	419	-	52	-	5	6	9	3	10	98	236
Portugal	212	57	-	7	4	-	7	-	27	-	12	-
Romania	846	189	-	40	4	3	22	31	8	14	35	32
Slovakia	335	99	-	24	12	1	-	10	16	12	7	17
Slovenia	121	58	-	9	-	2	2	-	20	-	2	23
Spain	445	166	-	2	48	-	-	-	16	-	9	91
Global programme	53	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	6,312	1,892	3	246	125	30	81	114	188	71	257	777

Source: DoRIS Report 35, 22 February 2016 & Data FMO on donor project partners, 25 February 2016

3.3 Baselines for the evaluation

As a starting point for the mid-term evaluation, the evaluator consulted a number of other evaluations and studies. The evaluation of the financing period 2004-09, the baseline study for the 2009-14 and the report of the Norwegian Auditor General were used to identify particular areas of investigation. Key findings of these studies are listed below.

3.3.1 Baseline study

In 2012-13, the Nordic Consulting Group carried out a baseline study on 'the bilateral relations' of the EEA and Norway Grants¹⁹. The focus of the baseline study was on whether and to what extent the grants of the new programme (2009-14) contribute towards strengthening bilateral relations between the donor and the beneficiary states.

Purpose of the baseline study

The study was prompted by concerns over the lack of information on the status of bilateral relations. The purpose of the study was to measure the level of bilateral

¹⁹ Kruse, Stein Erik and Kaya, Zozan (2013) *Baseline Study on Bilateral Relations EEA Norway Grants*, Nordic Consulting Group (NCG)

relations at an early stage in the programme, with the aim of replicating the study at a later date to measure possible changes over a given time period.

Scope The baseline study covered a number of selected beneficiary countries and the donor countries. The survey included four programmes in seven beneficiary countries (Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Slovakia, Latvia, Romania and Portugal) and the donor countries.

Methods The survey was conducted early on in the grant period, therefore it was not possible to measure the extent of the cooperation. The study documented the following findings:

- › there is a broad range of joint activities during the preparation phase and regular communication between partners.
- › there is trust in the relevance and importance of the bilateral relations and belief that the programmes/projects strengthen bilateral relations between donor and beneficiary states.
- › the established cooperation has a growth potential which can be extended in/to new programmes.
- › there has been a broad range of joint activities, including meetings, preparatory activities and conferences.
- › the guidelines are interpreted differently from country to country.

These findings were used in the preparation and development of the survey.

Baseline in relation to the mid-term evaluation Seven beneficiary countries and the donor countries were included in the baseline study (as mentioned above). Five beneficiary countries are included in the mid-term evaluation: Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

16 of the 43 original questions from the baseline survey are reused (in an adapted form) in particular for the survey of the mid-term evaluation and to a lesser extent for the interview guides.

3.3.2 The Auditor General's Report

The Norwegian Auditor General (OAG) conducted a review of the EEA and Norway Grants at the beginning of the 2009-14 period²⁰.

The OAG found that bilateral efforts were not sufficiently planned and communicated at the starting phase of the 2009-14 funding period and that e.g. the key guidance documents were finalised too late.

²⁰ The Office of the Auditor General's investigation of the EEA and Norway Grants. Document 3:15 (2012-2013)

The audit expects that bilateral relations in the 2009-14 funding period will be better safeguarded than during the previous period given the fact that the current 23 Norwegian DPPs have entered into donor programme partnerships with programme operators in the beneficiary states.

Moreover, the OAG found that there was only use of the bilateral funds at national level, making it challenging to plan and build networks and facilitate bilateral activities. In addition, there are examples of different perceptions among the programme operators and programme partners on the requirements of programme work.

The audit shows that the EEA and Norway Grants have had an impact on establishing partnerships between actors in Norway and actors in the beneficiary states in the period 2004-09. However, Norwegian partners have, variously, participated in planning and implementing the projects, i.e.:

- › The initiative of establishing partnerships was largely left to the beneficiary states.
- › Little time to find a suitable partner, a limited number of relevant partners in Norway and a high Norwegian cost level made it challenging to establish partnerships.
- › Continuing the cooperation after project conclusion also proved challenging.

The audit also showed that some of the challenges of establishing bilateral relations at project level in the previous period persist in the current funding period.

- › The number of relevant Norwegian partners is limited, and the cost level in Norway is substantially higher than in the beneficiary states.
- › The costs of Norwegian project partners are covered by project funds, and in some cases they account for a large share of the project funds thereby diminishing the share of the project funds going to the beneficiary country.

The OAG recommends that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

- › considers strengthening the ongoing work on results-based management of the EEA and Norway Grants 2009-14 to improve reporting of outcomes and long-term impacts of programmes and projects.
- › follows up on the use of administration-related and technical assistance costs in a manner that ensures that the highest possible share of the funds goes to programmes and projects in the beneficiary states.
- › in cooperation with the FMO, follows up on the complex management model with many actors to safeguard control needs and ensure achievement of results.

3.3.3 Other reviews

Other reviews were assessed to provide a background to the present evaluation, including the Report to the Stortinget (white paper) and the End-review. EEA and Norway Grants 2004-2009. Final report, NCG, January 2012.

Some of the findings for the 2004-09 period include:

- › 298 individual projects, or approximately 25% of all projects, have had a partner from a donor state. Most of these were Norwegian.
- › Partnerships were established for approximately 600 of the small projects that were financed. In some projects, the Norwegian partner has been heavily involved in the planning and implementation, while in others cooperation has been more limited and of an ad hoc nature, for example in the form of knowledge transfer study tours²¹.
- › Most of the institutions with a Norwegian partner reported that the partnership had been crucial or important for implementation of the project. This is a high proportion and indicates that the project cooperation was successful.
- › The grant scheme was also used as a tool for developing cooperation between Norway and the beneficiary states. This extends beyond the cooperation on specific projects.
- › Considerable attention is paid to the EEA and Norway Grants cooperation on state and official political visits, and the Norwegian embassies in the beneficiary states worked hard to make Norway's contribution widely known²².

In addition to these reviews, the reviews of priority sectors commissioned by the FMO have been used as background material. These are listed in appendix D.

²¹ EEA and Norway Grants Solidarity and cooperation in Europe. Report to the Stortinget (white paper). Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Meld. st. 20 (2011-2012).

²² End review. EEA and Norway Grants 2004-2009. Final report, NCG, January 2012.

4 Overall findings - progress towards the bilateral objective

This chapter presents the overall findings of the evaluation of the progress towards reaching the bilateral objective in EEA and Norway Grants. The chapter is divided into two main sections according to the two overall evaluation questions on effectiveness and efficiency. Each of the detailed sub-evaluation questions is answered under these two headings. The findings are based on the detailed analysis included in Chapters 5 and 6, at country level and priority sector level respectively.

Effectiveness

The first section on effectiveness explores how the EEA and Norway grants contributed to the overall bilateral objective, the extent of cooperation, the shared results, improved knowledge and understanding and the wide effects.

Efficiency

The second section looks at efficiency and at key factors that influence the implementation of the EEA and Norway grants and inherently the efficiency of the programmes. Questions such as disbursement, use of bilateral funds and roles and responsibilities are discussed together with factors that facilitate or hinder bilateral relations. Section 4.2.4 addresses the use of indicators in the programmes. This section includes an analysis of DoRIS data supplemented by findings from the interviews. This section also includes the evaluator's assessment of the bilateral indicators.

The bilateral results are not well documented in DoRIS or the programme reporting. There are no overall bilateral result indicators in the EEA and Norway Grants (neither at overall level nor at programme area or priority sector level) which would facilitate an assessment of the progress towards the bilateral objective. Instead, the accumulated programme targets and achievements are used to measure progress (in DoRIS). As many of the programmes do not use the bilateral indicators to any larger degree, the assessment of effectiveness in strengthening bilateral relations are thus primarily based on the survey and interviews.

4.1 Effectiveness: To what extent and how is the progress in strengthening bilateral relations evident at the different levels

The first section of the chapter focuses on the progress towards achieving the bilateral objective. This will be done by answering the evaluation questions that focus on the four dimensions of the bilateral objective as set out in the bilateral guidelines and in the evaluation framework in Appendix A.

Progress is measured quantitatively and qualitatively using DoRIS data, an e-survey and qualitative interviews conducted in the focus countries and sectors. Progress will be judged in quantitative terms on the indicators and in qualitative terms when stakeholders confirm progress in the survey and interviews.

4.1.1 Strengthening bilateral relations

EQ1 – strengthened bilateral relations

At the overall level, the EEA and Norway Grants have strengthened bilateral relations. The analysis indicates that many 'bilateral results' have been achieved in the projects and programmes. The analysis paints a positive picture of the achievements of programmes funded by the Grants.

Surveyed stakeholders find that the programmes do prioritise bilateral relations. Yet, the focus on bilateral relations is implicit, since the programmes and projects do not explicitly mention a specific bilateral objective. This finding is confirmed by interviews with stakeholders at both strategic, programme and project level.

Table 4-1 Strengthened bilateral relations

Survey question: Do you assess that your/the programme(s) or project has strengthened bilateral relations between the donor and the beneficiary country? (All respondents)	Average score	% of answers high/very high	Detailed results at country level (programme level)	Average score	% of answers high/very high
Scores (1 = to a very low extent, 2 = to a low extent, 3 = neutral, 4 = to a high extent, 5 = to a very high extent)					
All respondents (407)	3.96	72	Estonia (27)	4.22	85
All respondents at strategic level (76)	3.79	58	Latvia (29)	3.83	66
All respondents at programme level (195)	3.91	69	Poland (48)	3.94	70
All respondents at project level (107)	4.08	81	Romania (41)	3.85	71
All DPP respondents (29)	4.11	79	Slovakia (19)	3.58	58
			Other countries (31)	3.80	60

Source: Survey results, question 12

Programme and project level

Table 4-1 shows that especially survey respondents at project level confirm that relations have been strengthened and that strategic level stakeholders are those who are least optimistic about this development. At programme level, Estonia has the highest percentage (85%) of respondents answering that relations have been strengthened to a high or very high extent. The positive picture at project level was corroborated in interviews where almost all interviewed stakeholders confirmed that they had improved bilateral relations. However, it is clear from interviews that a positive project outcome influences the opinion in a positive direction.

Strategic level

The strategic level turned out to have the lowest level of respondents (58%) who found that bilateral relations had been strengthened to a high or very high extent. It should be noted that some respondents at the strategic level assess the programmes as a whole, including the bilateral outcomes at the programme and project levels, and not only at the strategic level. Interviews with strategic stakeholders point to good working relations at strategic level. Some strategic stakeholders pointed to the EEA and Norway Grants as an important factor for the establishment overall bilateral relations between the beneficiary and donor countries. Several strategic stakeholders in the beneficiary states mentioned that especially Norway had become more visible.

The baseline study

The baseline study²³ showed that 63% of the stakeholders surveyed at that point in time expected that the programmes/projects would strengthen the bilateral relations between the donor and the beneficiary country. In comparison, the survey showed that 69% of the respondents at programme level found that bilateral relations had been strengthened to a high or very high extent (see Table 4-1), which is an increase of 6 percentage points.

Donor state efforts

Awareness of donor state efforts has been raised as a result of programmes and projects. Results have improved compared with the results of the baseline study. 72% of all stakeholders confirm that they are aware of donor state efforts to a high or very high degree, see Table 4-2. This may be compared with the baseline study in which 65% of the respondents confirmed that the grants had strengthened their awareness of the grants. Table 4-2 shows that awareness of donor state efforts is higher at project level than at programme or strategic level. This is in line with the previous analysis of whether the bilateral objective had been strengthened where project level stakeholders were also more positive than other stakeholders.

Table 4-2 Awareness of donor states' efforts

Survey question: Do you assess that your/the programme(s) or project has raised awareness of the donor states' efforts to assist beneficiary states? (All respondents)	Average score	% of answers high/very high	Detailed results at country level (programme level)	Average score	% of answers high/very high
Scores (1 = to a very low extent, 2 = to a low extent, 3 = neutral, 4 = to a high extent, 5 = to a very high extent)					
All respondents (407)	3.96	72	Estonia (27)	3.96	76
All respondents at strategic level (76)	3.79	58	Latvia (29)	3.68	61
All respondents at programme level (224)	3.91	69	Poland (48)	3.81	71
All respondents at project level (107)	4.08	81	Romania (41)	4.15	90
All DPP respondents (29)	3.88	72	Slovakia (19)	4.00	74
			Other countries (31)	3.93	71

Source: Survey results, question 11

EQ2 changes in awareness, trust and attitudes

The analysis shows a positive result of the way in which the cooperation has resulted in increased awareness, attitudes and trust. The survey and the project

²³ Kruse, Stein Erik and Kaya, Zozan (2013) Baseline Study on Bilateral Relations EEA Norway Grants, Nordic Consulting Group (NCG)

level interviews confirm that awareness, attitude and trust have changed as a result of cooperation at different levels.

This finding is illustrated in Table 4-3, which shows the survey results relating to the changes in awareness, attitudes and trust. In particular, it is interesting to note that some of the scores at the strategic level are considerably higher than at the project and programme levels.

Table 4-3 Awareness, attitude and trust

Survey question: To what extent do you assess that the aspects listed below have been developed through the EEA and/or Norway Grants? (All respondents)	Awareness of the other country(ies)/institutions has increased		Attitude of organisation towards each other has improved		Trust between organisations has been developed	
Scores (1 = to a very low extent, 2 = to a low extent, 3 = neutral, 4 = to a high extent, 5 = to a very high extent)	Average score	% of answers high/ very high	Average score	% of answers high/ very high	Average score	% of answers high/ very high
All respondents (407)	3.89	72	3.88	72	3.92	74
All respondents at strategic level (76)	3.85	70	3.93	81	3.99	80
All respondents on programmes (195)	3.79	69	3.83	69	3.85	70
All respondents on projects (107)	3.97	75	3.91	73	3.95	78
All respondents that are a DPP (29)	4.28	86	4.00	70	4.14	75

Details on responses on programmes for the 3 selected priority sectors	Awareness		Attitude		Trust	
	Average score	% of answers high/ very high	Average score	% of answers high/ very high	Average score	% of answers high/ very high
Protecting cultural Heritage (22)	3.90	65	3.85	70	4.05	85
Research and Scholarships (22)	3.95	82	3.86	73	3.64	55
Human and Social Development (53)	3.92	74	4.02	79	4.08	85
Other sectors (98)	3.69	61	3.73	68	3.77	66

Source: Survey results, question 13

At programme level, the survey shows that 69% of respondents find that awareness, trust and attitudes have changed in a positive direction to a high or very high extent. Interviews with programme level stakeholders, however, pointed to the increase in awareness among policy-makers in the beneficiary states as an especially important result of the introduction of the DPPs. The increased awareness and the general level of cooperation between the DPPs and PO mean that cooperation in many cases now also includes strategic aspects of programmes and projects.

Furthermore, the survey shows that 75% of respondents at project level find that awareness, trust and attitudes have changed in a positive direction to a high or very high extent. At this level, especially attitudes have changed and trust has been developed through project cooperation towards common goals (outputs or results). This perception is reflected in the interviews where project level stakeholders had a positive attitude to these aspects. As one project promoter stated: "For me the understanding has definitely increased as I spent several

weeks working in our partner university. The culture is similar, but I knew little about the political and socio-economic situation in Norway beforehand".

4.1.2 Extent of cooperation (dimension 1)

The first dimension of the bilateral objective concerns: *Extent of cooperation; Formal partnerships or through more ad hoc exchange and collaboration financed by bilateral funds will increase cooperation.*

Extent of cooperation – EQ 3 and EQ4

There are a large number of programmes with DPPs and projects with donor project partners, both of which are highly appreciated by stakeholders. The focus countries have DPPs in a large number of programmes and donor project partners in 20-79% of projects, on average 28%. This is a little higher than the previous period where an estimated 25% of projects had a donor project partner. Cooperation takes place at different levels and in different forms as will be seen throughout the analysis. Overall, cooperation is extensive at all the different levels. There are many partnership agreements and donor project partners.

As an indicator of the extent of cooperation, projects and programmes are requested to report on the number of agreements made in the context of the partnerships. Therefore, a relatively high share of programmes makes use of the three obligatory bilateral indicators, i.e. 22 to 49% respectively (Table 4-4). Table 4-4 shows that there is overachievement on all the obligatory bilateral indicators ranging from 164% to 295%.

It is noted that some stakeholder interviewees at project level mention that it can be difficult to close agreements, especially beyond the partnership as some (especially) Norwegian municipalities were not keen on signing long-term agreements. A few programme stakeholders indicated that there were cases of project partnerships that had failed either because the donor project partner had not taken in the extent of the cooperation or because the donor project partner had been a sleeping partner from the beginning. However, this observation was only made in a limited number of interviews.

Table 4-4 Five focus countries - bilateral indicator - extent of cooperation: Achievements and targets (indicators in grey are obligatory)

Dimension: Extent of cooperation	Selected in number of countries	% of programmes using the bilateral indicator ²¹	Target	Achievement	Achievement in %
Number of project partnership agreements in beneficiary civil society	5	25	97	250	258
Number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary private sector	4	22	58	171	295
Number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary public sector	5	49	179	294	164
Number of women involved in exchange visits between beneficiary and donor states	5	22	278	418	150
Number of men involved in exchange visits between beneficiary and donor states	5	17	228	347	152

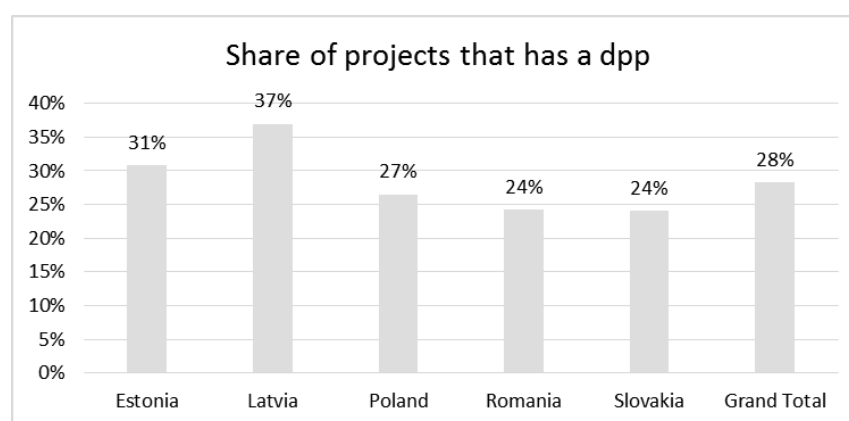
Source: DoRIS Report 13, 26 February 2016

Share of projects with a donor project partner

Another strong indicator of the extent of cooperation is “the extent to which projects have a donor project partner”. There are a large number of projects with donor project partners, both of which are highly appreciated by stakeholders. Tables in Chapter 3.1 show the number of project partners in total and for each of the donor states. 28% of the projects have donor project partners compared to 25% in the previous period (see section 3.3.3).

Figure 4-1 shows the share of projects that has a donor project partner in the five focus countries. Latvia has a relatively high share of projects with a donor project partner, namely 37%. The shares in the other four countries range between 20% and 31%. As the detailed analysis of the beneficiary countries in Chapters 5 and 6 shows, the number of donor project partners tends to vary due to a number of other factors.

Figure 4-1 Five focus countries - Share of projects with a donor project partner²⁴ by country



Source: DoRIS Report 41, 21 January 2016

Table 4-5 also shows the relationship between the number of projects and the number of donor project partners at programme level. The general picture is that the larger the country, the smaller the number of projects with donor project partners. This may be attributed to the availability of partners. In some priority sectors such as 'Protecting cultural heritage', it can be ascribed to the fact that some of the programmes do not lend themselves to partnerships, and partners are therefore not looked for in the first place.

²⁴ PA16, PA17, PA18, PA19, PA23, PA24 & PA25

Table 4-5 *Five focus countries - Share of projects that has a donor project partner (%) per programme area*

PA	Estonia	Latvia	Poland	Romania	Slovakia
PA16	16 *	80 *	50	39 *	29
PA17	-	100 *	98	31 *	-
PA18	-	-	-	100 *	-
PA19	100 *	100 *	100 *	21 *	100 *
PA23	100 *	100 *	69 *	-	-
PA24	100 *	100	33 *	-	-
PA25	-	100 *	-	100 *	-

* Programme has a DPP.

Source: DoRIS Report 41, 28 February 2016

The reason why the number of donor project partners is not higher is primarily due to a lack of availability of possible donor project partners in the donor states. Interviewed stakeholders at project and programme level found this lack of availability of donor project partners a key constraint to improving cooperation and thereby to furthering bilateral relations. The evaluation shows that a better ratio of programmes with projects with donor project partners would be beneficial to the promotion of the bilateral objective. As shown above, bilateral relations are established at project level.

The limited number of donor project partners (due to the size of the donor countries in relation to the size of the beneficiary countries) needs to be addressed in the future. As the analysis will describe, the lack of partners explains why the DPPs in many programmes more than anything are seen as key to finding donor project partners rather than to identifying more strategic issues.

4.1.3 Shared initiatives and results (dimension 2)

The second dimension of the bilateral objective concerns: *Sharing experience, knowledge, know-how and technology and working together for joint results such as the development of policies, laws, strategies or new knowledge or practice.*

EQ6 and EQ8 -
Shared results

During interviews, stakeholders across both programme and project level stated that positive experiences gained by working towards common goals during a programme or a project form a good basis for continued cooperation between the partners. Working together towards common goals is very important to stakeholders at all levels, and the common experiences have more impact on bilateral relations than more traditional ways of providing external support, e.g. technical assistance/expert assistance. Some of the DPPs and POs confirmed that in order for them to develop a close cooperative relationship they had to work together on a concrete project.

There are six bilateral indicators on shared results, which programmes have been able to select. Table 4-6 shows overall achievements on these bilateral indicators related to the shared results dimension. As illustrated, achievement differs markedly across available indicators. Currently, the achievement on one indicator

(number of projects with expected shared results') is 266%. In comparison, one indicator has an 84% level of achievement, while two are far from being fully achieved (15% and 38%), and the remaining two indicators have not been selected or reported on in any of the evaluated programmes.

Table 4-6 Five focus countries - bilateral indicators: shared results - target and achievements

Dimension: Shared results	Target	Achievement	Achievement in %
Number of joint (bilateral) articles published, written by persons from both an institutions in a beneficiary and donor state, published in a national or international publications, originated from a project financed by the programme	32	27	84
Number of joint (bilateral) scientific papers written with co-researchers in at least one beneficiary and one donor state, and published in a national or international scientific publication, originated from a project financed by the programme(s).	-	-	-
Number of new policies, laws and regulations adapted, as a result of bilateral cooperation, under the grants	13	5	38
Number of projects with expected shared results (both partners are involved professionally in planning and implementation and can claim credit for achieved results)	126	335	266
Number of new technologies/new practises, including IT-systems, adopted in a beneficiary state, as a result of transfer of knowledge from a donor state partner	39	6	15
Number of new technologies/new practices, including IT-systems, adopted in a donor state, as a result of transfer of knowledge from beneficiary state partners.	-	-	-

Source: DoRIS Report 13, 28 February 2016

In comparison with the use and achievements of the indicators related to the shared results dimension, survey respondents were asked to rate the three most important of the six results indicators. The indicator that stakeholders ranked highest is the 'Number of projects with expected shared results', which is consistent with the fact that this indicator has been most widely used across the five countries and has substantial overachievement as well. Table 4-7 shows how the ranking of that indicator differed across stakeholder levels.

Table 4-7 Ranking of common/shared results "Number of projects with expected shared results"

Survey question: Which common/shared results are the three most important on the list? (All respondents)	Ranking	Detailed results for the 3 selected priority sectors (programme level)	Ranking
Ranking 'Number of projects with expected shared results' (out of 6 results)			
All respondents (360)	1	Protecting cultural Heritage (22)	1
All respondents at strategic level (61)	3	Research and Scholarships (22)	1
All respondents on programmes (179)	1	CP in Human and Social Development (65)	1
All respondents on projects (94)	3	Other sectors (70)	3
All respondents that are a DPP (26)	2		

Source: Survey results, question 16b

As shown, the 'Number of projects with expected shared results' indicator is ranked highest across programme level stakeholders for all three priority sectors. At strategic and project level, the indicator is not rated as the most important, yet still in the top half. The fact that the project level ranks shared results as number three is probably because project stakeholders are more specific in the assessment of what can be categorised as common/shared results.

Programme level – shared objective

The last key indicator analysed in the context of the shared initiatives and results is whether programme level stakeholders feel that they share objectives. Table 4-8 shows that 67% on average of the survey respondents at programme level find that the objectives are shared, yet percentages differ between the programmes in the focus sectors. It is interesting to note that only around 50% of the respondents at strategic and DPP levels find that objectives are shared. One explanation of the low percentage may be found in the statements of many stakeholders at programme level on non-involvement in the programming process (see Chapter 6).

Table 4-8 Shared objectives at programme level

Survey question: How do you assess the degree to which the programme objectives are shared objectives between the beneficiary organisation(s) and the programme partner(s)? (Respondents on programme level)	Average score	% of answers high/very high
Scores (1 = to a very low extent, 2 = to a low extent, 3 = neutral, 4 = to a high extent, 5 = to a very high extent)		
All respondents (256)	3.69	61
All respondents at strategic level (81)	3.62	55
All respondents on programmes (143)	3.77	67
All respondents on projects	-	-
All respondents that are a DPP (32)	3.47	50

Detailed results for the 3 selected priority sectors	Score	% of answers high/very high
Protecting cultural Heritage (19)	3.75	50
Research and Scholarships (22)	3.55	55
CP in Human and Social Development (65)	3.86	75
Other sectors (37)	3.87	71

Source: Survey results, question 3

The evaluator assesses that there is limited focus on shared objectives, be they regular objectives or bilateral objectives. Interviews with stakeholders at strategic and programme level found no conclusive facts on this topic, although one programme level stakeholder specifically mentioned that this aspect had improved in the new period compared with the previous period. Less than 50% of the programme level interviewees responded to this question. This may explain the lower levels of responses in the high and very high degree categories.

4.1.4 Knowledge and understanding (dimension 3)

The third dimension of the bilateral objective concerns 'knowledge and understanding': *Bring people and institutions together and create space for improved knowledge and mutual understanding between individuals, institutions, states and the wider public.*

EQ2: What changes are evident amongst actors?

In both the survey and in interviews, stakeholders from both beneficiary and donor states confirm that they have increased their knowledge and mutual understanding of the partners' culture and institutions as a result of the programmes and projects. It is the opinion of the project level stakeholders that much learning can be achieved from being exposed to different practices and 'another way of doing things'. Table 4-9 shows the overall results of the survey. At programme level, 'understanding the institutions' receives the highest score in terms of respondents who responded to a high or very high degree (95%). This is particularly true for the areas of 'Research and Scholarship' (86%). This fits well with the findings of interviews where both programme level and project level stakeholders highlighted

the importance of getting to know the institutional culture and way of working of the partner country (more than the culture as such).

Table 4-9 Understanding of culture, institutions, political and socio-economic developments

Survey question: Has your/the programme(s) or project led to a better understanding of the partner country in the following fields? (All respondents)	Understanding of the culture - differences and similarities		Understanding the institutions - differences and similarities		Understanding of the political situation		Understanding the specific socio-economic developments	
Scores (1 = to a very low extent, 2 = to a low extent, 3 = neutral, 4 = to a high extent, 5 = to a very high extent)	Average score	% of answers high/very high	Average score	% of answers high/very high	Average score	% of answers high/very high	Average score	% of answers high/very high
All respondents (405)	3.76	65	3.91	72	3.33	45	3.67	60
All respondents at strategic level (76)	3.76	57	3.67	61	3.00	32	3.59	53
All respondents on programmes (194)	3.67	66	3.88	73	3.17	38	3.56	57
All respondents on projects (106)	3.77	63	4.03	75	3.56	55	3.90	69
All respondents that are a DPP (29)	4.32	82	4.24	76	4.14	79	3.83	62

Detailed results for 3 selected priority sectors (programme level)	Culture		Institutions		Political		Socio-economic	
	Average score	% of answers high/very high	Average score	% of answers high/very high	Average score	% of answers high/very high	Average score	% of answers high/very high
Protecting cultural Heritage (26)	4.21	83	3.91	78	3.35	43	3.66	57
Research and Scholarships (22)	4.05	86	4.27	95	3.39	39	3.79	63
Human and Social Development (53)	3.98	75	4.20	86	3.34	44	3.68	62
Other sectors (93)	4.21	83	3.91	78	3.35	43	3.66	57

Source: Survey results, question 14

EQ7 - Better understanding of the targeted sector

The analysis of whether a better understanding of the sector had evolved as a result of programmes and project results paints a mixed picture, indicating that a positive response depends on the sector or priority area. Table 4-10 shows that strategic level stakeholders and programme stakeholders in 'Research and Scholarships' do not assign high scores to this aspect. Interviews with stakeholders in 'Research and Scholarship' indicate that this is because the sector is already well known. On the other hand, in the 'Protecting Cultural Heritage' and 'capacity building in Human and Social Development sector', 96% and 83% respectively find that this has happened to a high of very high degree. Interviews suggest a similar picture where in particular stakeholders interviewed in the 'capacity building Human and Social Development' sector highlighted the importance of this aspect. This is explained by the fact that these types of projects exchange more knowledge in terms of policy and sector knowledge.

Table 4-10 Better understanding of the programme sector

Survey question: Do you assess that your/the programme(s) creates a better understanding of your/the programme sector(s)? (All respondents)	Average score	% of answers high/very high
Scores (1 = to a very low extent, 2 = to a low extent, 3 = neutral, 4 = to a high extent, 5 = to a very high extent)		
All respondents (405)	3.91	73
All respondents at strategic level (76)	3.72	57
All respondents at programme level (194)	3.98	79
All respondents at project level (106)	4.13	80
All DPP respondents (29)	3.93	69

Detailed results for the 3 selected priority sectors (programme level)	Average score	% of answers high/very high
Protecting cultural Heritage (22)	4.23	96
Research and Scholarships (22)	3.59	50
Human and Social Development (65)	4.10	83
Other sectors (85)	3.93	74

Source: Survey results, question 15

4.1.5 Wider effects (dimension 4)

The last dimension of the bilateral objective explored in the evaluation is the wider effects: 'Wider effects might happen as a result of institutions working together and finding common ground for extending their cooperation beyond the projects and programmes'.

EQ5: Depth and sustainably relations

The evaluation found that wider effects in terms of planned or anticipated continued cooperation and development of networks are significant and widespread results occur from the implementation of the Research programmes. Possibly due to the fact that in the research field, international funding is available for joint research projects from for example the large EU programmes Horizon, etc. This kind of funding is not available to other sectors. The benefits in terms of developing international and EU networks and learning about international initiatives in research are very clear. The EEA and Norway Grants support these processes by being an important contributor and often facilitating a first international cooperation for both parties. However, the evaluation also shows that such networks and cooperation cannot always continue after the expiration of the external funding.

The other sectors (Protecting culture heritage, Research and Scholarships and Capacity building in Human and Social Development) all confirm the wish for and the interest in further cooperation, but all depend on the availability of additional funding. As illustrated in Table 4-11, the two sectors 'protecting culture heritage' and 'scholarships' have experienced the best results concerning networks or access to networks. Table 4-11 furthermore shows the survey results relating to how projects and programmes rank the importance of the wider effects. 'Professional networks' receives high rankings by almost all priority sectors but 'international networks' is also a top scorer in all three priority sectors.

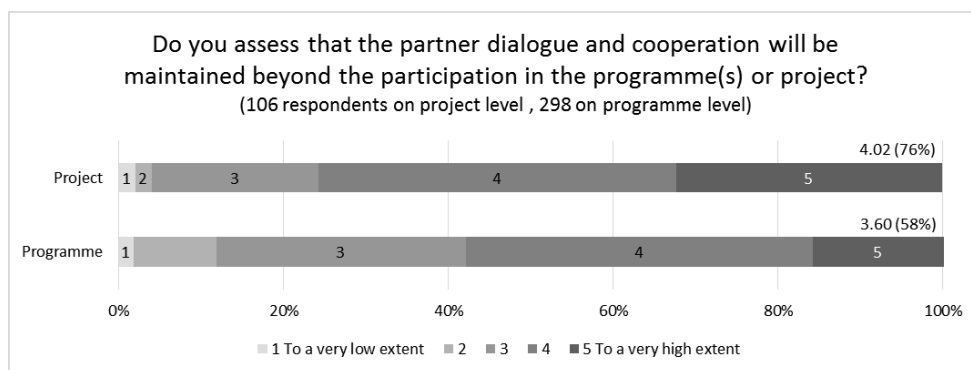
Table 4-11 Projects and programmes result in 'Wider effects'

Survey question: Do you assess that partnerships and networks have resulted in (wider effects) (Respondents from programmes and projects)	Ranking Protecting cultural heritage		Ranking Research and scholarships		Ranking Capacity building and Human and social development	
Assessment of how partnerships and networks have resulted in (wider effects), in order of importance	PRG (21)	PRJ (3)	PRG (29)	PRJ (5)	PRG (35)	PRJ (19)
Number of professional networks between institutions in beneficiary and donor states established and operational	1	1	2	1	1	1
Number of European and international networks where project and programme partners participate together	2	3	1	2	5	6
Number of replications of joint projects (or results) by other organisations in the same or another country	3	2	6	6	2	2
Number of joint, sector-wide initiatives, in a beneficiary or donor state, beyond your/the programme(s)	5	6	4	5	3	4
Number of cooperation activities or initiatives in international fora between senior decision makers / politicians, as a result of joint projects or programmes	4	5	5	3	4	3
Number of joint initiatives in the European or international arena or multilateral organisations	6	4	3	4	6	5

Source: Survey results, question 20

Further to these findings, Figure 4-2 shows that many projects (76% to a high or very high extent) do plan and expect that they will continue the dialogue and cooperation beyond the projects. Programme operators are also positive in this respect (58% respond to a high or very high extent).

Figure 4-2 Continuation of dialogue and cooperation



Source: Survey results, question 14

Qualitative data and surveys

Results in terms of 'wider effects' of the programmes are to be expected. The qualitative data collected through surveys and interviews indicate that this is a measureable dimension. However, an analysis of the programme indicators shows limited achievements in terms of 'wider effects' on the relevant indicators so far (cf. Table 4-12). This can most probably be explained by the fact that programme implementation is not very far and that the wider effects are most visible towards the end or after the completion of a project. Another factor is that the bilateral indicators on 'wider effects' are not used very much by the programmes or projects. Between 1% and 5% of the programmes use this indicator, and it is also selected in very few programmes. This aspect thus has to be addressed in an ex-post evaluation focusing on sustainability.

Table 4-12 Five focus countries - Overview bilateral indicators: achievements and targets

Dimension: Wider effects	Target	Achievement	Achievement in %
Number of professional networks between institutions in beneficiary and donor states established and operational	16	-	-
Number of European and international networks where project and programme partners participate together	28	10	36
Number of joint, sector-wide initiatives, in a beneficiary or donor state, beyond the programme	7	5	71
Number of joint initiatives in the European or international arena or multilateral organisations	6	4	67
Number of cooperation or initiatives in international fora between senior decision makers / politicians, as a result of joint projects or programmes	2	-	-
Number of replications of joint projects (or results) by other organisations in the same or another country	3	1	33

Source: DoRIS Report 13, 28 February 2016

4.2 Efficiency: What have been the common bottlenecks/facilitation factor in strengthening the bilateral relation at the different levels and what could be improved?

The second section of this chapter focuses on efficiency and the bottlenecks or factors which either facilitate or hinder the development of bilateral relations at different levels. This is done by answering the evaluation sub-questions that focus on the processes, tools and the programme structures relevant for the bilateral relations as set out in the evaluation framework in Appendix A.

Progress is measured quantitatively and qualitatively using DoRIS data, an e-survey and qualitative interviews conducted in the focus countries and sectors. As none of the programme indicators focus on effectiveness, the key data used are the survey data and interviews. Progress will be judged in qualitative terms when stakeholders confirm progress in the survey and interviews.

4.2.1 Roles and responsibilities

EQ11:
Understanding of
role and
responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the different actors are generally well understood. There is no indication that the different actors do not understand their roles and tasks. However, as the DPP is a new function, it is not surprising that the evaluation has identified some uncertainty and lack of clarity of the role. However, it is also the understanding of the evaluator that most of these uncertainties have been addressed during programme implementation.

The role of the DPP as a facilitator of the identification of donor project partners is seen as imperative. Both programme and project level stakeholders interviewed emphasise that no other stakeholder can provide the equivalent knowledge of and access to donor project partners. The DPPs have become a key feature of many programmes and stakeholders interviewed see the DPPs as key to the success of the EEA and Norway Grants.

Programme without DPPs	Yet, despite the fact that the DPP model ensured that a large number of donor states became involved in cooperation activities, stakeholders highlighted the need for additional DPPs. Due to capacity problems related to finding relevant DPPs, some programmes have experienced that their request for one could not be met. The capacity of the DPPs is an issue as some DPPs cover many countries and programmes and are used to their full capacity.
EQ13 Role of DPP in relation to projects	As mentioned above, the DPP is especially mentioned as a key factor in finding and identifying donor project partners. In some cases, databases can be useful for identifying partners, but in general stakeholders find that the DPP is more valuable when it comes to identifying partners. The analysis in Chapter 3 shows the number of DPPs relative to the number of donor project partners. In all focus countries, the share of projects with a donor project partner is higher when a DPP is present. However, as Chapters 5 and 6 show, other factors than the presence of a DPP can influence the number of projects that have donor project partners ²⁵ .
EQs13: The PO and the DPP	From the PO perspective, the DPP model plays an important role in ensuring strategic sparring between the partners. Furthermore, the DPPs play a role in strengthening the administrative and expert cooperation between donor state and beneficiary state. Nevertheless, the evaluation shows that there is a need for improving the match between PO and DPPs in the next round of the EEA and Norway Grants. Examples provided by stakeholders interviewed at programme level include cases where a DPP with a focus on content has been matched with an administrative PO, which is not considered a good match by the stakeholders.
Roles of the DPPs	<p>It is important to note that DPP use and roles differ considerably across programmes and countries. There is a sectoral difference in the use of DPPs and the DPPs do not necessarily have the same key functions in all sectors (see Chapter 6). In programmes in the sector of Research and Scholarships, the DPPs have an important role to play in facilitating partner search and in participating in monitoring/programme committees. In programmes with a capacity building element, the DPP more often assumes the role of an expert (especially in programmes with the Council of Europe (CoE). Additional findings of the DPP role are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Development of networks that can work within the EU and internationally outside the EU (culture IFACCA) is a key factor. DPPs themselves find that they have strengthened their international cooperation capacity through their work as DPPs. The professionalization that follows from international cooperation is an important part of the motivation for undertaking DPP work (not only of DPPs). › Programme level stakeholder interviews also confirm that the DPPs have strengthened the cooperation at the strategic level. However, the DPP involvement in the programmes is dependent on the PO (varied experiences).

²⁵ Note that these numbers include projects within programmes where a donor project partner is compulsory.

- › There are many examples of interesting exchanges between DPPs and POs – and interviews with the programme level stakeholders confirm the two-way learning process.

DPP international organisations

Some DPPs are not national partners. Examples are the Council of Europe (CoE), which is an international organisation, and the International Atomic Agency. It is difficult to assess how these international organisations function as DPPs and in terms of the bilateral objectives as they are not directly involved in promoting bilateral relations, but 'bilateral values'.

Programmes with DPP and use of bilateral indicators

The evaluation has not been able to find any correlation between the presence of a DPP and the use of bilateral indicators. In three of the focus countries, there is a substantially higher use of bilateral indicators in programmes with a DPP than in countries without – for two countries there is no or little difference. In the assessment of the evaluator, the use of the indicators depends much more on the POs than the DPPs – as DPPs are seldom directly involved in programme management and implementation.

4.2.2 Tools and processes

EQ 12: Tools and processes

The EEA and Norway Grants use a number of tools and processes to implement the programmes. Overall, the evaluation finds that these tools and processes support programme implementation, and some tools have a particularly positive effect on the bilateral relations and the implementation of the bilateral objective.

The analysis shows a difference between programmes and project stakeholders in terms of the importance of the tools. In the survey, respondents were asked to assess and rank the most important tools for a bilateral relation or bilateral objective perspective. Table 4-13 below lists the top-5 ranking for each group of stakeholders.

Programme level

At programme level, the survey shows (Table 4-13) that 'networking and exchange of experience' was ranked as the most important tool whereas the most important tool mentioned in interviews was the 'management or cooperation committee'. In general, programme level stakeholders interviewed see this committee as useful forum for discussing programme development, but also stress the importance of maintaining frequent contact between DPPs and POs outside the committee. The latter point supports the findings of the survey.

Project level

At project stakeholder level, the survey found that support for project preparation and availability of donor project partners were the most important. A key issue in failure to achieve the bilateral objective is the lack of possible partners in the donor states. This point was mentioned by all interviewees in the focus countries, albeit emphasized more in some countries than others. Countries with a longer tradition of cooperation with Norway particularly (which at the same time are small countries) seem to have fewer issues with finding partners (provided that they were not late in starting implementation).

In the same vein, stakeholders interviewed at project level emphasize that prior contact and previous cooperation are key to finding a partner and developing a project.

Table 4-13 Tools supporting bilateral relations

Survey question: To what extent do you assess that the tools/activities listed below support the development of bilateral relations? (All respondents: 421) Scores (1 = to a very low extent, 2 = to a low extent, 3 = neutral, 4 = to a high extent, 5 = to a very high extent)			
Top-5 Tools for programmes	Average score	Top-5 Tools for projects	Average score
Networking and exchange of experience	4.44	Support for project preparation	4.21
Study tours for PO's or other potential programme partners to the donor states	4.27	Availability of donor project partners	4.18
Donor Programme Partnerships	4.23	Conferences and seminars on topics of common interest	3.99
Bilateral funds at national level	4.08	Joint side events at international meetings	3.88
Cooperation committee	3.96	Seed money: Events for partner search	3.86

Source: Survey results, question 8

Use of bilateral funds

Survey respondents list bilateral funds among the most important tool. Bilateral funds at programme level are seen as useful, especially for partner search (Measure A) by interviewed stakeholders. However, particularly the larger focus countries of this analysis found that the amount set aside for bilateral funds is too high. Strategic level stakeholders stated that it is difficult to use the funds as intended. A general finding across the focus countries was that projects at this stage of implementation (many projects are close to completion) do not have time to apply for additional funds for cooperation. Several stakeholders interviewed at programme level stated that they were able to cover these expenses (bilateral – meetings etc.) with the mainstream funding.

In general, the analysis in Chapter 6 found that there are differences in the manner in which the bilateral funds are planned and used. Some programmes and countries use the bilateral funds for additional calls, not linked to the mainstream project of the programmes, whereas other countries and programmes use the funds in support of the mainstream projects.

Measure A

Less funding than envisaged was used for Measure A. Late implementation of some programmes resulted in programme operators being in a hurry to launch programmes and some did not launch calls for Measure A at all whereas other programme operators launched Measure A calls in parallel with the mainstream calls. Interviews with project level stakeholders revealed that few projects would apply for Measure A under such circumstances due to time constraints (and that this was another application which they did not have the staff resources to develop). Some project stakeholders stated that they had not even been aware of the calls for Measure A.

Measure B

In most countries, Measure B is being implemented and calls have been or will be launched in the coming months (due to the extension of the programmes in several countries). Some stakeholders at programme level expect that Measure B will not

fully come into play in all programmes, as projects are too engaged in main project implementation. Measure B funds are therefore likely to be used for calls for small bilateral projects, which have no direct relation to the mainstream programme.

Bilateral funds at national level

As shown in Table 4-14, 2.2 MEUR has been set aside as bilateral funds at national level across the five focus countries, and 4.1 MEUR at programme level. Stakeholders especially in the bigger countries find that too much money has been set aside for bilateral funds (national and programme level). This issue is exacerbated by the difficulty associated with transferring funds from one level to the other. Generally, there is an expressed wish for more flexibility in the bilateral funds, particularly that the bilateral funds at programme level and national level should be merged to avoid having bilateral funds at two levels.

Bilateral funds at national level are used for strategic, predefined projects in cases where the donor and beneficiary states can address a specific issue of common interest, which is outside the main programme lines. The evaluation shows that many stakeholders perceive this as an interesting option at strategic level.

Table 4-14 Incurred amount of bilateral funds (five focus countries)

Topic	MEUR	Progress in %
Bilateral funds at national level/%incurred	2.2	40
Bilateral fund at programme level/%incurred	4.1	21

Source: DoRIS report 5, 29 February 2016

Disbursement of bilateral funds

The amount of bilateral funds incurred²⁶ at this point in time is 21% at programme level and 40% at national level for the programmes overall. As mentioned above, the lower level of use of bilateral funds at programme level is explained by the fact that Measure B is generally intended to support activities when projects are already under implementation, more specifically the part of the projects that has to do with building relations.

4.2.3 Factors which facilitate or hinder bilateral relations

EQ 15: Organisation and management issues – facilitate/hinder

The analysis only identified relatively few, yet important, barriers and problems for the achievement of the bilateral objective. Positive factors referred to are mostly those relating to the tools (as mentioned above) provided by the grants. Still, other factors also contribute positively.

Looking first at factors that facilitate bilateral relations, interviews with programme and project level stakeholders showed that in all focus countries finding a partner with common interests and availability of human resources interested in the cooperation (EE, LV, PL, SK, RO) was important for establishing good cooperation. As shown in Table 4-15, there are sectoral differences and these issues are more important in 'Research and Scholarships' and 'capacity building in Human and

²⁶ The incurred amount is defined as 'eligible expenditure in approved Interim Financial Reports', and can be interpreted as the amount spent by the programmes. The incurred rate is the incurred amount calculated as a share of the total eligible expenditure

Social Development' than in 'Protecting cultural heritage'. Even though the stakeholder interviews did not reveal the same difference between sectors as the survey, it transpires that some culture programmes and projects do not attach the same importance to partnerships as programmes and projects in other sectors.

Table 4-15 Top 5 ranking of issues that facilitate bilateral relations

Survey question: Which organisational and management issues facilitate the development of bilateral relations? (All respondents, 443)	Programme level				Project level
	Protecting cultural Heritage	Research and Scholarships	Human and Social Development	Respondents that are a DPP	
Top 5 Ranking for issues that facilitate bilateral relations					
Availability of human resources interested in the cooperation	3	2	1	3	1
Partners (participants) on both sides available	1	1	2	2	-
Possible to find common ground and interest for cooperation	-	3	3	4	-
Information and support	4	5	4	-	3
Resources available for further actions and cooperation	-	-	5	-	-

Source: Survey results, question 9

Turning to factors that hinder bilateral relations, Table 4-16 shows the combined survey results of such hindrances. 'Procedures for granting programme(s)/project slow and cumbersome (bureaucratic)' is given the highest score by all three programme types. For projects with a donor project partner, the survey and the project level interviews identified bureaucratic rules (i.e. reporting, financial and procurement rules) and limited project implementation timeframes as obstacles to spending time on the bilateral relations aspect.

Bureaucracy and heavy financial administration

A number of countries have decided to use the same system for implementation of the EEA and Norway Grants as they use for the EU structural funds. Programme and project stakeholders find that the structural funds system is too bureaucratic and that the financial rules are too cumbersome. The national system for implementation of structural funds and related procedures may not be very relevant to a partner/bilateral relation focused programme, especially when this programme includes a donor project partner, who has a hard time complying with the checks and balances of EU Member State structural fund programmes. Programmes in the Research and Scholarship sector regret the decision not to use ERASMUS+ procedures.

Table 4-16 *Top 5 ranking for issues that hinder bilateral relations*

Programme level					Project level
Survey question: Which organisational and management issues hinder the development of bilateral relations? (All respondents, 436)	Protecting cultural Heritage	Research and Scholarships	Human and Social Development	Respondents that are a DPP	
Top 5 Ranking for issues that hinder bilateral relations					
Procedures for granting programme(s)/project slow and cumbersome (bureaucratic)	1	1	1	-	5
Capacity of involved institutions not adequate	2	2	2	4	-
Difficulty in initiating cooperation between beneficiary and donor state partners	5	4	3	3	-
Lack of communicating	4	5	4	2	-
Difference in legal provisions regulating the rules of cooperation	-	-	5	-	-

Source: Survey results, question 10

4.2.4 Reporting and use of indicators

Reporting on the bilateral objectives

All programme reporting includes sections on achievements of bilateral objectives. The reports on achievements are generally formulated in a standardised manner, describing activities. Often, achievements are not very well documented and contain no reference to specific examples. The 2015 reports (submitted in 2016) include sections on the bilateral objectives which attempt to take a step further by listing the bilateral results or objectives. Some reports now describe the development of DPP relations (e.g. SK06), some also report on results and use of bilateral funds (e.g. RO15), some also list the bilateral indicators (e.g. RO14 and SK05), whereas others include examples of projects with good results in the bilateral relations domain (long list of projects) (e.g. EE06). Others again are merely activity oriented and resemble the 2014 reports (e.g. PL12).

DPP reports and the bilateral aspect and indicators

Although DPP reports are often interesting and informative, they differ widely in length and quality. The DPP reports are not very specific on the bilateral relations and results. Most reports only report on the activities or the 'bilateral' activities of the DPP themselves such as participation in meetings, etc.

Bilateral indicators

Use of bilateral indicators

The analysis reveals several reasons why bilateral indicators are not used. Overall, the programmes and projects do not seem to be aware of the bilateral indicators, and reporting tends to be limited to compulsory indicators. The indicators are standardised for all programme types (priority areas), which make them less relevant to some programme/projects types. Consequently, some projects cannot see themselves and their activities mirrored in the generic indicator.

Table 4-17 shows that no more than 30% of the programmes report on the bilateral indicators in DoRIS (apart from the obligatory reporting). Of the 28 programmes scrutinised in the evaluation, only nine programmes use other bilateral indicators than the compulsory ones. In general, the reporting in DoRIS on regular indicators seems better and more consistent than the one on the bilateral indicators. For the indicators chosen by programmes through the setting of targets, achievements are often significantly higher than the targets. DoRIS also contains achievements for indicators for which no targets were set, which in turn indicates a lack of planning.

Indicator use in the 4 dimensions

Table 4-17 below shows the number and percentage of programmes²⁷, which use bilateral indicators in the four dimensions. Each dimension is discussed separately below.

Table 4-17 Five focus countries (all programmes) - Use of bilateral indicators

Dimension	Programmes		Projects	
	Total number that has an indicator in this category (share)	Number with a DPP	Total number that has a bilateral indicator (3,070 in total)	Number with a dpp (share)
1. Extent of cooperation	52 (81%)	39	2,603	613 (24%)
2. Shared results	19 (30%)	14	562	181 (32%)
3. Knowledge and mutual understanding	7 (11%)	5	172	68 (40%)
4. Wider effects	10 (16%)	6	248	52 (21%)

Source: DoRIS Report 13, 31 & 41, 28 February 2016

Extent of cooperation

Overall, Table 4-18 shows that programmes and projects use the compulsory bilateral indicators on the extent of cooperation. Not all programmes use these as this would result in the total of the three compulsory indicators in Table 4-18 being 100% (assuming that all programmes choose one extent indicator). The two last indicators are only used by 17-22% of the programmes are therefore not very informative.

Table 4-18 Five focus countries - bilateral indicator - use of extent of cooperation (indicators in grey are compulsory)

Dimension: Extent of cooperation	Selected in number of countries	Programmes using the bilateral indicator (%)
Number of project partnership agreements in beneficiary civil society	5	25
Number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary private sector	4	22
Number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary public sector	5	49
Number of women involved in exchange visits between beneficiary and donor states	5	22
Number of men involved in exchange visits between beneficiary and donor states	5	17

Source: DoRIS Report 13, 26 February 2016

Shared results

Table 4-19 shows the use of the five bilateral indicators related to the 'shared results' dimension. This is the least used bilateral indicator, i.e. 4-16% of programmes in the focus countries used these indicators, although one would expect that this dimension would be relatively straightforward to measure as it is actually very similar to the regular indicators. One may also question why these indicators would be necessary as bilateral indicators or whether it would not be easier to measure this aspect using the regular indicators.

This being said, some of the indicators lend themselves more to some programme types – articles, for example, are probably more an output of research programmes. Most projects should be able to 'find themselves' under 'number of projects with expected shared results' and this is also the indicator which is used in most programmes. The last indicator may be too 'dominated' by technologies that

²⁷ All programmes, which have a target with a value higher than '0' have been included.

projects refrain from using as they do not feel that their output constitutes a technology.

Table 4-19 Five focus countries - Bilateral indicators: use of shared results

Dimension: Shared results (5 countries)	Selected in number of countries	Programmes using the bilateral indicator (%)
Number of joint (bilateral) articles published, written by persons from both an institutions in a beneficiary and donor state, published in a national or international publications, originated from a project financed by the programme	4	10
Number of new policies, laws and regulations adapted, as a result of bilateral cooperation, under the grants	2	4
Number of projects with expected shared results (both partners are involved professionally in planning and implementation and can claim credit for achieved results)	4	16
Number of new technologies/new practises, including IT-systems, adopted in a beneficiary state, as a result of transfer of knowledge from a donor state partner	3	7

Source: DoRIS Report 13, 28 February 2016

Knowledge and understanding

The guideline foresees that programmes or projects develop their own indicators in this dimension. And, in the opinion of the evaluator, the only indicator given is probably only relevant to certain types of programmes such as Research. However, similar indicators are generally selected as regular (or derived indicators) and therefore not needed as bilateral indicators.

Table 4-20 Five focus countries - Overview bilateral indicators: use of wider effects

Dimension: Wider effects	Selected in number of countries	Programmes using the bilateral indicator (%)
Number of professional networks between institutions in beneficiary and donor states established and operational	1	2
Number of European and international networks where project and programme partners participate together	3	5
Number of joint, sector-wide initiatives, in a beneficiary or donor state, beyond the programme	2	3
Number of joint initiatives in the European or international arena or multilateral organisations	2	2
Number of cooperation or initiatives in international fora between senior decision makers / politicians, as a result of joint projects or programmes	2	1
Number of replications of joint projects (or results) by other organisations in the same or another country	1	2

Source: DoRIS report 13, 28 February 2016

Comment on wider effects

Six indicators are presented in the guideline on the bilateral objective for the dimension 'Wider effects': In the opinion of the evaluator, one or more of the six indicators are relevant to many of the programmes analysed. An interpretation of the limited use of this indicator could be that programmes and projects were not very advanced when data on the bilateral indicators were collected in the beginning of 2014. This did not improve for 2015.

Result indicators and derived indicators

Derived result indicators

Apart from the bilateral indicators, which are the focus of the evaluation, this analysis also includes the derived result indicators and other quantitative data from DoRIS. As the programmes under the EEA and Norway Grants have the choice of applying own regular indicators, this has resulted in the development of a very large number of indicators reported in the DoRIS database, which cannot be

aggregated. The FMO has therefore structured these indicators in overall indicators called derived indicators. These indicators can be aggregated at programme, country or overall level.

Achievements of derived indicators

Projects in 19-50% of the programmes use these particular result indicators to measure and describe progress. Table 4-21 shows some progress towards achieving the targets in the selected, derived indicators as well as over achievement in two.

Use of derived indicators

As the analysis will show, the total use of regular indicators (based on the derived indicators) is higher than the use of bilateral indicators. Table 4-21 shows that the selected indicators are used in 20% to 100% of the countries.

Table 4-21 Five focus countries: Derived result indicators (related to the dimensions) use and progress

Derived indicators used in the dimension	Number of indicators	Average progress (achievement/target) in %	Used in number of countries
Extent of cooperation	5	375%	1-4
Knowledge and mutual understanding	8	74%	1-5
Shared results	2	123%	3
Wider effects	-	-	-

Source: DoRIS Report 44, 3 March 2016

Bilateral objectives

What are the bilateral objectives?

The evaluation reveals that stakeholders at both programme and project level have no common understanding of what the bilateral objectives are and thus not always of what has to be achieved at the bilateral level. In a few programmes, bilateral results are formulated, but in general there is no explicit formulation of specific bilateral objectives at programme level (for example in the programme agreement).

However, this fact does not imply that there is no understanding of the bilateral objectives of the programmes and projects altogether, but the implicitness of the existing understanding causes it to be unfocused and potentially inconsistent across stakeholders. As mentioned above, surveyed programme level stakeholders find that the objective of strengthening bilateral relations was prioritised during the programme planning process. However, this finding could not be confirmed during interviews, as many of the interviewed programme level stakeholders were not involved in the programming process.

5 Country assessments

Chapter 5 assesses the efficiency and effectiveness of bilateral objective at country level within and across the five focus countries Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. The issues addressed here differ from those addressed in chapter 6 as they are determined nationally rather than at sector level.

Country level in five countries

Five individual country assessments have been conducted and subsequently subjected to a comparative analysis with the aim of identifying common denominators or specific fluctuations that may provide particular insights into the approaches that each country has taken to meeting the bilateral objective.

Structure of the chapter

The chapter starts by providing an overview of the key figures on which the analyses of this chapter are based, i.e. total net allocation, incurred amounts, number of projects etc., in total and for the five countries individually. Then, the effectiveness of the programmes is assessed in terms of achieving the bilateral objectives (EQs 1, 2, 9 and 10) and subsequently the level of efficiency across the five in-depth countries (EQs 11, 13, 14 and 15) is analysed.

Evaluation questions covered

The following evaluation questions and topics are addressed across the five countries.

- › EQ1: Implementation/Strengthening of the bilateral objective
- › EQ2: Changes in awareness/visibility
- › EQ9 + EQ10: Formulated bilateral objectives and Memorandum of Understanding and use of bilateral indicators
- › EQ11: Roles and responsibilities of different actors
- › EQ13 + EQ14: The effect of the DPP
- › EQ15: Organisational and management issues facilitating or hindering bilateral relations.

Please note that this chapter has no summary. All findings are summarised in Chapters 4 and 7 respectively.

5.1 Key figures

Table 5-1 shows the key figures for the five focus countries that form the basis of the chapter analyses. This covers the status of the overall implementation of the programmes under the EEA and Norway Grants, and the use of bilateral funds.

Table 5-1 Key figures for the five in-depth countries

Topic	All 5 countries		EE		LV		PL		SK		RO	
Programme funds	MEUR	Progress in %	MEUR	%	MEUR	%	MEUR	%	MEUR	%	MEUR	%
Total Funding (Net allocation)	1,004.9		45.0	-	67.5	-	534.7	-	74.7	-	283.0	-
Total allocated amount (MEUR) and allocated rate (%)	998.0	99.3	44.7	99.4	67.1	99.4	531.6	99.4	74.3	99.4	280.3	99.1
Incurred amount (MEUR) and incurred rate (%) ²⁸	428.0	42.9	25.2	56.4	26.3	39.2	242.1	45.5	34.7	46.7	99.7	35.6
Bilateral funds												
Incurred amount (MEUR) and incurred rate (%) at national level ²⁹	2.2	39.9	0.2	45.7	0.4	96.4	0.8	30.4	0.0	6.6	0.8	51.5
Incurred amount (MEUR) and incurred rate (%) at programme level ³⁰	4.1	21.2	0.5	42.1	0.4	26.2	2.3	23.3	0.3	20.0	0.6	11.9
Projects	Number	Share in %	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Approved projects ³¹	3,045	-	295	-	344	-	1,221	-	340	-	845	-
Projects with donor project partner	836	27	91	31	128	37	326	27	85	25	206	24
Predefined projects	131	4	16	5	16	5	49	4	6	2	44	5
Programmes with a DPP	42	67	9	90	6	86	8	50	6	67	13	62

Source: DoRIS report 3, 5, 41 and 45, 29 February 2016

²⁸ The incurred amount is defined as 'eligible expenditure in approved Interim Financial Reports', and can be interpreted as the amount spent by the programmes. The incurred rate is the incurred amount calculated as a share of the total eligible expenditure.

²⁹ Incurred rates are calculated as a share of the eligible expenditure on national level. Note that this theoretically includes co-financing but that there is no co-financing allocated on this level.

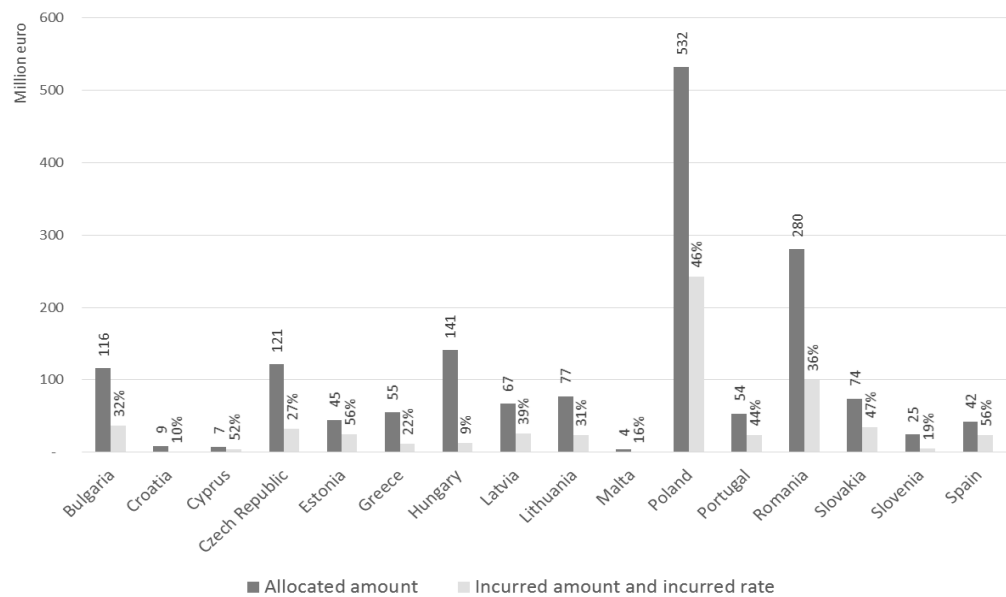
³⁰ Incurred rates are calculated as a share of the eligible expenditure on programme level. Note that this includes co-financing.

³¹ 50 projects have been terminated.

Programme funds	As the table shows, 99.3% of the total funds have been allocated to the five focus countries, and 42.9% of total programme funds have been incurred ³² to date. The share of incurred funds varies across the five countries from 35.6% in Romania to 56.4% in Estonia.
Bilateral funds – overall all level	While an average of 39.9% of the bilateral funds are incurred at national level, the same rate is 21.2% at programme level across all five countries.
Bilateral funds – country variation	Looking at the individual countries, Romania and Latvia have both incurred a markedly higher share of the bilateral funds at national level (51.5% and 96.4%) than at programme level (11.9% and 26.2%), while Slovakia, in contrast, has incurred a relatively higher share (20.0%) at programme level compared to only 6.6% at national level. This variation is somewhat smaller at programme level, ranging from 11.9% in Romania to 42.1% in Estonia, which has incurred a markedly higher share of bilateral funds at programme level than the other focus countries. Overall, countries with high incurred amounts also seem to have a high number of pre-defined projects, seen in relation to the programme overall allocated amount.
DPPs at country level	On average, 67% of programmes in the five countries have a DPP, although the share of programmes with a DPP is significantly higher in Estonia and Latvia (90% and 86% respectively).
Overall implementation progress	Figure 5-1 illustrates, for all countries, the allocation of funds and the incurred amounts. The percentages allocated for the bilateral funds for each beneficiary country is indicated in brackets. The incurred rates vary significantly from country to country with Estonia and Spain having the highest incurred rates and thereby being further in the implementation of the programmes.

³² Incurred amount is defined as 'eligible expenditure in approved Interim Financial Reports' and can be interpreted as the amount actually spent by the programmes.

Figure 5-1 Allocation of total programme funds and incurred amount per beneficiary country



Source: DoRIS Report 3, 5 & 45, 29 February 2016

5.2 Effectiveness

EQ1: strengthened bilateral relations

In terms of effectiveness, the programmes analysed across the five countries generally seem to deliver on the bilateral objective. As illustrated in Table 5-2, survey respondents in the five countries find that the programmes have strengthened bilateral relations to a high or very high extent (72%). Generally, the DPPs are the most positive (average 4.11) with 79% of respondents stating that bilateral relations have been strengthened to a high or very high extent. In comparison, the remaining respondents at strategic level are slightly less positive with an average score of 3.76, and 58% of respondents stating "to a high" or "very high" extent.

When this finding is compared with the survey results on the extent to which respondents find that the programmes and projects have strengthened bilateral relations on a scale from 1 to 5, a similar result is achieved.³³

³³ For the sake of simplicity, in the remainder of the chapter, we will refer to the effectiveness and efficiency of the *programmes*, implicitly including the projects under each programme as part of the assessment (rather than repeatedly writing the full reference to "the programmes and projects").

Table 5-2 Programmes and projects have strengthened bilateral relations³⁴

Survey question: Do you assess that the project has strengthened bilateral relations between the donor and the beneficiary country? Scores (1 = to a very low extent, 2 = to a low extent, 3 = neutral, 4 = to a high extent, 5 = to a very high extent)	Average score	% of answers high/very high	Detailed results at country level (programme level)	Average score	% of answers high/very high
All respondents (268)	3.96	72	Estonia (27)	4.22	85
All respondents at strategic level (34)	3.79	58	Latvia (29)	3.83	65
All respondents at programme level (164)	3.91	69	Poland (48)	3.94	70
All respondents at project level (70)	4.08	81	Romania (41)	3.85	71
All DPP respondents (29)	4.11	79	Slovakia (19)	3.58	58

Source: Survey results, question 12.

Strategic level

At strategic level, interviewed stakeholders generally found that bilateral relations have been strengthened but also that exact results are difficult to measure. Some divergence is experienced at strategic level. Some interviewees feel that the degree of focus of the development of bilateral relations could be increased in the future. Some interviews also indicate that relations have been strengthened at the strategic level through high profile projects.

Among the strategic stakeholders, the Norwegian embassies³⁵ in the five countries were probably those who most clearly confirmed progress towards the bilateral objective. The embassies see the programmes in general and some of the predefined bilateral funds projects as key policy tools for establishing relations at the bilateral level (policy level). Several of the stakeholders interviewed in this group stated that both programmes and projects open doors at the political level (a strategic project can be as important as a full programme).

Programme level

Turning to the national programme level, Estonian programme level respondents generally feel that bilateral relations have been strengthened more than is the case in the other countries (average score of 4.22). In contrast, the score of the Slovak programme level respondents on strengthened bilateral relations is 3.58. Stakeholders interviewed at programme level confirmed that bilateral relations are an important part of policy and emphasised the value of good and extensive cooperation to the benefit of both beneficiary and donor state partners. Slovak stakeholders found DPPs to be key enablers of developing bilateral relations, while in Romania the lack of donor project partners is seen by other stakeholders as hampering bilateral relations.

EQ2: Changes in awareness and visibility

To shed light on the visibility of the programmes, survey respondents were asked to assess the extent to which their programme(s) or projects had raised awareness of the donor states' efforts to assist beneficiary states.

³⁴ As mentioned in the methodology, all DPP respondents contain data from all countries, not only the five focus countries. This is true for all similar tables in this chapter.

³⁵ None of the other donor countries have embassies in the five focus countries.

Table 5-3 *Raised awareness of donor efforts*

Survey question: Do you assess that your/the programme(s) or project has raised awareness of the donor states' efforts to assist beneficiary states?	Average score	% of answers high / very high	Detailed results at country level (programme level)	Average score	% of answers high / very high
Scores (1 = to a very low extent, 2 = to a low extent, 3 = neutral, 4 = to a high extent, 5 = to a very high extent)					
All respondents (268)	3.97	75	Estonia (27)	3.96	76
All respondents at strategic level (34)	4.12	73	Latvia (29)	3.68	61
All respondents at programme level (164)	3.92	76	Poland (48)	3.81	71
All respondents at project level (70)	4.00	75	Romania (41)	4.15	90
All DPP respondents (29)	3.88	72	Slovakia (19)	4.00	74

Source: Survey results, question 11

As illustrated in Table 5-3, 75% of all respondents (strategic, programme and project level) across the five countries find that the programmes have raised awareness to a high or very high extent with an average score of 3.97. At the country-specific level, fluctuations are slightly larger. At programme level in Romania, as many as 90% of respondents find that the programmes have raised awareness of the donor states' efforts to assist beneficiary states to a high or very high extent. In Latvia, this share is somewhat lower, 61%, with an average score of 3.68. This however, is still positive.

Stakeholder interviews in all five countries confirm the overall tendency of higher awareness and better visibility. People are generally more aware of the grants and have a higher opinion of them than was the case in earlier phases of EEA and Norway Grants. Interviews at strategic and programme level show that visibility has increased, particularly at regional and local level and in rural districts, where the projects tend to be very visible, such as the renovation of a school or a cultural object - projects that are likely to have significant impact on the community. Similarly, high profile projects, such as the Health Care project in Estonia, further enhance the visibility of the EEA and Norway Grants. The project story from Slovakia in Box 5-1 below is a case in point. The Pro Monumenta Project shows how involvement of stakeholders at different levels can improve the visibility of the EEA and Norway Grants, and in this case, also minimise the restoration costs of historic monuments.

Box 5-1

Project story - Slovakia

Project title: Pro Monumenta

Country: Slovakia

Description of the partnerships

The project entitled Pro Monumenta is a cooperation between Pamiatkový úrad SR (The Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic), who is the project controller and Riksantikvaren (The Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Environment). The two institutions first established contact back in 2010 based on a Slovak initiative financed by the Ministry of Culture. During the preparation of the project, both institutions organised and participated in several preparatory meetings and online discussions aimed at developing a plan for the implementation of the Pro Monumenta idea.

Description of the project and activities

The project was implemented from 1 January 2014 and was scheduled to terminate on 30 March 2016. The main goal of Pro Monumenta in Slovakia is to establish and equip three mobile teams with the capacity to identify and repair easy-to-mend defects at historic monuments, which have led or may lead to deterioration (including basic roof repairs, repairs to chimneys, rainwater drains, fixing of lightning conductors). Major damage identified in the project is documented in a monument technical report, which is stored electronically in a common database. Such a service is highly beneficial and minimises restoration costs because regular maintenance to immovable monuments is cheaper than restoration carried out once in several decades. Due to a lack of funds, the latter practice is quite common in Slovakia and many other countries and results in major damage to historic monuments. This type of initiative originates from the Netherlands, where it has yielded such good results that it now constitutes a case of best practice and has inspired projects worldwide.

The project is expected to have a high level of sustainability in Slovakia because both the current government's declaration for 2012 - 2016 and its strategic document "Monument protection conception in SR up to 2020" places emphasis on the conservation of historic monuments. Therefore, there is a good chance of not only continuity, but also of extensions to the scale of the project.

Description of the bilateral results:

The project delivers several bilateral and multilateral results and includes all types of results.

- › In this case, the Norwegian partner mainly learns from Slovak experiences and approaches to the implementation of such activities. However, the Norwegian partner also supports the project through its human and technical expertise, such as through an expert from Nasjonele Fervardung, who is expected to arrive to Slovakia to conduct workshops for team members on monument conservation and repairs within a given area.
- › The project visibly improves already existing working relations between involved partners, including two national ministries of culture. This improves the chances of sustainability in a long-term perspective. The national Norwegian interest in the project is exemplified by the attendance of about 40 local stakeholders at the project presentation in Oslo.
- › Norway is currently planning to place all publicly restored monuments, especially wooden churches, under a similar programme. In addition the project resulted in both participating partners joining a large international community/network dealing with the issue, where they may further disseminate lessons learnt to other interested parties.

Lessons learned:

The project is a clear example of the great contextual and bilateral potential of the programme, if properly implemented. According to the assessment by the project coordinators the project impacts are visible both in Slovakia and Norway (establishment of the formal programmes in the project area) and as Mr. Reznik summarized: "The project significantly improved bilateral co-operation between Norwegian and Slovak experts in the area – especially because it focused on an area of the common interest".

Use of bilateral indicators:

One (of three possible) bilateral indicator is officially used in the project documentation and reporting, namely indicator 12.2.3 Number of signed bilateral agreements by Slovak public organisations with organisations from donor states. The value of this indicator is 1 signed bilateral agreement.

Use of bilateral funds:

The project has received funding from the Bilateral Programme Funds for strengthening of the partnership (measure B). The main activity financed from this source is the visit of the Slovak delegation in Norway (September 2015). The main Norwegian institutions visited were "Riksantikvaren" and "The National Fortification Heritage" of the "The Norwegian Defence Estates Agency".

According to embassy stakeholders in some of the countries, Norway in particular, has become far more visible through the EEA and Norway grants, as beneficiary institutions previously mainly focused on the regional EU members: Denmark, Sweden and Finland.

In four of the five focus countries, NFPs have conducted a national awareness survey to shed light on the level of public awareness of the EEA and Norway Grants (no such survey was conducted in Slovakia).

The public opinion survey conducted by the NFP in Romania showed that there is wide awareness of the EEA and Norway Grants both within and *outside* the group of direct stakeholders. Yet, outside the group of direct stakeholders, awareness is much lower than it is of EU funds³⁶. In support of the Romanian finding, stakeholder interviews in Latvia and Poland indicate that visibility outside the wider stakeholder group is limited. In Poland, for instance, 65% of the respondents to the national awareness survey had not heard about EEA and Norway Grants³⁷. Similarly, in Latvia, 45% of respondents to the national awareness survey who are internet users are aware of the EEA and Norway Grants. This knowledge however, is very superficial as most (71%) of the respondents only know the title but not any of the contents³⁸.

EQ9+10: Formulated bilateral objectives and MoU

Survey respondents at strategic and programme level were also asked to assess the extent to which they found that the bilateral objective (i.e. strengthening relations between the EEA EFTA states, Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway, and the beneficiary states) has been prioritised in the programme(s).

Table 5-4 *Prioritisation of strengthened bilateral relations in programmes*

Survey question: Do you assess that the bilateral objective - strengthened relations between the EEA EFTA states (Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway) and the beneficiary states - has been prioritised in the programme(s)?	Average score	% of answers high/very high	Detailed results at country level (programme level)	Average score	% of answers high/very high
Scores (1 = to a very low extent, 2 = to a low extent, 3 = neutral, 4 = to a high extent, 5 = to a very high extent)					
All respondents (201)	3.99	75	Estonia (27)	4.30	81
All respondents at strategic level (34)	4.03	80	Latvia (29)	4.00	76
All respondents at programme level (167)	3.98	74	Poland (47)	3.81	68
All respondents at project level	-	-	Romania (45)	4.07	78
All DPP respondents (29)	4.10	74	Slovakia (19)	3.68	68

Source: Survey results, question 4

As illustrated in Table 5-4, 75% of strategic and programme level respondents found that strengthened bilateral relations have been prioritised to a high or very

³⁶ Quantitative public opinion survey developed in order to assess the visibility and transparency of EEA and Norway Grants 2009-14 Financial Mechanisms in Romania, April 2014

³⁷ Awareness and evaluation of Norway grants and EEA grants in the Polish society. Findings from quantitative study commissioned by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development. Warsaw, February 2014

³⁸ Strategic Report on Implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009–2014 in Latvia, January – December 2013

high extent (average score of 3.99). At programme level, the country-specific replies show that Slovak respondents generally find that bilateral relations have been prioritised to a lesser extent (average score 3.68) than in the other countries, while 81% of Estonian respondents find that bilateral relations have been prioritised to a high or very high extent (average score 4.3). This pattern mirrors the findings of the extent to which the programmes and projects have in fact strengthened bilateral relations, illustrated in Table 5-4 above. This indicates how prioritisation of the bilateral objective increases the likelihood of bilateral results.

Interestingly, the stakeholder interviews conducted in all five countries yield a somewhat different result. While stakeholders in all countries, on the overall level, state that bilateral relations are an important part of the policy, the programmes very seldom develop to a stage where specific bilateral objectives are formulated. One explanation for this may be found in Latvia, where some stakeholders indicated that since the bilateral objective is included in the MoU, cooperation is therefore embedded at programme level in most programmes. Since most programmes, particularly in Latvia and Estonia, also have a DPP, the programmes automatically focus on the bilateral relations. This may indicate a tendency for the bilateral aspect to become somewhat formalistic, along the lines of 'we have a DPP therefore our programme adheres to the bilateral objective', rather than it being a matter of content and mutual results.

Stakeholders interviewed in both Poland and Romania stated that they did not consider it necessary to formulate a specific bilateral objective, and a few programme level stakeholders even believed that bilateral aspects were part of the programme. Although such statements may reflect a misunderstanding, it suggests that there is a lack of clarity about the bilateral objective. This notion is backed up by interviews from Estonia revealing that even though some stakeholders have in fact used the bilateral indicators, most are unsure about how to measure the bilateral objectives.

Involvement in programming

Table 5-5 below shows the extent to which survey respondents were involved in the programme preparation and planning process. This sheds light on their level of knowledge of the priorities that were set during that phase.

Table 5-5 *Involvement in programming and planning*

Survey question: Were you involved in the programme preparation and planning process?	Average score	% of answers high/ very high	Detailed results at country level (programme level)	Average score	% of answers high/ very high
Scores (1 = to a very low extent, 2 = to a low extent, 3 = neutral, 4 = to a high extent, 5 = to a very high extent)					
All respondents (212)	2.99	42	Estonia (27)	2.44	33
All respondents at strategic level (39)	3.62	59	Latvia (29)	2.55	31
All respondents at programme level (173)	2.85	38	Poland (52)	2.88	35
All respondents at project level	-	-	Romania (46)	3.39	54
All DPP respondents (32)	3.56	53	Slovakia (19)	2.47	26

Source: Survey results, question 2

As Table 5-5 shows, respondents across all five countries state that they were involved in the programme preparation and planning process to some extent. However, as the country-specific data show, there are considerable variations

across the five focus countries. The data behind Table 5-5 reveal that in Estonia and Slovakia, more than 40% of all respondents were only involved in the planning and preparation process to a very low extent. In Latvia, the share of all respondents involved to a very low extent was almost 40%. In Poland, involvement was slightly higher, adding up to an average score of 3.12 across all respondents and 2.88 for respondents at programme level. Involvement was highest among Romanian respondents with more than half of respondents indicating involvement in the planning process to a high or very high extent, adding up to an average score of 3.47 for all respondents and 3.39 at programme level³⁹.

Very few interviewed stakeholders at programme level were directly involved in the programme formulation and development and few therefore had insight into the process. No additional data can thus corroborate the above findings.

Use of bilateral indicators

For all five focus countries, Table 5-6⁴⁰ below shows the share of all national programmes that make use of the bilateral indicators (shown in the grey shaded column), and the level of achievement in percentage towards the established target for that indicator (white column). Only those indicators that have been selected by at least one country are included in the table. An actual example of this is found in the Romanian project story presented in Box 6-3. The Romanian project on Capacity Building in Nuclear and Radiological Safety, Emergency Preparedness and Response exemplifies how a project may have many bilateral results but as these are not reflected in the bilateral indicators (none were used), only the project reporting and possibly the regular indicators may reflect these results.

As Table 5-6 shows, the use of bilateral indicators is generally very low across all five countries. In particular, several of the indicators on shared results and wider effects tend to be disregarded altogether.

In Estonia, for instance, one indicator has been used in half of the programmes, namely the mandatory indicator *"Number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary public sector"*. In more than 30% of the Estonian programmes, no indicator has been used, including the two other mandatory indicators *"Number of project partnership agreements in beneficiary civil society"* and *"...in the beneficiary private sector"*. These two indicators have both been used in only 10% of the programmes in 2016. Most programmes are required to make use of at least one of the three obligatory indicators, yet if adding together the top three lines of Table 5-6 for each country, it can be seen that some shares do not sum to 100%. This may be explained by the fact that there are programmes that do not require partnerships, and in some programmes it has not been possible to find relevant partners.

³⁹ The percentages referred to are not in the table, but in the background analysis

⁴⁰ All figures prior to a slash (/) indicate data from 2015 and all data after a slash represent the newest data from 2016. As described in the methodology, figures in the columns on achievement are based on those programmes that have set targets.

Table 5-6 *Bilateral indicators in the five countries (all programmes): Use and achievements 2015*

Dimension & Bilateral indicator	Estonia		Latvia		Poland		Slovakia		Romania	
	% of programmes using the bilateral indicator	Achievement in %	% of programmes using the bilateral indicator	Achievement in %	% of programmes using the bilateral indicator	Achievement in %	% of programmes using the bilateral indicator	Achievement in %	% of programmes using the bilateral indicator	Achievement in %
Extent of cooperation										
Number of project partnership agreements in beneficiary civil society	10	460	29	344	13	50	56	289	29	217
Number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary private sector	10	150	-	-	25	510	44	143	24	141
Number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary public sector	50	215	57	131	13	125	78	244	62	166
Number of women involved in exchange visits between beneficiary and donor states	30	415	29	57	13	385	56	159	29	51
Number of men involved in exchange visits between beneficiary and donor states	20	250	29	133	13	204	33	294	24	114
Shared results										
Number of joint (bilateral) articles published, written by persons from both an institutions in a beneficiary and donor state, published in a national or international publications, originated from a project financed by the programme	10	500	14	20	-	-	56	111	10	-
Number of new policies, laws and regulations adapted, as a result of bilateral cooperation, under the grants	20	18	-	-	-	-	22	150	-	-
Number of projects with expected shared results (both partners are involved professionally in planning and implementation and can claim credit for achieved results)	20	111	-	-	44	319	22	244	14	228
Number of new technologies/new practises, including IT-systems, adopted in a beneficiary state, as a result of transfer of knowledge from a donor state partner	30	22	-	-	13	14	22	-	-	-
Knowledge and mutual understanding										
Number of articles published in one country about the other partner country	10	140	14	47	19	50	22	200	-	-
Wider effects										
Number of professional networks between institutions in beneficiary and donor states established and operational	-	-	29	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of European and international networks where project and programme partners participate together	-	-	14	100	-	-	22	150	5	-
Number of joint, sector-wide initiatives, in a beneficiary or donor state, beyond the programme	20	50	14	200	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of joint initiatives in the European or international arena or multilateral organisations	-	-	14	100	6	-	-	-	-	-
Number of cooperation or initiatives in international fora between senior decision makers / politicians, as a result of joint projects or programmes	-	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of replications of joint projects (or results) by other organisations in the same or another country	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	-	-	-

Source: DoRIS report 13, February 2016 (28 Feb 2016)

According to stakeholders interviewed in the five focus countries, there are several reasons for the limited use of bilateral indicators. Firstly, they were introduced late (after the main programme was finalised) and had to be added to the programmes. Secondly, for some programmes it was found that they overlapped with regular result indicators and thus of limited use (for example, the Latvian LV04 Culture Heritage Programme has the following regular output indicator - Number of a newly established and promoted existing partnership). Thirdly, some interviews suggest that stakeholders responsible for programmes based on an application model find themselves unable to define the indicators since they do not know which project applications they will receive. Fear of not meeting the indicators seems to discourage them from trying. Finally, some project level stakeholders simply stated that the bilateral indicators did not cover their needs. For instance, one interviewed stakeholder in Latvia stated that it is *"hard to evaluate partnerships using only quantitative indicators; therefore [we] are trying to find a qualitative aspect and to be creative when reporting the bilateral aspect (e.g. participants in the conference, etc.)"*.

Interviews with Polish, Latvian, and Romanian stakeholders also indicate that little attention is paid to the bilateral indicators at programme level, and that they are simply left to be completed by the projects. One interviewed programme level stakeholder said *"for POs, it is difficult to define the bilateral indicator because it is almost impossible to predict how many partners will be present in the projects for open calls. It is much easier with the pre-defined projects"*.

Achievement on bilateral indicators

In spite of the limited use of bilateral indicators, achievement on the indicators that are in fact in use is very high. Assessing the level of achievement on the bilateral indicators with an established target, Table 5-6 above also shows that all five focus countries have considerable overachievement on a very high number of indicators. In fact, in four of the five countries, there is overachievement on more than half of the bilateral indicators, corresponding to an achievement of 120%. In Slovakia, this applies to as many as 75% of the indicators. Furthermore, in all five countries there is overachievement on indicators, corresponding to an achievement of more than 200%. In Estonia and Poland, this is the case for almost half of the bilateral indicators applied.

To some extent, this is because programme targets tend to constitute the sum of the targets of the projects under that programme, rather than a representation of a political or strategic ambition. Consequently, the very high levels overachievement are problematic as they reflect a poor level of planning and thus a lost potential for increasing effectiveness through ambitious planning. When targets have been reached and even considerably surpassed, they lose their inherent ability to steer a programme in a specific, desired direction. Stakeholders will tend to disregard them as they are no longer applicable for anything but possibly meeting a reporting requirement.

5.3 Efficiency

EQ11: Roles and responsibilities of different actors

The introduction of the DPP is key to successfully developing bilateral relations (see also Chapter 6). This makes it relevant to assess the extent to which stakeholders at programme level find that they have received adequate information about the opportunities for establishing programme partnerships. The respective survey responses are illustrated in Table 5-7.

Table 5-7 Adequacy of information on establishing Donor Programme Partnerships

Survey question: Did you receive adequate information about the opportunities for establishing programme partnerships?	Average score	% of answers high/very high	Detailed results at country level (programme level)	Average score	% of answers high/very high
Scores (1 = to a very low extent, 2 = to a low extent, 3 = neutral, 4 = to a high extent, 5 = to a very high extent)					
All respondents (241)	3.81	67	Estonia (28)	3.93	64
All respondents at strategic level (35)	3.37	51	Latvia (29)	3.86	72
All respondents at programme level (174)	3.75	63	Poland (52)	3.81	62
All respondents at project level	-	-	Romania (46)	3.52	59
All DPP respondents (32)	3.53	53	Slovakia (19)	3.74	63

Source: Survey results, question 1a

As Table 5-7 shows, 67% of all respondents across the five focus countries feel that they have been adequately informed to a high or very high extent (average score 3.81). This average is somewhat lower at the strategic level, where respondents to some extent feel that they have received adequate information about the opportunities for establishing programme partnerships (3.37). These figures most probably also reflect that stakeholder representatives change over time and those responsible at the time of programming and planning of the EEA and Norway Grants may no longer be in the same positions.

EQ13-14: The effect of the DPP

Information on how to establish donor programme partnerships (as discussed above), however, is ultimately mainly a catalyst for the subsequent establishment of such partnerships. Table 5-1 in the introduction to the chapter, established that 67% of programmes across the five focus countries have a DPP, ranging from 50% of programmes in Poland to 90% in Estonia. In comparison, Table 5-8 shows the extent to which survey respondents across the five countries find that DPPs and donor project partners contribute to strengthening bilateral relations.

Table 5-8 Contribution of DPPs and donor project partners to strengthening bilateral relations

Survey question: Did the Donor Programme Partner(s) / donor project partner contribute to strengthening bilateral relations between actors in donor states and in the beneficiary state?	Average score	% of answers high/very high	Detailed results at country level (programme level)	Average score	% of answers high/very high
Scores (1 = to a very low extent, 2 = to a low extent, 3 = neutral, 4 = to a high extent, 5 = to a very high extent)					
All respondents (265)	4.03	77	Estonia (27)	4.48	89
All respondents at strategic level (33)	3.94	61	Latvia (29)	4.19	90
All respondents at programme level (163)	4.01	80	Poland (48)	3.80	75
All respondents at project level (69)	4.11	77	Romania (40)	4.00	78
All DPP respondents (29)	4.21	75	Slovakia (19)	3.56	69

Source: Survey results, question 18

As Table 5-8 shows, 77% of all respondents find that DPPs and donor project partners contribute to strengthening bilateral relations to a high or very high extent (average score of 4.03). This view is most positive among project level respondents and (not surprisingly) DPP respondents. Estonian and Latvian respondents are most positive about the extent to which the DPPs and donor project partners contribute to strengthening bilateral relations. This corresponds with the fact that DPPs are considerably more common in Estonian and Latvian programmes. In contrast, Slovak respondents feel that DPPs and donor project partners contribute less to strengthening bilateral relations, which corresponds with Slovak stakeholders experiencing the lowest degree of prioritisation and strengthening of bilateral relations (cf. Table 5-2 and Table 5-4).

In Romania, a few interviewed programme stakeholders found that DPPs could be even more active in developing bilateral relations and results.

The role of the DPP

Overall, there is a high degree of satisfaction with the DPP model at both programme and project levels across all five countries. Generally, the most important role of the DPPs is to assist in finding and matching project partners and participating in cooperation committees. Slovak stakeholders express that no matchmaking seminars would be possible without DPPs. The matchmaking is seen as a key instrument in bringing the partners together.

In Latvia, the greatest benefit of the DPPs is reported to be the fact that they have improved cooperation at the strategic and programme levels. Stakeholders interviewed at strategic level find that programmes have become more visible in responsible ministries, even at minister level.

Finally, the DPPs are considered beneficial to programme development and finding technical experts. Asked whether the DPPs should then have more functions, the Estonian stakeholders interviewed generally reply that the DPPs are involved at the required level and that they do not need to be assigned other responsibilities. In contrast, some interviewed stakeholders at programme level in Poland would like to see a broadening of the DPP role and deeper involvement of the DPPs in programme implementation. At the same time, these stakeholders mention that they consider this request is possibly due to the limited capacity of Norwegian DPPs.

The role of the donor project partners

As shown in Table 5-1, 27% of projects across the five focus countries have a donor project partner, ranging from 24% of projects in Romania to 37% in Latvia. The majority of projects in the focus countries do not have a donor project partner. National stakeholders attribute this to lack of partner availability, late start-up and/or insufficient information.

The donor project partners play different roles in different projects, yet across all five countries donor project partners are generally appreciated by stakeholders, who feel that the cooperation adds real value to the project. Donor project partners are most often highlighted as contributors to the development of projects, providing contacts, facilitating the exchange of experience and creating new knowledge.

Donor project partners are also generally seen as being able to adapt to the type of project in which they are involved. A few interviewed project stakeholders however, found it difficult to achieve well-balanced bilateral cooperation. When this becomes a challenge, it seems to be due to different needs and priorities, capacities, roles and responsibilities, which makes it difficult to achieve results that can be shared equally by the partners because of uneven contributions.

A general request from some project promoters is for donor project partners to take more part in and be more aware of the implementation of the project. This being said, stakeholder opinions on this issue differ considerably. Sectoral and institutional differences seem to determine the degree of involvement as well as the experience and professionalism of the donor project partner.

To illustrate this issue, the Polish analyses revealed that in most partnership projects in the field of culture and research there is a high level of exchange of experience/knowledge/good practice to the benefit of both partners. However, in some sectors in Poland (education/scholarships) the assessment is less positive, and there is a feeling that there is less interest and commitment on the part of the donor project partners.

Finally, the country analyses also show that previous cooperation and personal contacts are the most effective way of finding a relevant donor project partner. For instance, all interviewed project promoters (with a donor project partner) in Poland plan to continue cooperation with their current donor partners, and some of them have already implemented joint initiatives beyond the programme. Such collaboration is exemplified by the Polish project case in Box 5-2 below.

Box 5-2 Case story - Poland

Project title: Care support for elderly and disabled people by radar-sensor technology (RADCARE)

Country: Poland

Description of the partnership

The Polish-Norwegian partnership project "Care support for elderly and disabled people by radar-sensor technology (RADCARE)" is carried out through multidisciplinary cooperation between the Warsaw University of Technology (WUT) and the Bergen University College (BUC). WUT, functioning as Project Promoter, provides technical expertise in the project through its Institute of Radioelectronics and Multimedia Technology, while BUC provides healthcare expertise through its Centre for Care Research West Norway. The partnership was initiated and facilitated by a Polish researcher, a WUT graduate, who currently works in BUC.

Description of the project and activities

The purpose of the project is to conduct basic research on new technology in care services for elderly and disabled people in the fields of preventive care and diagnosis. The research focuses on examining the applicability of impulse radar sensor for non-invasive monitoring of the movements of elderly and disabled persons in their home environment. This radar-based technology is expected to provide solutions that are less invasive, less intrusive, less cumbersome and more effective than the existing monitoring techniques. The study combines three academic disciplines: health sciences (occupational and physical therapy, nursing), social science (sociology/anthropology), and electrical engineering. The research activities are grouped in three tasks: System design (focused on hardware), system development (focused on software), and system integration and verification (focused on testing the system model functionality in a realistic environment). The first two tasks are led by WUT and the third task is led BUC. As a result, a laboratory model of the radar-based system of assumed and verified functionality will be developed for more advanced tests. It will consist of a set of radar sensors and intelligent computing system that provides information about the identification of human body movements and selected bodily functions in a non-invasive way.

Description of the bilateral results

The project contributes to the increased research cooperation in the field of healthcare and nursing between Norway and Poland. In particular, it contributes to new knowledge in Poland about Norway's experiences with care technology. Likewise, the project facilitates the transfer of knowledge about the advanced electronic and information systems in Poland, which may enhance care technology development in Norway. The project results in a cross-disciplinary sharing of knowledge between engineers and health scientists participating in the research study. The lessons learned are likely to be applicable to diverse healthcare technologies.

Lessons learnt

Bilateral cooperation projects can only succeed when both partners integrate their research efforts and harmonize methodological approaches: "RadCare is an interdisciplinary project integrating research efforts of Polish experts in radar technology with the efforts of Norwegian experts in healthcare and medicine. This is an organisational framework making both teams learn a lot. First of all, the Polish team has had to learn the language of healthcare and medicine, and the Norwegian team – the language of technology. In the process of harmonisation of different methodological approaches of both teams, we have understood the limitations of our initial understanding of the project goals and application-specific requirements. More precisely: we have realised that prevention of falls is more important than their detection, and that radar technology may be very useful in this respect also. Moreover, we have recognised the need for the use of complementary technologies of monitoring to make it sufficiently reliable for medical and healthcare purposes."

Use of bilateral indicators

So far, 24 scientific papers, including three papers authored by both teams, have been published to convey preliminary research results regarding opportunities and challenges in this novel technology for care services. The publication of further papers in international scientific publications is scheduled for 2016 and 2017. Laboratory tests of the model of the system developed jointly by WUT and BUC teams confirm high potential of the radar-based technology for modern diagnostics and prevention.

Use of bilateral funds

The project received EUR 5,000 for the reimbursement of the partnership project proposal's preparatory costs. This amount was distributed among the project partners in accordance with the percentage of their participation in the project budget (WUT – 60%, BUC – 40%).

EQ15:
Organisational and
management issues
facilitating or
hindering bilateral
relation

The final evaluation question concerns an assessment of which of the organisational and management issues either facilitate or hinder bilateral relations. As a point of reference for this assessment, the progress of the programme implementation in the five focus countries in terms of disbursement rates is examined first.

This assessment showed that the programmes in four of the five focus countries are well under way in implementation with 45.5%, 46.7%, 35.6%, 39.2 and 56.4% of the programme funds having been incurred to date in Poland, Slovakia, Romania, Latvia and Estonia respectively.

This overall picture was largely corroborated during stakeholder interviews in the five focus countries, according to which the different stakeholders involved in the programmes generally understand and fulfil their roles as required. As an example, according to Polish stakeholders, the Polish programmes are characterised by a strong implementation structure, where POs are located in line ministries or implementing agencies, which are both strong content and administrative capacities. Programmes and projects are managed in a professional way, and involved institutions generally seem to have a high level of expertise.

The role of the Norwegian Embassies is to be involved with programme implementation in the beneficiary countries and to provide information and partner search support in their respective countries. The value added by the partner search support is highlighted by POs and project promoters. In Slovakia, the Norwegian Embassy is referred to as having more or less taken on the role of DPP for Protecting Cultural Heritage (because no DPP exists), and assists in the partner search process accordingly.

Stakeholders in at programme level in Romania and Slovakia have raised an issue relating to the structures implementing the EEA and Norway Grants. In Slovakia, rather than a line ministry or government agency, the PO is often the NFP, and this is also the case for a few programmes in Romania. This may lead to a PO role that is focused more on administrative matters than on contents. In both countries, the NFP is described as a very professional and competent body, which strengthens the administrative and financial side of programme implementation, but the structure leaves the programme without real content management. This was raised as an issue by amongst others the DPPs, who would have preferred cooperation with 'content' or a similar institution.

As an additional, supplementary indicator for the management of the programmes, Table 5-9 below shows the provision of information about the EEA and Norway Grants during the preparation of the programme or project to survey respondents.

Table 5-9 Survey results: Source of information (% that received information)

Survey question: From whom did you receive information about the EEA and Norway Grants during the preparation of the project?	Donors	Donor Programme Partner	Financial Mechanism Office (FMO)	National Focal Point	Programme Operator
Percentage from whom respondent received information					
All respondents (282)	17	17	43	52	35
All respondents at strategic level (35)	49	6	63	14	11
All respondents at programme level (173)	17	21	52	62	27
All respondents at project level (74)	3	11	11	45	68
All DPP respondents (32)	50	9	72	16	38

Detailed results at country level (programme level)	Donors	Donor Programme Partner	Financial Mechanism Office (FMO)	National Focal Point	Programme Operator
Estonia (27)	7	37	44	52	30
Latvia (29)	10	21	52	66	31
Poland (52)	19	12	42	77	27
Romania (46)	20	26	63	65	20
Slovakia (19)	26	16	63	26	32

Source: Survey results, question 1b

As illustrated in Table 5-9, information about the EEA and Norway Grants at programme level is most often provided by FMO and NFP, and this tendency is quite consistent across the five countries. Overall, donors and DPPs are the least frequent source of information at programme level.

At project level in Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia and Romania, information about the EEA and Norway Grants are provided primarily through an active NFP and through POs. In Poland, information about the EEA and Norway Grants at project level is provided by the PO and the DPP. However, notably the information about project level provision of information is based on a limited number of observations in each country (between 8 and 23). No lack of information has been experienced in any of the five countries, though some interviewed project level stakeholders stated that there had been limited information about the reason for delays in approval of programmes (Slovakia and Romania).

Issues facilitating or hindering bilateral relations

Summarising this chapter, the key issues that have been highlighted throughout the in-depth case studies, as positive or negative for the implementation of programmes. Issues raised concern both programme implementation in general (i.e. promoting or hindering implementation) and the bilateral relations objective in particular (Table 5-10 below). As the bullets points reflect qualitative statements and verbally expressed opinions, which may have contained several compliments or criticisms, some overlap between the categories cannot be avoided. The promoters and obstacles are organised in four main categories, namely 1) Programming and planning, 2) Rules, 3) DPPs/donor project partner, and 4) Institution and Capacity.

Table 5-10 Factors influencing the achievements of the bilateral objective

Factors	Positive/promoting	Negative/hindering
Programming and planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Call for proposal launched in time (EE) › NFP is regarded as helpful and supportive (SK, RO) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Time constraints – it takes time to establish the cooperation (EE, PL) › Programming/planning should be faster – takes too much time in comparison to implementation (LV, SK, RO) › More possibilities for prolongation/extension (EE) › Programmes started late (LV, SK) › Insufficient funds for the project administration by the Polish project promoters of mobility projects (PL) › Too limited time and too much work to prepare an application for the measure (PL)
Rules	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Complicated the financial rules (difference between beneficiary and donor state rules) (EE, RO) › Problems with exchange rates (EE) › Programme rules and procedures which require provision of many documents from the donor partners - problem to comply with the formal requirements (PL, SK) › Public procurement rules (laborious and time consuming procedures, unclear rules) (PL, SK, RO)
DPPs/dpp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › DPPs great help in finding partners (EE, LV, SK, RO) › DPPs help in identifying technical experts (EE) › DPPs also assist with reporting at programme level (LV) › dpp role is clear and they are essential to projects (EE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Difficulty in initiating cooperation between beneficiary and donor state partner (LV, PL, RO) › Lack of interest in the programme(s)/project (donor organisation) (LV, PL) › Lack of previous cooperation (PL)
Institution and Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Possible to find common ground and interest for cooperation (EE, LV, SK, RO) › Availability of human resources interested in the cooperation (EE, LV, PL, SK, RO) › Partners (participants) on both sides available (EE, LV, PL, RO) › Good communication (PL) › Good reporting formats (PL) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Capacity of involved institutions not adequate (especially donor state) (EE, PL, SK, RO) › Limited availability of possible partners both in beneficiary state (NGO) and in donors states (institutions) (EE, LV, SK, RO) › Procedures for granting programme(s)/projects slow and cumbersome (bureaucratic) (EE, LV, PL) › Administrative system is a barrier (LV, PL, SK, RO) › Capacity of involved institutions is limited (both sides) › Red tape and paper work is high in comparison with similar programmes (EE, LV) › Insufficient English language skills of the project direct beneficiaries (PL)

6 Priority sectors – efficiency and effectiveness

This chapter assesses the effectiveness and efficiency in the selected priority sectors: 1) Promoting Cultural Heritage, 2) Research and Scholarships, and 3) Capacity Building in Human and Social Development and the Justice Sector.

Chapter coverage

The assessment details progress on the bilateral objective in selected priority sectors. The overall findings were already presented in Chapter 4. This chapter includes the detailed assessment of the three focus priority sectors.

Data

The findings are based on the desk research, e-survey and interviews at country level in the five focus countries (Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Slovakia). Tables and figures cover the five focus countries unless otherwise stated. Additional data have been collected for the countries that have programmes under PA25 (Lithuania, Czech Republic, Bulgarian and Malta). The level of coverage (programme, project⁴¹, etc.) is stated in the tables and figures. In general, all responses from the survey (both from the programme and the project level⁴²) have been included in this chapter.

Evaluation questions covered

The following evaluation questions and topics are addressed in each of the three priority sector sections.

- › EQ2: Changes in awareness/visibility
- › EQ7: A better understanding of the targeted sector
- › EQ3: and EQ4: Main forms and levels of cooperation
- › EQ5: Depth and sustainability of relations
- › EQ6: and EQ8 and EQ12: Mutual interest and shared results

⁴¹ There are relatively few responses at the project level in the sectors. Therefore, the project level has not been addressed in isolation.

⁴² Ibid

- › EQ13 + EQ14: Effect of DPPs on the programme on culture
- › EQ15: Organisational and management issues facilitating or hindering bilateral relation.

Please note that the priority sector sections and the chapter as such do not include a summary of findings. Findings are summarized in Chapters 4 and 7 respectively.

Disbursement rates

Table 6-1 present the key figures used for the analysis relating to the programmes. First a look is taken at the incurred rate of the programmes, as shown Table 6-1. As mentioned in earlier chapters, the incurred rate gives an idea of the progress on spending in the programmes. In general, there is decent progress, but it is clear that some countries are lagging behind for some priority sectors. This is especially true for Latvia in 'Justice and Home Affairs', for Poland and Slovakia in 'Human and Social Development', and for Romania in 'Research and Scholarships'. Estonia is the only country with an incurred rate above 60% for all priority sectors at this point in time. Progress is therefore recorded for almost all countries.

Table 6-1 All focus priority sectors - Incurred rate in the five focus countries

Beneficiary state	Incurred rates (%) in priority sector				Grand total
	Protecting Cultural heritage	Research and Scholarships	Human and Social Development	Justice and Home Affairs	
Estonia	82	64	65	78	68
Latvia	42	48	55	22	37
Poland	50	79	33	39	52
Romania	36	29	39	49	39
Slovakia	42	78	24	42	37
Grand Total	38	41	47	66	47

Source: DoRIS, 19 April 2016

6.1 Protecting Cultural Heritage

The priority sector 'Protecting Cultural Heritage' has been allocated a total of 174 MEUR in the programme period – for the five focus countries, this amounts to 120 MEUR (approximately 70% of the total allocation).

Conservation and revitalisation of cultural and natural heritage

The EEA and Norway Grants support cultural and natural heritage projects in recognition of the importance of the European cultural heritage, exemplified by the fact that the cultural sector is a significant contributor to economic growth and job creation. Many cultural sites in the beneficiary countries have been neglected in recent years and are in need of restoration and modernisation. Support is provided to cultural heritage programmes in fourteen beneficiary countries, which contributes to conserving and revitalising cultural and natural heritage and improving public accessibility⁴³.

⁴³ <http://eeagrants.org/What-we-do/Programme-areas/Protecting-cultural-heritage/Conservation-and-revitalisation-of-cultural-and-natural-heritage>

Promotion of diversity in culture and arts within European cultural heritage

Europeans share a rich cultural heritage, and the promotion of cultural diversity can strengthen democratic values in Europe and contribute to economic and social cohesion. The programmes promote the diversity in culture and arts in ten beneficiary countries. These programmes aim at encouraging intercultural dialogue and diversity in the arts⁴⁴.

Table 6-2 shows an overview of the programmes in the priority sector promoting cultural heritage covered by the evaluation in the five focus countries.

Table 6-2 Protecting Cultural Heritage - Programmes covered by the evaluation

Programme	Programme area and title		DPP	Amount ⁴⁵ (EUR)
EE05	PA16	Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage	Directorate of cultural heritage (RA)	4,609,259
LV04	PA16	Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage	Directorate of cultural heritage (RA),	9,829,642
	PA17	Promotion of diversity in culture and arts within European cultural heritage	Arts Council Norway (ACN)	834,720
PL08	PA16	Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage	-	66,888,381
PL09	PA17	Promotion of Diversity in Culture and Arts within European Cultural Heritage (Donor Partnership Programme)	Arts Council Norway (ACN)	10,961,111
RO12	PA16	Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage	Directorate of cultural heritage (RA)	16,448,526
RO13	PA17	Promotion of Diversity in Culture and Arts within European Cultural Heritage	Arts Council Norway (ACN)	6,951,522
SK05	PA16	Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage &	-	11,849,941
	PA17	Promotion of Diversity in Culture and Arts within European Cultural Heritage	-	1,405,074

Source: DoRIS Report 17, 2 March 2016

6.1.1 Effectiveness (Protecting cultural heritage)

This section presents the findings related to achievements and progress towards the bilateral objective for Protecting Cultural Heritage. The key evaluation questions under scrutiny are presented in the margin.

EQ2: Which changes are evident amongst the actors?

The first question in this section explores changes in terms of improved attitudes, understanding and trust in the programmes and projects in the cultural sector. Responses regarding attitudes and awareness are depicted in Figure 6-1. Project stakeholders interviewed underlined that the attitudes were often positive from the outset of the project and that this sentiment improved over time.

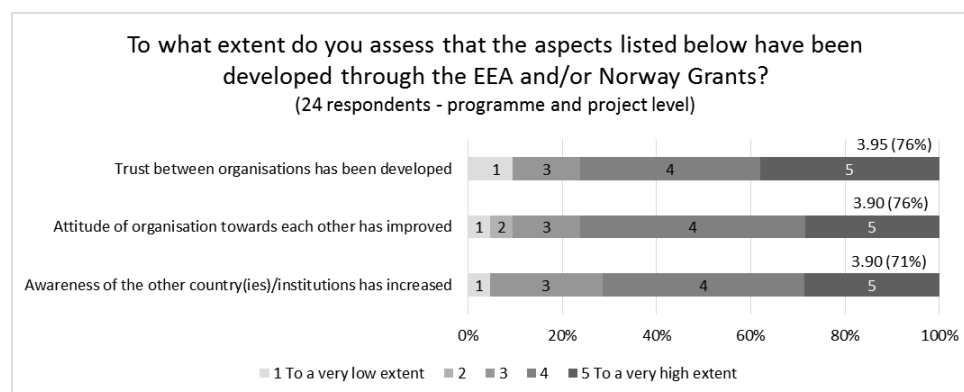
Figure 6-1, Figure 6-2 and Figure 6-3 illustrating the responses from the survey show a positive assessment of the changes at programme level (DPP, PO and

⁴⁴ <http://eeagrants.org/What-we-do/Programme-areas/Protecting-cultural-heritage/Promotion-of-diversity-in-culture-and-arts-within-European-cultural-heritage>

⁴⁵ Total eligible amount including co-financing

project promoters). 71 to 76% of the respondents state that changes in attitudes and awareness have occurred to a high or a very high extent. Project stakeholders interviewed underlined that, from the outset of the projects, attitudes are generally positive and improving over time. The project case story for Latvia (see Box 6-1) illustrates how trust is built in a project. The project has increased the understanding of how work is organised in a small municipality in Norway and Latvia respectively and built trust among the partners. As a result, the Norwegian partners are now ready to put their signature on documents without posing too many questions and asking for additional information.

Figure 6-1 Protecting cultural heritage - Development of trust, attitudes and awareness

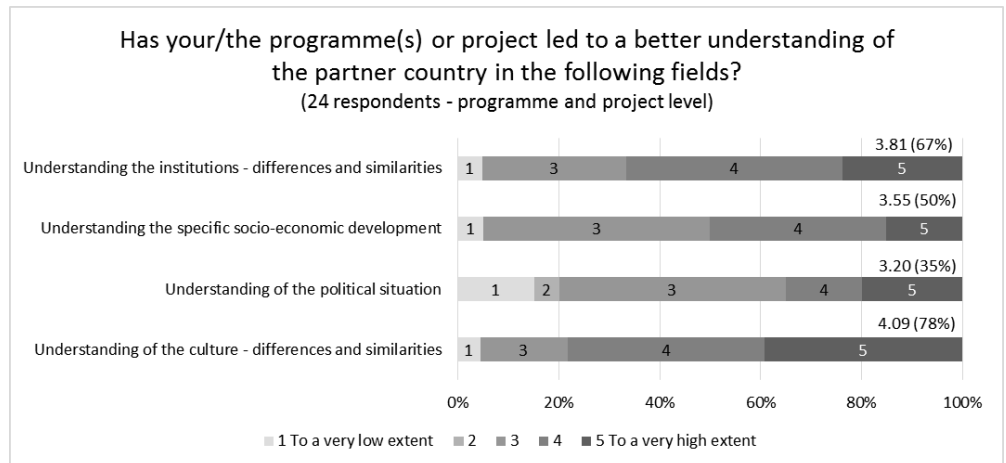


Source: Survey results, question 13.

Understanding the other country

Several of the stakeholders interviewed at both project and programme levels stated that they find the cultures in the beneficiary and donor states similar. In interviews, project stakeholders provide positive feedback, especially on the issue of getting to know the other culture (although, notably, the evaluator finds that this is often refers to the administrative system). Project stakeholders mention that exchange of experience and collaboration on planning and implementing events have both helped improve cultural understanding. This suggests that the understanding comes from working together and having to tackle different situations and issues. One stakeholder at project level found that the *'administrative system in Norway was very quick to solve tasks and problems and that this served as an inspiration to mobilize and encourage the partners'*. Figure 6-2 shows that understanding of the institutions and the culture respectively has changed most, with 67% and 78% of the respondents answering to a high or very high extent.

Figure 6-2 Protecting cultural heritage - Improved understanding of partner country

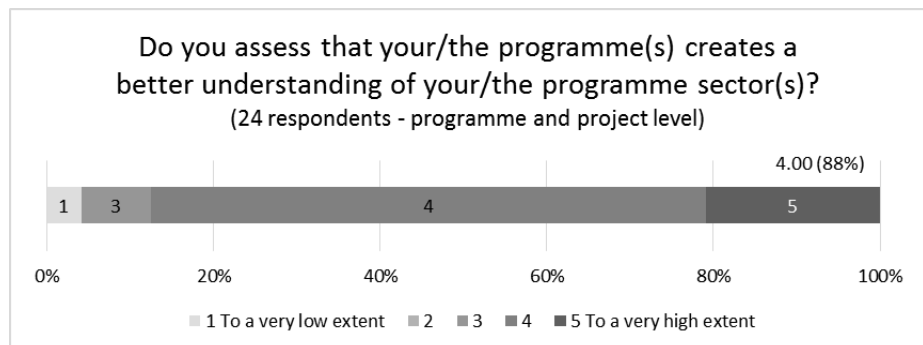


Source: Survey results, question 14

EQ7: A better understanding of the targeted sector

The question whether the understanding of the sector had improved was primarily addressed during interviews; yet many interviewees found it difficult to provide a clear answer. Figure 6-3 shows that a high level of respondents found that the understanding of the sector had increased.

Figure 6-3 Protecting cultural heritage - Improved understanding of the sector



Source: Survey results, question 15

Limited need to understand the sector

Overall, few of the project level stakeholders found that there was a need for a better understanding of the sector. Rather, they stated that their interests lie in the different management methods applied (i.e. how to manage a call, how to engage applicants, how to manage financing, etc.). According to the interviewees, the sharing of experience and knowledge creates an understanding of the challenges faced by the partners. This insight has supported partners on both sides.

Getting to know the other system

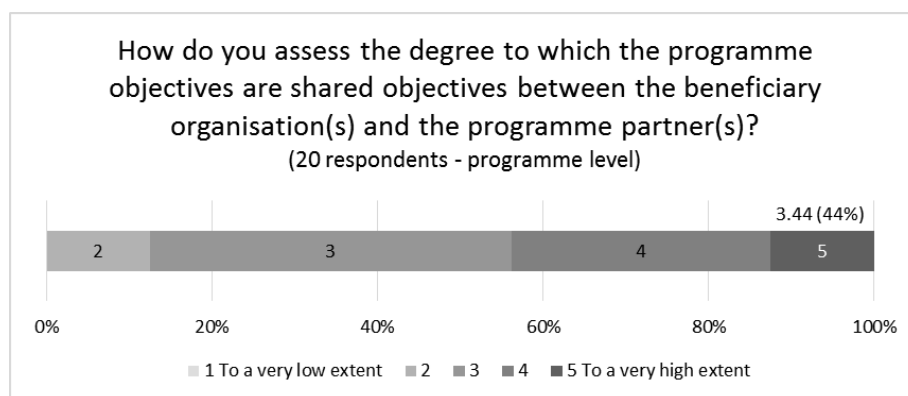
At programme level, stakeholders highlight that getting to know the 'other' administrative system and understanding how this system functions has generally improved over time. Working together lets the participants reflect on their own systems, policies and ways of doing things. As one stakeholder at project level phrases it: "Sometimes you have to see what somebody else is doing to understand what it is that you do". The understanding and knowledge of other systems prompt participants to reflect on their own system. This observation was mentioned during several interviews in the sector. Another stakeholder at programme level noted 'the cooperation with the Norwegian side (e.g. evaluation

committee) made us think more thoroughly about the sustainability of the projects we have financed/wished to finance. I think we will take this knowledge and apply it also in other domestic programmes'.

EQ6 and EQ8:
Mutual interest and
shared results

Figure 6-4 and Table 6-3 show different aspects of the degree of mutual interest and results collected from the survey. 96% of respondents agreed that the programme and project resulted in 'one or more common results' and only 4% did not agree⁴⁶. Several projects show that the activities undertaken as part of the restoration of a cultural site may also benefit the donor institution in terms of learning. As an example, the case project for Slovakia (Box 5-1) shows how a cultural project can serve as a learning platform for both the beneficiary and the donor. The project in question tests a technology (monument preservation) in Slovakia, which is new to both the beneficiary and the donor. For Slovakia, the project facilitates the introduction of the system and the physical set up of 'rescue teams'. The Norwegian part takes part and learns from the process, possibly with a view to establishing a similar system.

Figure 6-4 Protecting cultural heritage - Shared objectives



Source: Survey results, question 3

Table 6-3 shows survey respondents' ranking of the most important types of bilateral results. It is noted by the evaluator that these results may not be particularly relevant to the cultural sector. The general indicator on projects with shared results receives the highest ranking by all programme and project respondents. Although there are only few survey respondents at project level, the interviews indicate that projects often work towards common outputs or results. Interviews with project promoters reveal a keen interest in working together towards common results (outputs) and common development of tools and training. The derived indicators show relatively high targets for programmes that use these indicators (presently only 20-40% of the programmes).

⁴⁶ 24 respondents - Figure for this is not included in report.

Table 6-3 Protecting cultural heritage – Importance of common/shared results

Ranking at programme level	Survey question: Which common/shared results are the three most important on the list? (21 respondents – programme level)
1	Number of projects with expected shared results (both partners are involved professionally in planning and implementation and can claim credit for achieved results).
2	Number of joint (bilateral) articles published, written by persons from both an institution in a beneficiary and donor state, published in national or international publications, originated from a project financed by the programme(s).
3	Number of new technologies/new practices, including IT-systems, adopted in a donor state, as a result of transfer of knowledge from beneficiary state partners.
4	Number of new technologies/new practices, including IT-systems, adopted in a beneficiary state, as a result of transfer of knowledge from a donor state partner.
5	Number of new policies, laws and regulations adapted, as a result of bilateral cooperation, under the grants.
6	Number of joint (bilateral) scientific papers written with co-researchers in at least one beneficiary and one donor state, and published in a national or international scientific publication, originated from a project financed by the programme(s).

Source: Survey results, question 16b

Achievements on Indicators

As shown in Table 6-4, the bilateral indicator 'shared results' is not used in the sector 'Protecting Cultural Heritage', and this dimension cannot be illuminated and assessed by means of the indicators. In general, the bilateral indicator is not used very much in the cultural programmes, and the progress depicted in Table 6-4 has not changed from 2014 to 2015.

Table 6-4 Protecting Cultural heritage - Progress on the indicators 2014 and 2015

Dimension	Bilateral indicator (2014/2015)	Progress (achievement in relation to target in %)									
		Estonia		Latvia		Poland		Romania		Slovakia	
		2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
Extent of cooperation	Number of project partnership agreements in beneficiary civil society	-	-	-	-	-	-	185	185	100	100
	Number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary private sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	100	100
	Number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary public sector	50	50	-	-	-	-	140	140	100	100
Shared initiatives and results	See Table 6-5below	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Knowledge and understanding	No indicators available	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wider effects	No indicators available	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: DoRIS Reports 13 & 44: February 2015 (14 Oct 2015) and February 2016 (28 Feb 2016)

Table 6-5 shows the derived indicators in the sector that reflect almost all aspects of common and joint results. As mentioned above, many projects in this area are concerned with working on common results/outputs. Table 6-5 shows that indicators are not widely used by the programmes (less than half of the surveyed countries). The table also shows that the achievements in this sector are not visible (or recorded yet). Achievements on and use of indicators are unchanged since 2014. The lack of recorded achievement reflects that programmes are not very

advanced whereas the lack of use of the indicators most probably reflects that programmes either do not find the indicators relevant or are hesitant committing to targets that they may not be able to meet.

Table 6-5 Protecting Cultural heritage - Derived result indicators: target, achievements, and coverage for 2014/2015

Indicator (2014/2015)	Total targets		Total achievements		% country coverage	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
Annual number of visitors to cultural heritage sites and museums	115,000	115,000	-	-	20	20
Number of buildings of cultural heritage value restored or rehabilitated	32	32	-	-	60	60
Number of cultural buildings and heritage sites opened to the public	15	15	-	-	40	40
Number of cultural diversity projects	42	42	-	-	40	40
Number of cultural performances held	120	120	1,050	1,047	40	40
Number of items of cultural heritage converted to an electronic format	5	5	-	-	20	20
Number of local cultural associations involved in the implementation of projects	112	112	-	-	40	40
Number of new museums and cultural facilities	5	5	-	-	40	40

Source: DoRIS Report 44, February 2015 (14 Oct 2015) and February 2016 (28 Feb 2016)

EQ3 and EQ 4: Main forms and levels of cooperation

The main form of cooperation in this sector is inter-institutional cooperation between cultural institutions with a project promoter and a donor project partner. Often projects have more partners and in some cases quite a large number of partners. Most projects in this sector are cooperation projects or projects based on joint activities, e.g. common training in a specific topic as a shared or common output whereas the results may differ between the partners. Fewer projects in this sector have a capacity building aspect (transfer of knowledge from donor project partner to partner) than in the Research and Scholarships sector and in the Human and Social Development sector.

Projects in the cultural area may be based on existing relations or on new relations and a large variation is seen. Geographical differences may in part explain this. Interviews with project level stakeholders indicate that in countries with a history of working with partners in donor countries, projects tend to be based on existing cooperation. In countries with little or limited previous contact between institutions, the DPPs become very important for partner search and matching.

Wider effects

An important aspect of the work in the cultural area is the possibility of partners to work internationally, within and outside the EU. According to interviews with programme level stakeholders, cooperation also helps internationalise the DPPs (development of international strategies) and the POs. There are examples of spin-offs from projects, where project partners together prepare an application for e.g. EU funding or planning to apply for further funding under future EEA and Norway Grants.

Box 6-1

Latvia - Project case story

Project title: Environment manufactures

Country: Latvia

Description of the partnership

The project "Environment manufactures" was built on the existing bilateral cooperation between Kuldiga District Council in Latvia and the Frogn Municipality in Norway that started in 2008 with another project on preservation of cultural heritage, which was funded by the Norwegian Financial Instrument 2004-2009. The previous collaboration played a significant role in improving the implementation of this project, in as much as both parties already knew what to expect from one another and were aware of the strengths and benefits of the cooperation. In order to extend the partnership horizons, Environment manufactures also involved partners from Iceland (Youth Culture centre "Hitt Husitt") and Lithuania ("Artists Club") as well as artists from Belgium and France.

Description of the project and activities

The project aimed at preparing the historical old province towns of Kuldiga in Latvia and Drobak in Norway as the stages for cross-disciplinary contemporary, cultural activities. The central axis of the project was two creative, cultural environment actions or performances: 1) the "Factures of old town" held in Kuldiga in July 2014 and 2) the „Light Festival" held in Drobak in September 2014. The contents of these performances were co-developed by the artists from Latvia, Norway, Iceland and Lithuania during three creative workshops in the fields of music, street theatre and contemporary art. The performances were organised as open air events in the historical environment of both towns discovering new venues that had not been previously recognised and used for cultural activities.

Description of the bilateral results

The project had four key bilateral results for the partners involved:

It ensured mobility of the artists from four different countries in the fields of street theatre, contemporary dance, music and visual arts.

It implemented exchange of the creative cultural units from these countries.

It contributed to teaching new innovative, creative skills to the young artists from Latvia, Norway, Lithuania and Iceland.

It developed new innovative venues for the cultural activities in the old towns of Kuldiga and Drobak.

Lessons learned

According to the project promoter, the project has increased the understanding of how the work is organised in a small municipality in Norway and Latvia and built trust among the partners. As a result, the Norwegian partners are ready to put their signature on documents without posing too many questions and asking for additional information.

On the project implementation side, the main bilateral aspect of the project was the insight into the diversity of cultures and their importance in making the overall cultural space. This especially inspired the young people who participated in the project activities.

Use of bilateral indicators

The project is promoting the achievement of the bilateral indicators on cooperation in the sphere of culture between the providers of cultural services and cultural institutions in Latvia and the donor countries by promoting international movement of culture products, culture services and works of art. The project inspired 40 young artists who participated in the project activities and contributed to the opening of seven new open-air venues for the cultural activities in Kuldiga and Drobak. The cooperation, in general, gave an insight into the diversity of cultures, raised the level of understanding of the other countries and added new inspiration into rather traditional local environments.

Use of bilateral funds

With the financial support of the Bilateral Fund, in August 2015, Kuldiga visited Iceland and extended its existing partnership to new partners and creative groups. As a result, a new cooperation project for continuation of similar activities has been prepared and has received funding under the NORD programme. The new project builds on the same cooperation approach as applied in this project and will include common workshops and performances devoted to ecological art and a green way of life, planned in Kuldiga for July 2016

6.1.2 Efficiency (Protecting cultural heritage)

Efficiency

This section addresses key questions on efficiency in implementing the bilateral objective of the programme in the priority sector 'Protecting Cultural Heritage'.

EQ12: Tools supporting the development of bilateral relations in culture

When project stakeholders are asked to assess the most useful tool for assisting in developing the bilateral relations during interviews, they most often highlight the assistance for developing (and identifying) the partnership. However, the expected applicability of the tools differs between the countries. The difference seems to depend on the geographical proximity between the beneficiary and donor state and their level of previous cooperation.

Table 6-6 shows the assessment of the key tools made available to the programme level. With an average score of 4.78 (out of 5), cooperation committees turn out to be most important to programme stakeholders, as also corroborated by interviews. Interviews with project level stakeholders show that the tools related to partner search are the most important.

According to stakeholders interviewed, the bilateral funds have extended the level of cooperation as can be seen from Box 6-1 (the project case for Latvia). For this project, the bilateral funds resulted in *"A new cooperation project for continuation of similar activities has been prepared and has received funding under the NORD programme. The new project builds on the same cooperation approach"*.

Table 6-6 Protecting cultural heritage – Tools supporting bilateral relations

Survey question: To what extent do you assess that the tools/activities listed below support the development of bilateral relations? (21 respondents – programme level)	
Top 5 Tools	Average score ⁴⁷
Cooperation committee	4.78
Networking and exchange of experience	4.74
Study tours for POs or other potential programme partners to the donor states	4.53
Donor Programme Partnerships	4.44
Project preparation and partner search	4.28

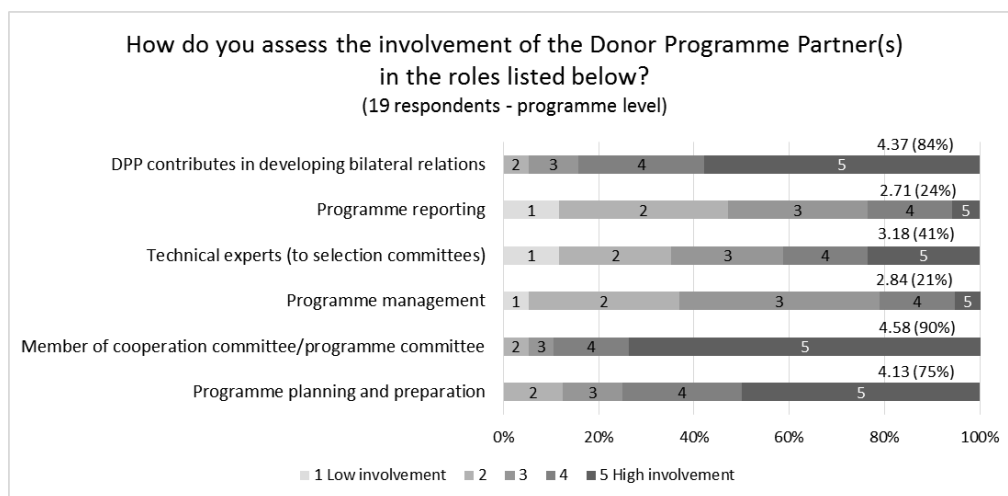
Source: Survey results, question 8

EQ13 + EQ14: Effect of DPPs in the programme in culture

Whereas DPPs are very welcome in most programmes, some programmes in the cultural sector found that DPPs had no real relevance, in particular in culture preservation. Programmes with a specific focus on restoring historical sites did not see the use of DPPs (on the contrary), and in the same vein projects did not see the relevance of a donor project partner. This observation was made for some but not all programmes. In general, stakeholders interviewed in 'Protecting cultural heritage' programmes (both programme and project level) did not consider a bilateral objective part of the programme. However, the survey shows (Figure 6-5) that both cooperation/programme committee and DPP contribution receive very high scores (4.37) in terms of contributing to the development of the bilateral objective. The difference between the data in interviews and survey is not fully clear. This may reflect the fact that project stakeholders interviewed represented projects without a bilateral aspect more so than stakeholders responding to the survey.

⁴⁷ Scores (1 = to a very low extent, 2 = to a low extent, 3 = neutral, 4 = to a high extent, 5 = to a very high extent)

Figure 6-5 Protecting cultural heritage - The roles of the DPPs



Source: Survey results, questions 6 & 7

EQ15:
Organisational and management issues facilitating or hindering bilateral relation in culture

The key factors facilitating bilateral relations are listed in Table 6-7. Almost all interviewees in the cultural sector mention the burdens of financial administration (and procurement) and the approval of expenditure and reporting as key issues. In most cases, beneficiary countries have chosen to use the EU structural fund procedures, although they are cumbersome and create special problems for the Norwegian partners, who are not used to the requirement that each expenditure must be approved (differences were observed from country to country. Estonia seems to have less problems with financial administration). In the survey, lack of capacity is mentioned as a key factor hindering bilateral relations; still this issue was not mentioned very often during the many interviews conducted in the sector. Table 6-7 also indicates that the timing – funds available on time – is an issue for stakeholders in this sector.

Table 6-7 Protecting cultural heritage - Factors that facilitate or hinder bilateral relations

Survey question: Which organisational and management issues facilitate / hinder the development of bilateral relations? (24 respondents – programme and project level)		
Ranking	Top 5 issues that <u>facilitate</u> development of bilateral relations	Top 5 issues that <u>hinder</u> development of bilateral relations
1	Partners (participants) on both sides available	Procedures for granting programme(s)/project(s) slow and cumbersome (bureaucratic)
2	Funds available in time from the EEA Grants	Capacity of involved institutions not adequate
3	Availability of human resources interested in the cooperation	Difference in legal provisions regulating the rules of cooperation
4	Information and support	Lack of communication
5	Programme(s)/project(s) planned in time	Difficulty in initiating cooperation between beneficiary and donor state partners

Source: Survey results, questions 9 & 10

Below is a list of key issues raised during interviews:

- **Availability of project partners** was raised in most countries (as mentioned some programmes do not focus on partnerships). One stakeholder at programme level also mentioned that there may be issues with regard to

quality of the partnership requests and that this might be a factor hampering the establishment of bilateral cooperation projects⁴⁸.

- › **Support to identifying and finding partners.** Partner meetings before the submission of the project application are considered important for developing strong project proposals.
- › **Likeminded (or similar) institutions work better together** (more easily). A PO that is a MoF thus tends to find it difficult to work with a DPP that is an art council and vice versa.
- › **The experience of project partners matters** when working on international cooperation projects and in specific institutional contexts. Previous experience (having worked together in other contexts) and project partners that know each other are key strengths.
- › **Timing** (timely publishing of calls, availability of funds, launching of programmes) was highlighted in the survey, but was not brought up as a key issue during interviews in this sector.

6.2 Research and Scholarships

The priority sector 'Research and Scholarships' has been allocated 181 MEUR in the programme period. For the five focus countries, the allocation amounts to 123.6 MEUR or 67.96% of the total allocation.

Research within
priority sectors /
Bilateral research
cooperation

The EEA and Norway Grants promote the European research base and increasing mobility for researchers. As part of the EU sustainable growth strategy, research and innovation are key, and EU Member States have to improve conditions and access to finance for research and innovation. The programmes provide support in seven beneficiary countries to increase research capacity and the application of research results.

Scholarships /
Bilateral scholarship
cooperation

Boosting transnational mobility and removing obstacles help students acquire new skills and strengthen future employability. Partnerships between higher education institutions to support scholarship programmes have been established in eleven countries. The focus is on strengthening education systems through international cooperation and on facilitating student and staff exchanges with Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

Table 6-8 gives an overview of the programmes in the priority countries promoting research and scholarships.

⁴⁸ The issue was raised but one stakeholder late in the evaluation and further investigation of the extent and validity of the critique has not been performed

Table 6-8 Research and Scholarships - Programmes covered by the evaluation

Programme	Programme area and title		DPP	Amount ⁴⁹ (EUR)
EE10	PA19	Scholarship	1) Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS)	568,811
	PA24	Bilateral scholarship programme	2) Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU) 3) National Agency for International Education Affairs (AIBA)	948,018
EE06	PA23	Bilateral research cooperation	Research Council of Norway (NFR)	2,958,333
LV05	PA19	Scholarships	1) Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU),	515,460
	PA23	Bilateral research cooperation	2) Research Council of Norway (NFR),	4,435,556
	PA24	Bilateral scholarship programme		529,577
PL10	PA19	Scholarship	1) Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS)	4,927,567
	PA24	Bilateral scholarship programme	2) Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU) 3) National Agency for International Education Affairs (AIBA)	9,854,949
PL12	PA23	Bilateral Research Cooperation	Research Council of Norway (NFR)	70,837,642
RO14	PA18	Research within priority sectors	1) Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS) 2) Research Council of Norway (NFR)	21,681,063
RO15	PA19	Scholarships	1) Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS) 2) Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU) 3) National Agency for International Education Affairs (AIBA)	4,396,000
SK06	PA19	EEA Scholarships	1) Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS), 2) Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU), 3) National Agency for International Education Affairs (AIBA)	1,957,176

Source: DoRIS Report 17, 2 March 2016

6.2.1 Effectiveness (Research and Scholarships)

This section presents the findings related to achievements and progress towards the bilateral objectives in Research and Scholarships. The key evaluation questions under scrutiny are presented in the margin.

EQ2: Which changes are evident amongst actors

Figure 6-6 below shows the changes in trust, attitudes and awareness of the other institutions brought about by the programmes. Both at programme level (DPP and PO) and project level (project partners), the survey found high levels of assessed change by respondents. This is confirmed in stakeholder interviews, revealing a change towards improved awareness, attitudes, understanding and trust. As is the case for the Protecting Cultural Heritage sector, stakeholders highlight that getting familiar with the 'other' administrative system and understanding how this system functions have generally improved over time. The many meetings, workshops, seminars and other opportunities to meet at programme and project level have enhanced cooperation. Stakeholders at both levels find that strengthened communication supports the development of understanding and trust.

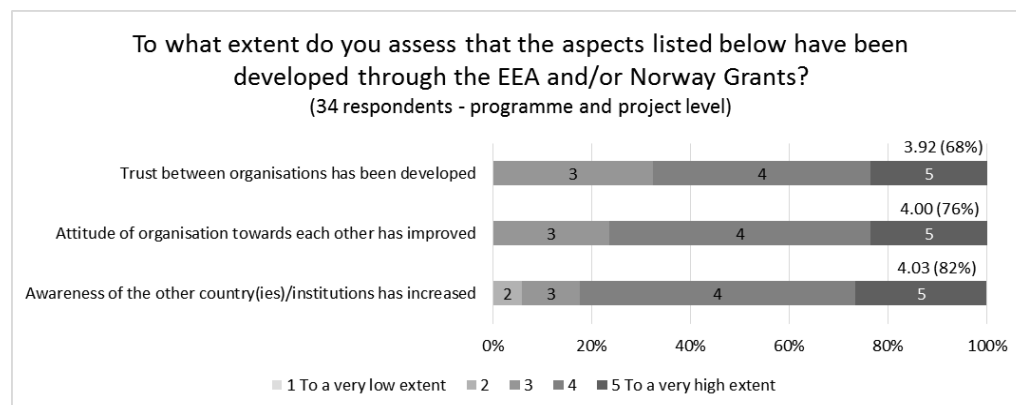
Schools get an opportunity to internationalise

At project level, exchanges of students and teachers also help increase awareness and understanding. In general, the interviews show that the institutional exchanges at school level are more significant than at university level. This type of cooperation is more common at university level, through e.g. ERASMUS, than at school level.

⁴⁹ Total eligible amount including co-financing

Schools are not used to this type of cooperation and the programme is thus an important element in the internationalisation of schools.

Figure 6-6 Research and scholarships – Development of trust, attitudes and awareness

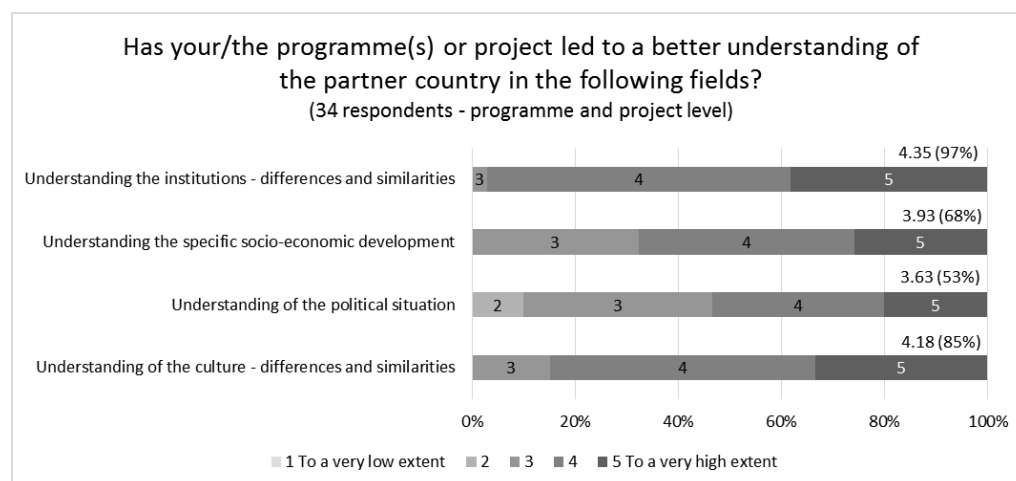


Source: Survey results, question 13

Creating trust

That being said, some of the project level stakeholders interviewed emphasised that although universities are often involved in similar international cooperation initiatives, the opportunity for researchers to collaborate with new international researchers remains an important benefit of the programme. This in particular, builds trust which is important for cooperation in future projects e.g. under the EU programmes. In the research area, the interpersonal relationship (and trust) thus plays an important role (an example is the case story for Poland in Chapter 5, Box 5-2).

Figure 6-7 Research and scholarships – Improved understanding of partner country



Source: Survey results, question 14

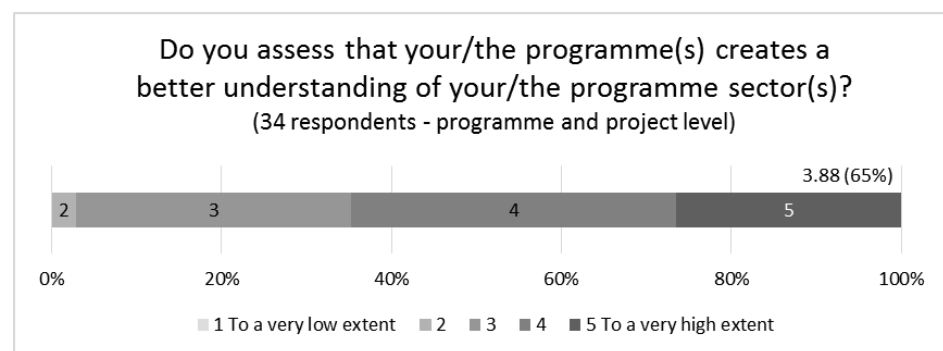
As can be seen in Figure 6-7, respondents at both programme and project levels found that programmes and projects contributed to the understanding of partners and their specific circumstances. During interviews, some of the project stakeholders emphasised that it was important to understand the organisational culture of the partner organisation. However, it should be noted that a substantial part of the stakeholders interviewed found it difficult to answer the question, and that those who did answer almost exclusively represented projects in which

schools cooperated. These interviewees confirmed the importance of the cooperation and that the improved understanding of culture was especially important.

EQ7: A better understanding of the research and education sector

Asked whether cooperation had improved the overall understanding of the sector, most interviewed stakeholders refrained from answering on the grounds that the question was superfluous. In spite of this reaction in the interviews, Figure 6-8 shows that the result of the survey is a relatively positive response to the question – i.e. 65% of the respondents replied to a high or very high extent. This discrepancy may reflect the difference between respondents to the survey and in interviews.

Figure 6-8 Research and scholarships – Improved understanding of the sector

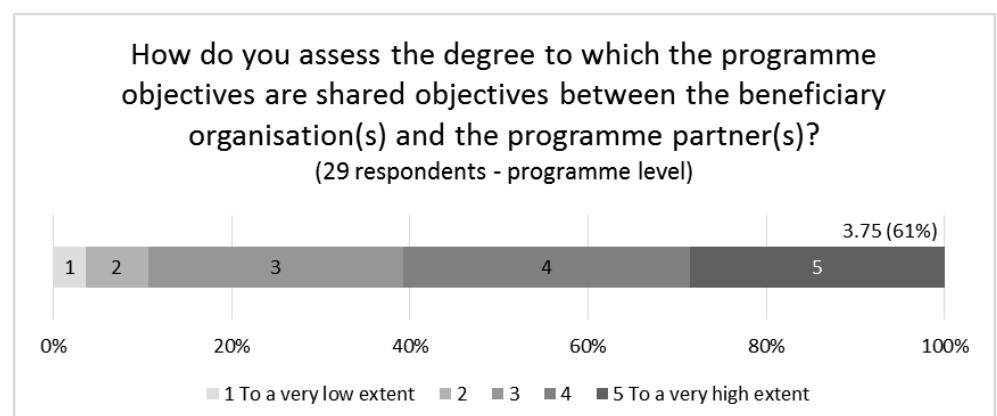


Source: Survey results, question 15

EQ6 and EQ8
Mutual interest and share results

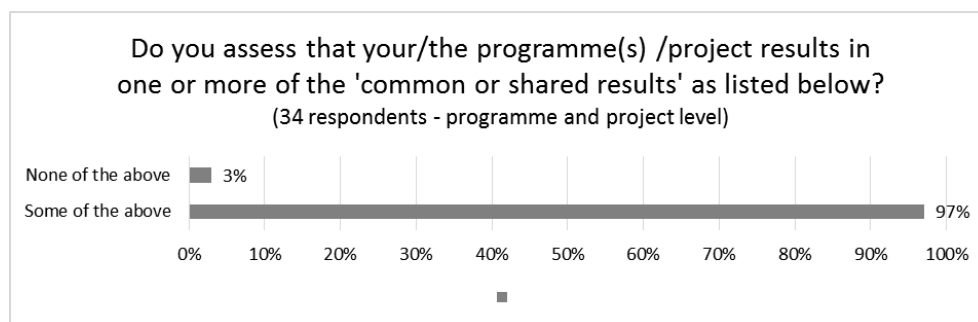
As mentioned above, working on common results in this priority sector is a key result. As illustrated in Figure 6-10, the survey found clear indications that the programmes result in common or shared results. Interestingly, however, to the question of whether the partners have the same objective, the opinions of the respondents are more mixed (yet still quite positive), as can be seen in Figure 6-9.

Figure 6-9 Research and scholarships – Shared objectives



Source: Survey results, question 3

Figure 6-10 Research and scholarships – Common and share results



Source: Survey results, question 16

Survey findings on the result rated as the most important by respondents in the Research and Scholarship programmes were also unambiguous (illustrated in Table 6-9). Both at programme and project level, the indicator '*Number of projects with expected shared results (both partners are involved professionally in planning and implementation and can claim credit for achieved results)*' is rated as the most important result. Again, the overall homogeneity of the sector both in terms of content and implementation methods (between programmes in different countries) gives relatively clear responses in comparison with other sectors.

Table 6-9 Research and scholarships – Importance of common/shared results

Ranking at programme level	Survey question: Which common/shared results are the three most important on the list? (29 respondents – programme level)
1	Number of projects with expected shared results (both partners are involved professionally in planning and implementation and can claim credit for achieved results).
2	Number of joint (bilateral) scientific papers written with co-researchers in at least one beneficiary and one donor state, and published in a national or international scientific publication, originated from a project financed by the programme(s).
3	Number of joint (bilateral) articles published, written by persons from both an institution in a beneficiary and donor state, published in national or international publications, originated from a project financed by the programme(s).
4	Number of new technologies/new practices, including IT-systems, adopted in a beneficiary state, as a result of transfer of knowledge from a donor state partner.
5	Number of new technologies/new practices, including IT-systems, adopted in a donor state, as a result of transfer of knowledge from beneficiary state partners.
6	Number of new policies, laws and regulations adapted, as a result of bilateral cooperation, under the grants.

Source: Survey results, question 16b

Achievements on indicators

The Research and Scholarship programmes are slightly better than other programmes in using indicators. Especially the bilateral indicators are used more frequently in this priority sector. One reason for this may be that the programmes are similar across the countries, which makes it easier to develop a common set of indicators.

Table 6-10 shows a high level of achievement on the bilateral indicators in this sector with some of the performance achievements being 200% or 300% above target. This indicates that the targets have been set very low. While this can be positive in terms of performance, it is less positive in terms of planning.

Table 6-10 *Research and scholarships – Progress on the indicators towards the bilateral objective on key bilateral indicators 2014 and 2015*

Dimension	Bilateral indicator (2014/2015)	Progress (achievement in relation to target in %)									
		EE		LV		PL		RO		SK	
		2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
Extent of cooperation	Number of project partnership agreements in beneficiary civil society	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary private sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	-
	Number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary public sector	288	288	0	125	109	266	0	115	0	-
Shared results	Number of projects with expected shared results (both partners are involved professionally in planning and implementation and can claim credit for achieved results)	125	125	-	-	-	-	73	73	0	-
Knowledge and understanding	See Table 5-10 below	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wider effects	No indicators available	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: DoRIS Report 13 & 44: February 2015 (14 Oct 2015) and February 2016 (28 Feb 2016)

In Table 6-11 showing the derived indicators, the Research and Scholarships priority sector has a high level of coverage. There is good progress towards targets and achievements and much less over-performance than is the case for the bilateral indicators. Some targets have been adjusted significantly upward in 2015, compared with 2014.

Table 6-11 *Research and Scholarships – Derived result indicators: target, achievements, and coverage for 2014/2015*

Indicator (2014/2015)	Total targets		Total achievements		% country coverage	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
Increased skills/competences of staff involved in mobility	610	610	280	506	80	80
Number of Beneficiary State and Donor State research institutions co-operating within the programme	160	80	99	99	60	40
Number of internationally refereed scientific publications	390	390	3	154	80	80
Number of joint products and services *	57	270	-	154	60	60
Number of mobile staff as part of new or existing mobility agreements	837	837	296	1,138	100	100
Number of PhD students and postdocs supported	83	203	234	171	60	100
Number of researchers involved in joint projects	265	820	592	582	60	60
Number of students with received ECTS credits	946	946	344	724	100	100

Source: DoRIS Report 44: February 2015 (14 Oct 2015) and February 2016 (28 Feb 2016)

EQ3 and EQ4: Main forms and levels of cooperation

The main form of cooperation in this sector is interinstitutional cooperation between research institutions and educational institutions. Some research projects involve private partners, while local authorities are involved in school projects. Research projects are typically projects where researchers work towards common results. Mobility projects involve personal exchanges of students or staff, and institutional projects regularly involve cooperation between educational institutions to develop training materials or exchange experiences. The project case for Estonia in Box 6-2 is a good example of institutional cooperation between schools.

EQ5: Depth and sustainability of relations

Research projects generally promote cooperation possibilities as they often build on already existing cooperation. Potentially, international cooperation can yield important benefits in the research sector, and the EEA and Norway Grants projects often provide an opportunity for those who have not yet been part of a cooperation project to embark on a cooperation project, maybe in the framework of EU projects. In this respect, the research projects are equally important to the beneficiary and to the donor states. At programme level, stakeholders stated that the programme has resulted in five European Research Council grant projects, which they consider highly prestigious.

The same goes for the mobility projects. However, many requests for mobility cannot be realised due to lack of capacity on the one hand (too many students wish to visit the donor states) and lack of demand on the other hand (donor state students want to visit 'more exotic countries'). This may limit the continuation of some of the mobility projects. The evaluation also reveals differences between countries. In the cases where a university has an ongoing cooperation agreement with a donor state university, it is often easier to renew the agreement, according to the stakeholders interviewed.

Box 6-2

Estonia - Project case story

Project title: ESTIC - Sustainable School Policy

Country: Estonia

Description of the partnership

The project "ESTIC - Sustainable School Policy" was a 1.5 year long cooperation partnership between two schools: Viimsi Secondary School from Estonia and Fjölbrautaskólinn við Ármúla from Iceland. While both schools had previous experience with international projects, they had not previously cooperated with each other. Collaboration between the schools was initiated by Viimsi school, which contacted the national agencies in all three donor countries and asked them to distribute the school's e-mail in which they searched for project partners. The Icelandic school responded to the request, and mutual interests became the basis of the partnership.

Description of the project and activities

The project's activities centred on the theme of sustainability and targeted teachers in the upper secondary school. Viimsi school aimed at introducing the principles of sustainable development at their school while Fjölbrautaskólinn við Ármúla wished to further develop its sustainability. Both schools prepared teaching materials and organized events that supported the application of the principles of sustainable development, as for instance the Day of Cleaning. The project consisted of three main types of activities:

The Viimsi school drew up its first sustainable school policy, and Fjölbrautaskólinn við Ármúla updated its annual action plan for sustainability.

Teachers at both schools produced study kits for seven different subjects including geology and biology as well as one general study kit for the topic of sustainability. In total, twenty different study kits were developed. Furthermore, nine video clips were created around nine topics of Icelandic nature and history. Both schools conducted analyses and further developed curricula for mathematics and natural science field studies. In order to prepare the study materials and facilitate an exchange of experiences, two study trips were organized, one to each country. Altogether 76 Estonian and 98 Icelandic teachers and staff members were involved in the project.

Description of the bilateral results

A few years prior the Icelandic school prepared a sustainability policy, and the school was therefore in a good position to guide Viimsi school in their first effort to do the same. On the other hand, Viimsi school contributed to the preparation of the Fjölbrautaskólinn við Ármúla annual action plan for sustainability by suggesting new and wider perspectives to be taken into account. The Icelandic videos were produced jointly by both schools and are now publicly available in both languages along with other developed study kits. Finally, while the development of the curricula for mathematics and natural sciences were conducted separately by each school, the comparing of contents and sharing of good practices during the project meetings improved the quality of the developed curricula in both schools.

Lessons learned

Maarja Urb, project manager at Viimsi School: *"I believe the project was an eye-opener for our partner about Estonia's historical and political background. And for us it was heart-warming to see both the similarities (e.g. humour) and differences between the two countries (e.g. the energy production). We found that we have much to learn from our partner school in terms of outdoor learning and recycling and we used the ideas got from the school visit in our school. We had an experienced Icelandic partner who delivered its part excellently. However, the project would have benefited from a pre-meeting with the partner to create a more shared ownership of the project which this time felt more like our responsibility. It could also be useful to have three instead of two partners – this would balance the relationship and avoid the donor-recipient feeling."*

Use of bilateral indicators

The bilateral indicator used for the project was the participation of teachers and school administrative staff in the mobility scheme. Ten Estonian teachers and four staff members participated in the mobility scheme, while eight Icelandic teachers and four staff members participated. The indicator was not established from the beginning of the project but was used in the final report to measure the bilateral results.

Indicator: Participation in mobility	Project Promoter		Partner institution	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Number of mobilities involving teachers	8	2	7	1
Number of mobilities involving staff	4	0	2	2
Total	12	2	9	3

Use of bilateral funds

The schools' project teams participated in three events organised by the PO for all projects financed by the scholarship programme. These were aimed at disseminating the project results and exchanging experience about the project management and cooperation in general. The team subsequently stated that the events were a good source of new ideas and provided valuable knowledge about the teaching tools produced during project implementation. In the first meeting, one of the schools' accountant participated as well, which allowed for discussions of financial questions and paved the way smoother financial management throughout the project.

6.2.2 Efficiency (Research and scholarships)

This section addresses key issues in implementing the bilateral objective in the priority sector 'Research and Scholarships'.

EQ12: Tools supporting the development of bilateral relations in culture

As it was the case in the Protecting Cultural Heritage sector, partner search events are the most important tool to ensure bilateral cooperation at the project level. Interviews with project promoters reveal that some projects were challenged due to lack of partners and the partner being unable to deliver on agreed outputs.

As shown in Table 6-12, in comparison, networking and exchange is considered the most important tool at programme level. The latter is likely due to the fact that this sector has institutionalised some important events (as mentioned below). At these events, POs and DPPs meet across countries and exchange experiences and good practices. Stakeholder interviews indicated that these events are important and that they are unique to this sector.

Table 6-12 Research and scholarships – Tools supporting bilateral relations

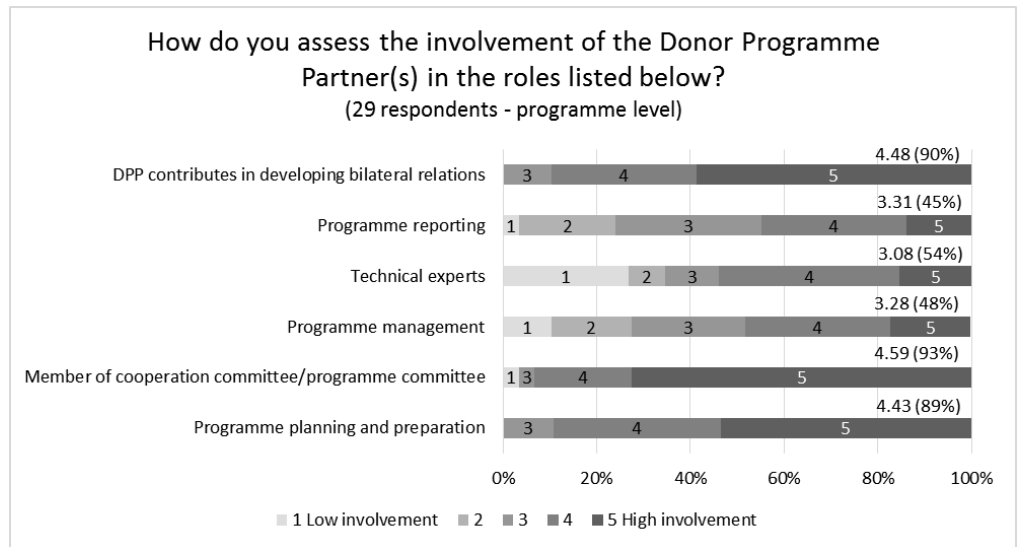
Survey question: To what extent do you assess that the tools/activities listed below support the development of bilateral relations? (29 respondents – programme level) Scores (1 = to a very low extent, 2 = to a low extent, 3 = neutral, 4 = to a high extent, 5 = to a very high extent)	
Top 5 Tools for Programmes	Average score
Networking and exchange of experience	4.72
Donor Programme Partnerships	4.63
Study tours for PO's or other potential programme partners to the donor states	4.40
Project preparation and partner search	4.12
Cooperation committee	4.00

Source: Survey results, question 8

EQ14: Effect of DPPs in the programme R&S

Generally, the DPPs are highly appreciated in this sector. The fact that a few institutions in the donor states are the DPPs offers a good possibility for coordination of work, which has helped institutionalise key events and working methods. The development of a database of partners or the use of existing databases have made it easier and more effective to search for partners. This being said, interviewed stakeholders differ on the usefulness of the databases. As illustrated in Figure 6-11, on 'developing bilateral relations', the survey found that 90% (high or very high involvement) of the respondents at programme level consider DPPs membership of the cooperation committee the most important. The results are likely to reflect a finding derived from the interviews, namely that at programme level, the DPPs are highly appreciated as good partners.

Figure 6-11 Research and scholarships – The roles of the DPPs



Source: Survey results, questions 6 & 7

Events organised by the DPPs

Some activities of DPPs are specially praised and appreciated across programmes and countries. For instance, the organisation of matchmaking meetings for project promoters and partners from donor states is very much appreciated in the project application phase. Therefore, the importance of these events for partners and the general awareness of the programmes are assessed to be high. The events may not in themselves lead to partnerships, but they facilitate contacts and further collaboration.

DPPs are also credited for the annual meetings, which are organised under the Research and Scholarship programmes. At these events, all programme partners across countries gather to exchange experiences and lessons learnt.

EQ15:
Organisational and management issues facilitating or hindering bilateral relation in R&S

Almost all interviewees highlighted the burden of financial reporting, approval of expenditures and procurement. In most cases, countries chose to apply the EU structural funds procedures, although they are cumbersome and create particular problems to Norwegian partners who are not used to the requirement that each expenditure item must be approved. A number of project and programme level stakeholders found that it would have been more expedient to apply procedures such as those used for ERASMUS+. This would have eased the work of agencies responsible for the implementation of the Research and Scholarship programmes, as these are often already familiar with the ERASMUS+ procedures.

It is worth noticing that the availability and the capacity of partners are ranked as the second most important issues both on the list of issues that facilitate bilateral relations and on the list of issues that hinder the development of bilateral relations, as shown in Table 6-13. This clearly demonstrates the importance of this aspect in the Research and Scholarships sector across the countries.

Table 6-13 Research and scholarships – Factors that facilitate or hinder bilateral relations

Survey question: Which organisational and management issues facilitate / hinder the development of bilateral relations? (34 respondents – programme and project level)		
Rank	Top 5 issues that <u>facilitate</u> development of bilateral relations	Top 5 issues that <u>hinder</u> development of bilateral relations
1	Partners (participants) on both sides available	Procedures for granting programme(s)/project slow and cumbersome (bureaucratic)
2	Availability of human resources interested in the cooperation	Capacity of involved institutions not adequate
3	Possible to find common ground and interest for cooperation	Difference in legal provisions regulating the rules of cooperation
4	Funds available in time from the EEA Grants	Difficulty in initiating cooperation between beneficiary and donor state partners
5	Information and support	Lack of communication

Source: Survey results, questions 9 & 10

In addition to the ranking from the survey, which is shown in Table 6-13, the interviewees highlighted the following:

- › **Timing is an issue.** Research project stakeholders in particular find that the time available for project implementation is too short.
- › As mentioned above, there is also a **supply and demand issue** with regard to the mobility of students: On the one hand, there is a lack of capacity to accept more exchanges in donor countries, and on the other hand, there is a lack of interest from donor country students in visiting the beneficiary countries.
- › In addition to the administrative difficulty relating to the approval of expenses and other financial, **administrative challenges, formalisation of the partnership** by signing collaboration agreements (donor project partners are reluctant to make formal agreements) seems to be a source of frustration in some of the focus countries.
- › **Exchange rates are problematic** in a project context.
- › According to interviewed stakeholders at project level, particularly in school projects, the **high administrative burden** on project managers is problematic, as work on this type of project is often done outside normal working hours (see also Estonian project case in Box 6-2)

6.3 Capacity building in Human and social development and the Justice sector

This section assesses selected programmes in the priority sector 'Human and Social Development' (Children and youth at risk, Local and regional initiatives to reduce national inequalities and to promote social inclusion; Capacity-building and institutional cooperation with Norwegian public institutions, local and regional authorities; Cross-border cooperation) and Justice and Home Affairs. The latter priority sector is included in three projects by means of a capacity building

aspect⁵⁰. The total amount of the programmes assessed in this sector is MEUR 96.2. Projects in four countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Lithuania and Malta)⁵¹ not part of the in-depth study have been included.

The programmes included in the assessment are very heterogeneous but cover common topics such as cooperation at regional local level, justice and youth, but also cross-border cooperation – although at the moment Slovakia is the only country that runs a cross-border cooperation programme. It should be noted that some of the projects in this area started very recently. This means that the achievements recorded so far are limited.

Human and Social Development

- › **Children and youth at risk:** Programmes in this area aim to address threats to vulnerable groups and improve the well-being of children and young people at risk.
- › **Local and regional initiatives to reduce national inequalities and to promote social inclusion:** The programmes aim at strengthening social and economic cohesion at national, regional and local levels. Cooperation, knowledge and experience sharing can be key triggers in stimulating dynamic regional development.
- › **Capacity-building and institutional cooperation with Norwegian public institutions, local and regional authorities:** These programmes aim to improve the skills of public sector employees, enhance the quality of services and strengthen cooperation between public institutions and local and regional authorities.
- › **Cross-border cooperation:** This programme aims to enhance knowledge transfer and learning between local and regional bodies in Slovakia and Ukraine, as well as civil society groups. The programme focuses on EU's Eastern border regions that face a number of shared challenges.

Justice and Home Affairs

Correctional services, including non-custodial sanctions: A growing prison population is a challenge to many countries. This leads to overcrowding and problems of ill health resulting from poor accommodation and sanitation. Norway supports programmes in this area in seven countries that aim at improving conditions in prisons and prisoner rehabilitation and at promoting alternatives to imprisonment.

Table 6-14 provides an overview of the programmes and DPPs.

⁵⁰ These projects were proposed by the evaluator and approved by the FMO

⁵¹ Only survey and DoRIS data are included in the draft as none of the contacted POs responded to the interview request.

Table 6-14 CB in HSD - Programmes covered by the evaluation

Programme	Programme area and title		DPP	Amount ⁵² (EUR)
BG11	PA25	Capacity-building and Institutional Cooperation between Beneficiary State and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities	The Norwegian Association of Local and regional Authorities	2,170,165
			The Norwegian Barents Secretariat	
CZ10	PA25	Capacity-building and Institutional Cooperation between Beneficiary State and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities	Council of Europe	1,664,308
LV07	PA25	Capacity-Building and Institutional Cooperation between Latvian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities	The Norwegian Association of Local and regional Authorities	5,061,563
LT10	PA25	Capacity-Building and Institutional Cooperation between Beneficiary State and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities	The Norwegian Association of Local and regional Authorities	6,696,176
			National Police Directorate (POD)	
			Norwegian Environment Agency (NEA)	
MT04	PA25	Norwegian Financial Mechanism Programme	N/A	321,976
		Correctional services, including non-custodial sanctions	Council of Europe	1,285,553
RO18	PA25	Capacity-building and Institutional Cooperation between Romanian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities	Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority (SSV)	6,588,463
EE04	PA11	Children and youth at risk	The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities - KS	6,954,848
LV08	PA32	Reform of the Latvian Correctional services and police detention centre	Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service	13,997,758
RO10	PA11	Children and youth at risk	Council of Europe (CoE)	21,000,000
	PA12	Local and regional initiatives to reduce national inequalities and to promote social inclusion (EEA grants)	The Norwegian Association of Local and regional Authorities	7,123,294
RO23	PA32	Correctional Services, including non-custodial Sanctions	1) Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service (KDI) 2) Council of Europe (CoE)	8,000,000
SK08	PA26	Cross-border cooperation	The Norwegian Barents Secretariat	14,284,920
SK04	PA12	Local and regional Initiatives to reduce national inequalities and to promote social inclusion	Council of Europe (CoE)	1,041,177

Source: DoRIS Report 17, 2 March 2016

6.3.1 Effectiveness

This section presents the findings on achievements and progress on the bilateral objective in the broader 'capacity building and social development sector'. Key evaluation questions are answered (questions are shown in the margin) in this section.

Delayed implementation of programmes in PA25

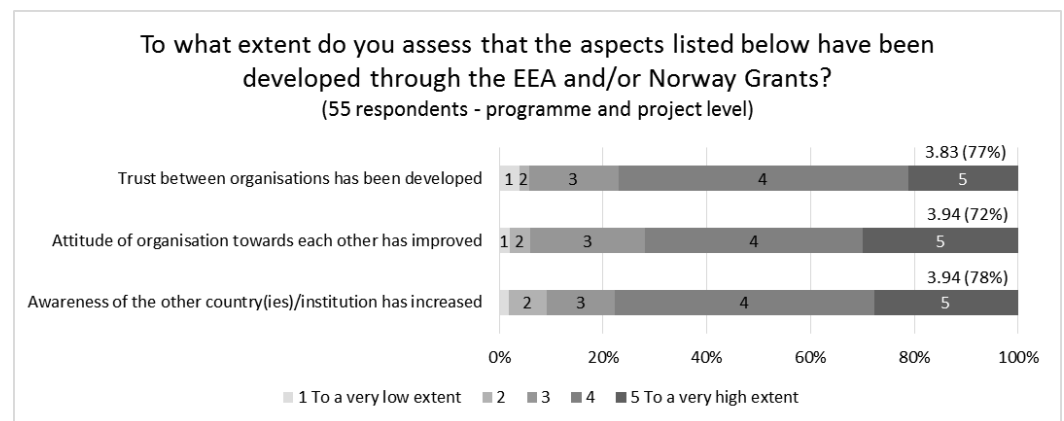
It should be noted that in this priority sector, some of the programmes have not progressed very far (especially under PA25 Capacity Building). This will have an impact on the findings of the analysis. An overview of the amounts incurred of the programmes covered by the sector is given in Table 6-1.

⁵² Total eligible amount including co-financing

EQ2: What changes are evident amongst the actors?

At project level (project partners), stakeholders interviewed confirm that awareness, attitudes, understanding and trust have improved. In general, project stakeholders highlight that getting to know the 'other' administrative systems and understanding how this functions has improved over time. Both programme and project stakeholders attached to programmes in the Justice and Home Affairs confirm that changes have affected awareness, attitudes and trust positively (especially the latter). Figure 6-12 shows similar scores on all aspects of changes – at project and programme level. Awareness of the other country's institution is given the highest scores with respondents answering to a high or very high extent.

Figure 6-12 CB in HSD - Development of trust, attitudes and awareness



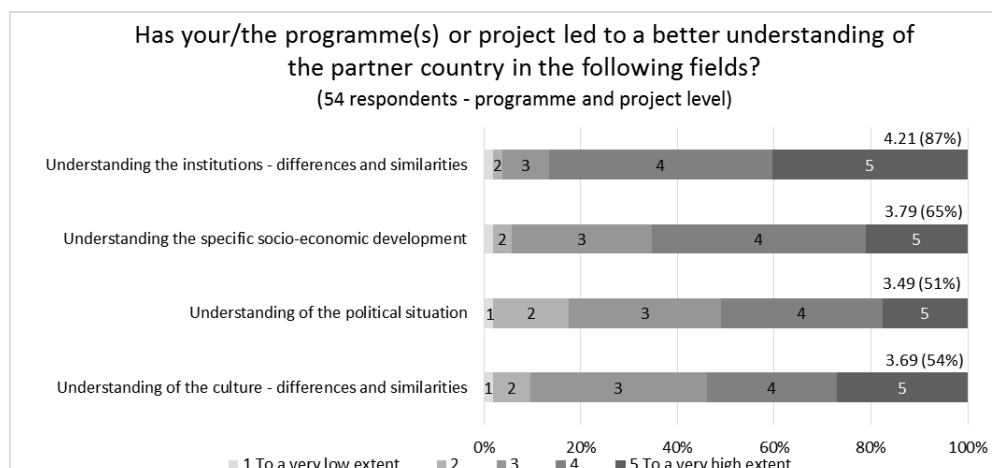
Source: Survey results, question 13

Understanding of the 'other'

Turning to the 'better understanding of the institutions, culture and political situation', especially at project level, interviews confirm that understanding has improved. However, one programme stakeholder mentioned that this was not a stated objective of the programme or the projects. Figure 6-13 shows that in particular 'understanding of the institution' scores high in this group. This may be linked to the answers on the 'understanding of the targeted sector' (see below).

In spite of the above, and as shown in Table 6-17, no projects have so far chosen the indicator 'Knowledge and mutual understanding' as a bilateral indicator. This is not an issue, which has been or can be 'caught' easily by the bilateral indicator. The regular indicators do not capture this dimension either, as shown in Table 6-18. One project level stakeholder stated *"We surely understand better Norwegian partner's conditions and they understand ours. Through experience exchange, we understand better how our partner addresses problems and there is the tendency of balancing at an international level the national activities and experience, as well as good practice exchange. So we understand better the national policies, national institutional and legal framework in the domain"*.

Figure 6-13 CB in HSD – Improved understanding of partner country



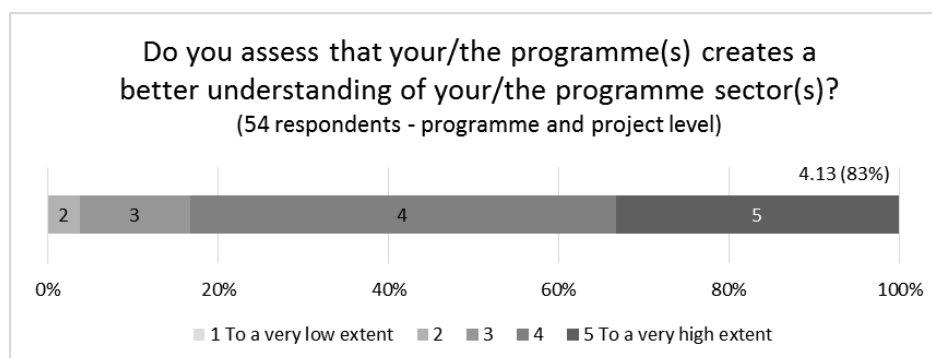
Source: Survey results, question 14

EQ7 Better understanding of the targeted sector

Figure 6-14 shows that 'better understanding of the targeted sector' receives a high score of 4.13 (83%). This aspect was also brought up in interviews. However, in parts of the programmes the interviewees found it difficult to answer the question or did not answer at all. Still, there is little doubt that both sides have learnt a lot from each other, as is also reflected by answers to other questions. Stakeholders at programme and especially project level confirmed that getting an understanding of the partners challenges have supported both project promoters and donor project partners.

However, almost all projects respondents in 'correctional service and youth projects' answered this question confirming that being exposed to the 'other' country's system and policy not only showed how other systems and policies function, but also made them reflect on their own system. This reflection works both ways – donor project partner and project promoter/partners. One interpretation may be that correctional service and youth projects are real policy areas that involve professionals on both sides. The exchange of sector experience and expertise is a core activity of the projects.

Figure 6-14 CB in HSD - Improved understanding of the sector



Source: Survey results, question 15

The projects in this sector focus on capacity building. An additional indicator for achievements is the extent to which the programmes and projects perceive an increase in capacity.

Increase in capacity

The survey explored this question, and Table 6-15 shows the results from the different countries. Apart from Slovakia, the score is relatively high confirming that stakeholders interviewed at both levels had noted a capacity increase. This issue was only covered indirectly, through other questions, in the interviews, and answers were mixed. The stakeholder interviews give the impression that correctional service and youth projects have brought about a capacity increase – and not only to beneficiaries but also to donor project partners.

Table 6-15 CB in HSD - increase in capacity⁵³

Survey question: Do you assess that beneficiary institution/organisation/person(s) involved in your project have increased their capacity? (All respondents)	Average score	% of answers high/very high
Scores (1 = to a very low extent, 2 = to a low extent, 3 = neutral, 4 = to a high extent, 5 = to a very high extent)		
All respondents (404)	3.95	73
All respondents at strategic level (84)	3.94	66
All respondents on programmes (194)	3.89	71
All respondents on projects (106)	4.13	78
All respondents that are a DPP (20)	3.86	64

Detailed results at country level (programme level)	Average score	% of answers high/very high
Estonia (29)	4.33	96
Latvia (29)	4.10	86
Poland (48)	3.70	63
Romania (40)	4.03	83
Slovakia	3.74	63
Other countries	3.64	61

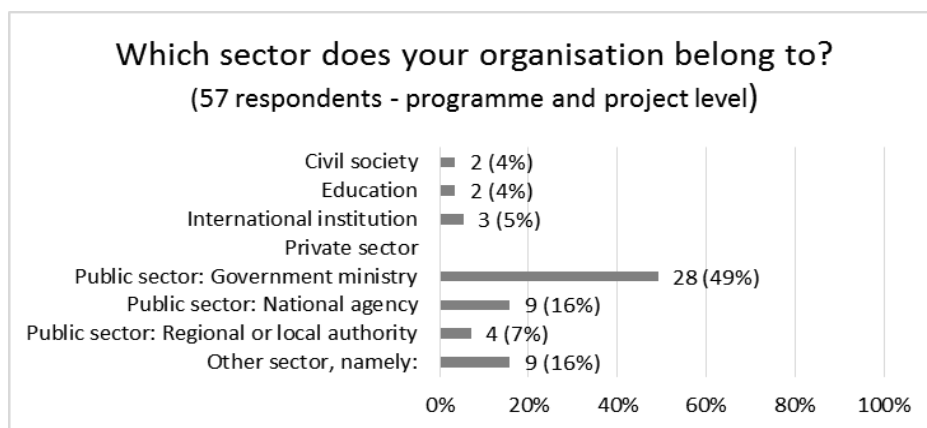
Source: Survey results, question 17

EQ3 and EQ 4 Main forms and levels of cooperation

The main form of cooperation at project level in this sector is inter-institutional cooperation, which includes a project promoter and a donor project partner. Often, projects have more partners and, in some cases, many partners. Projects range from capacity building type projects (transfer of knowledge from donor project partner to project promoter/partner) to cooperation projects where the project works on shared results (outputs). Central governments are the key actors involved in cooperation, as can be seen in Figure 6-15.

⁵³ Only focus countries are included here due to the low number of survey respondent in the 4 additional countries.

Figure 6-15 CB in HSD - Type of actors involved in cooperation



Source: Survey results, question B

EQ5 Depth and sustainability of relations

Whether relations in this priority sector (like in other) build on existing relations varies greatly across projects. Adding to this is the fact that some DPPs are international organisations. However, some projects in the area clearly build on existing relations (Cross-border SK) and the Romanian project on Nuclear safety (see project case story in Box 6-3).

At project level, most projects stakeholders confirm that they would like to continue current cooperation (or other international cooperation). A few projects point to specific continuation of a partnership either directly or in the form of other cooperation arrangements with the same partners. The Latvian project on capacity building⁵⁴ (LV07) is an example of a project with very concrete plans for continuity through a signed partnership agreements after the project has been completed at municipal level.

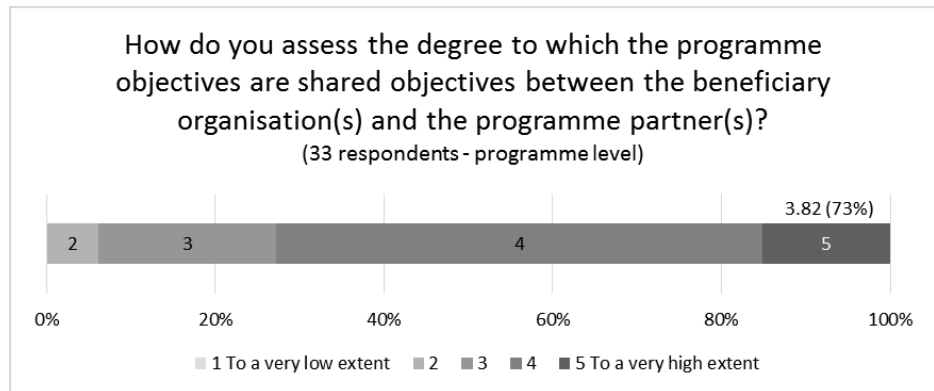
As mentioned earlier, some projects and programmes are only beginning to disburse at the end of 2015, and many projects are not very specific on how to sustain relations yet. The strengthening of the relation, in order to sustain the relation beyond the current project is also the purpose of Measure B. As measure B is only commencing implementation now, it is too early to measure the effects. This questions can therefore only be further explored in an ex post evaluation of the EEA and Norway Grants.

EQ6 and EQ8
Mutual interest and share results

In programmes in this sector, the score for the question about shared objectives is 3.82 (73%), see Figure 6-16. This score is higher than in the cultural sector and exactly the same as in 'Research and Scholarships'. Figure 6-17 shows that 89% of respondents find that projects result in 'some common results'. This is a higher score than in 'Protecting cultural heritage' and lower than in 'Research and Scholarships', which scores 100% at project level.

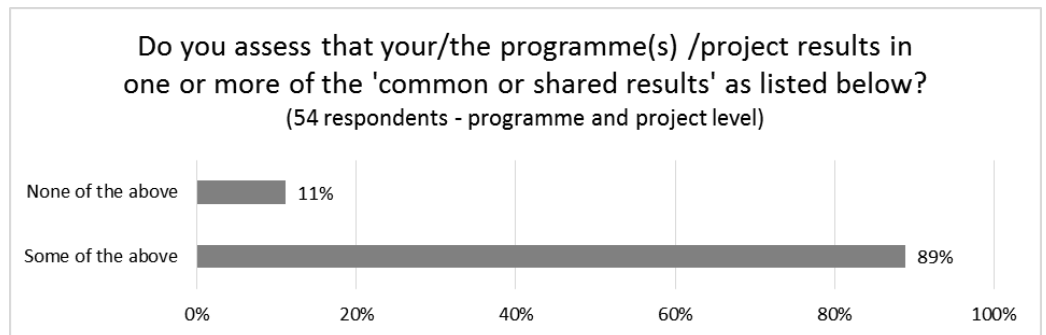
⁵⁴ Increasing territorial development planning capacity of planning regions and local governments in Latvia and elaboration of development planning documents.

Figure 6-16 CB in HSD - Shared objectives



Source: Survey results, question 3

Figure 6-17 CB in HSD - Common and shared results



Source: Survey results, question 16

The importance of the bilateral results in terms of type is shown in Table 6-16 where the item 'projects with shared results' is given the highest rank by both programme and project level respondents. This category is subject to the widest interpretation as it can embrace many types of activities (results). Interviews with project promoters reveal a great interest in working together on common results (output), and common development of tools and reports. Only few stakeholders interviewed confirmed that the project they represented had been or were working on a common result. One of them told that they were working with the donor project partner to develop common publications.

In the opinion of the evaluator, some stakeholders seem to interpret the common or shared results more narrowly than intended by the Guidelines on the Bilateral Objective. It is the impression from some interviews that project level stakeholders do not see themselves or their activities (results) as belonging to the categories listed in Table 6-16.

Table 6-16 CB in HSD – Importance of common/shared results

Ranking at programme level	Survey question: Which common/shared results are the three most important on the list? (32 respondents – programme level)
1	Number of projects with expected shared results (both partners are involved professionally in planning and implementation and can claim credit for achieved results).
2	Number of new technologies/new practices, including IT-systems, adopted in a beneficiary state, as a result of transfer of knowledge from a donor state partner.
3	Number of new policies, laws and regulations adapted, as a result of bilateral cooperation, under the grants.
4	Number of new technologies/new practices, including IT-systems, adopted in a donor state, as a result of transfer of knowledge from beneficiary state partners.
5	Number of joint (bilateral) articles published, written by persons from both an institution in a beneficiary and donor state, published in national or international publications, originated from a project financed by the programme(s).
6	Number of joint (bilateral) scientific papers written with co-researchers in at least one beneficiary and one donor state, and published in a national or international scientific publication, originated from a project financed by the programme(s).

Source: Survey results, question 16b

Achievements on indicators

Table 6-17 shows the achievement of the bilateral indicators. The use of these indicators are more limited, in comparison to the other sectors, except for the extent of cooperation. More indicators are reported on in the 2015-reports than targeted. This is indicated by the achievement percentages, which exceeds a 100%. The non-use of indicators poses analytic challenges and limits the amount of information that can be derived from them, even from those that are actually in use, as it removes the possibility to compare achievements across countries and indicators.

Table 6-17 CB in HSD – Progress on the indicators towards the bilateral objective on key bilateral indicators 2014/2015

Dimension	Bilateral indicator (2014/2015)	Progress (achievement in relation to target in %)									
		EE		LV		PL		RO		SK	
		2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
Extent of cooperation	Number of project partnership agreements in beneficiary civil society	-	180	-	-	-	100	-	88	-	188
	Number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary private sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100	-	-
	Number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary public sector	-	167	100	100	-	150	-	181	100	167
Shared initiatives and results	Number of projects with expected shared results (both partners are involved professionally in planning and implementation and can claim credit for achieved results)	-	100	-	-	-	-	100	150	-	-
Knowledge and understanding	No indicators available	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wider effects	No indicators available	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: DoRIS Report 13 & 44: February 2015 (14 Oct 2015) and February 2016 (28 Feb 2016)

Table 6-18 shows the relevant, derived indicators in the priority sectors. Use of the indicators in the programmes varied between 13% and 38%. Relatively few

programmes have reported on achievements in this priority sector. Updated data from 2015 only changed the picture slightly.

Table 6-18 CB in HSD - Derived result indicators: target, achievements, and coverage for 2014/2015

Indicator (2014/2015)	Total targets		Total achievements		% country coverage	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
Number of children and youth directly benefitting from services	272	272	-	239	20%	20%
Number of policies implemented aimed at promoting work/life balance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of services and measures for vulnerable groups of children and young people	102	102	-	59	40%	40%
Number of trained persons in support of children and youth	350	350	-	3,298	20%	20%
Number of trained staff	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of trained staff with improved skills	120	120	-	331	20%	20%
Provision of childcare services	14	-	-	-	20%	-

Source: DoRIS Report 44, February 2015 (14 Oct 2015) and February 2016 (28 Feb 2016)

Box 6-3

Project story - Romania

Project title: Past, Present and Future of Bilateral Cooperation – Capacity Building in Nuclear and Radiological Safety, Emergency Preparedness and Response in Romania

Country: Romania

Description of the partnership

The project is a continuation of the cooperation partnership established in a project conducted by the Romanian National Commission for Nuclear Activities Control (CNCAN), the Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority (NRPA) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) during the 2009-2011 cycle of Norway Grants. The previous project activities revealed that additional improvements and capacity-building were still needed in order to bring the CNCAN to a level that could be compared with the regulatory authorities of EU/EEA states as well as up to international standards.

Description of the project and activities

The objective of the project is to enhance the capabilities of CNCAN in eight specific functional areas. This capacity building is obtained through an exchange of experiences, best practices, and training with NRPA and IAEA. The main project activities focus on the improvement of CNCAN capabilities in the following areas: Preventive measures, development of knowledge management systems, control activities, and emergency preparedness and response intended to improve the safety and security of transport and handling of radioactive and nuclear materials.

Description of the bilateral results

The project mainly contributed with country-specific rather than bilateral results. However, one achieved bilateral result includes the exchange of experiences during scientific visits organised in Norway and Romania. The sharing and exchange of good practices took place while CNCAN implemented activities for revising national regulations and procedures in the area, which upon completion will be used by both partners, thus further adding to the bilateral results of the project.

Lesson learnt

The attitudes of the partners have changed due to the bilateral cooperation. Thus, at the beginning of the project implementation the Romanian partner implemented most activities. More recently, the Norwegian partner's participation in the project activities increased. *"During the project implementation Norwegian partner's interest in activities for which we did not thought they had an interest has risen. We invited them to other activities, such as inspection practices, for which they did not have an initial interest, but when they saw that these activities bring benefits to both institutions they participated more actively"* according to Mr. Cantemir Ciurea – project manager CNCAN.

Use of bilateral indicators

The project does not use bilateral indicators, but the following regular indicators reflect bilateral results:

- › 25 IAEA expert missions were conducted for Romania and corresponding event reports.
- › 6 new IAEA documents, training modules, and other materials were developed and will become available to all IAEA Member States.
- › 7 IAEA documents, training modules, and other materials have been updated and will become available to all IAEA Member States.

Use of bilateral funds

No funding was received from the Bilateral Programme funds neither for preparation nor for partner search (measure A) nor for strengthening of the partnership (measure B). The partners' collaboration started in a previous project implemented by means of the Norway Grants mechanism in the period 2009-2011.

6.3.2 Efficiency (Capacity building in Human and Social Development)

This section assesses the efficiency of implementation by looking at the common bottlenecks and facilitating factors in strengthening bilateral relations (cooperation) at different levels in the priority sector.

EQ12 Tools supporting the development of bilateral relations in culture

The survey shows that programme stakeholders consider study tours for POs the most important tool and generally project stakeholders also select study tours as the preferred tool. This sector rates partner search tools highest. However, interviews with programme stakeholders at programme level pointed to the cooperation committee as the most important tool. At project level, the interviews pointed more to the availability of bilateral funds (or funds in general) (in Table 6-19 this would be covered under bilateral funds at national level) being the most important tool. Project and programme level stakeholder interviews indicate that finding project partners was not so much a concern in projects in this priority sector as in the two other priority sectors.

Table 6-19 CB in HSD – Tools supporting bilateral relations

<i>Survey question: To what extent do you assess that the tools/activities listed below support the development of bilateral relations? (37 respondents – programme level)</i> <i>Scores (1 = to a very low extent, 2 = to a low extent, 3 = neutral, 4 = to a high extent, 5 = to a very high extent)</i>	
Top 5 Tools for Programmes	Average score
Study tours for PO's or other potential programme partners to the donor states	4.57
Networking and exchange of experience	4.50
Cooperation committee	4.09
Donor Programme Partnerships	4.06
Bilateral funds at national level	3.94

Source: Survey results, question 8

EQ14 Effect of DPPs in the programme in HSD

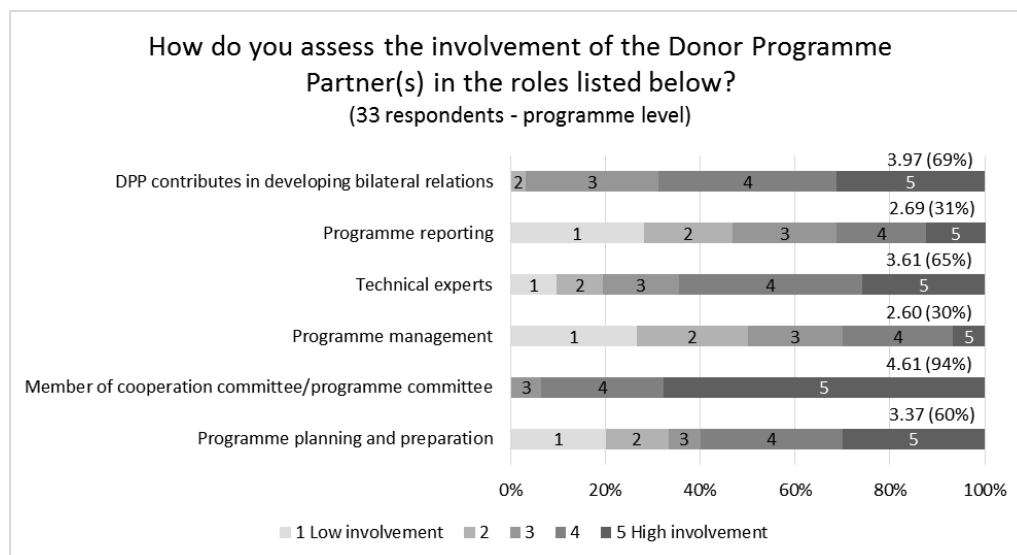
This sector has some key features, which differ from the other priority sectors analysed in this report. Firstly, it consists of a number of very heterogeneous projects in terms of topics and content. Furthermore, the DPPs, partners and form of cooperation vary considerably, from capacity building in the justice and home affairs projects to cross-border cooperation. A common feature for all projects is the capacity building aspect.

A number of the DPP functions are covered by the Council of Europe, which is the counterpart to the PO of the programmes (and not a fully-fledged DPP). Also among the 'real' DPPs, the institutions have very different profiles (in comparison with the two other sectors) – from the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities – KS to the Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority (SSV).

In this priority sector, programmes score the role of the DPP in the monitoring committee highest and projects find the technical expertise more important. This fits well with the findings from responses to other questions in the interviews. Interviews with programme stakeholders confirm the importance of the DPPs and the monitoring committee. Figure 6-18 shows the survey results and that, according to respondents at programme level, the most important role of the DPPs

is the participation in the cooperation/programme committee. 94% of the respondents replied to a high or very high extent.

Figure 6-18 CB in HSD - The roles of the DPPs



Source: Survey results, questions 6 & 7

EQ15 Organisational and management issues facilitating or hindering bilateral relation in HSD

A key issue highlighted in almost all interviews in all sectors, including this priority sector, is the burden related to financial approval of expenditures and reporting. The bureaucracy involved in the projects using the EU structural funds procedures, is cumbersome and creates particular problems for Norwegian partners that are not used to the requirement that each expenditure item must be approved. Table 6-20 confirms this finding.

The flexibility of the funding is mentioned as an important feature. Interviews at both programme and project level confirmed that the flexibility (wide scope for the use of funds) was appreciated by stakeholders. This was by some stakeholders compared with the restrictiveness of other programmes (EU).

Table 6-20 CB in HSD - Factors that facilitate or hinder bilateral relations

Survey question: Which organisational and management issues facilitate / hinder the development of bilateral relations? (56 respondents – programme and project level)		
Rank	Top 5 issues that <u>facilitate</u> development of bilateral relations	Top 5 issues that <u>hinder</u> development of bilateral relations
1	Availability of human resources interested in the cooperation	Procedures for granting programme(s)/project slow and cumbersome (bureaucratic)
2	Partners (participants) on both sides available	Capacity of involved institutions not adequate
3	Possible to find common ground and interest for cooperation	Difficulty in initiating cooperation between beneficiary and donor state partners
4	Information and support	Lack of communication
5	Resources available for further actions and cooperation	Lack of interest in the programme(s)/project (donor organisation)

Source: Survey results, questions 9 & 10

7 Conclusion and recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

Presenting the conclusions from the evaluation, this chapter is structured around to the two overall evaluation questions. First, the conclusions drawn from the evaluation questions on effectiveness and efficiency are presented. Second, in section 7.2, the recommendations derived from the conclusions are presented.

Effectiveness: To what extent and how is the progress in strengthening bilateral relations evident at the different levels

Strengthening of
bilateral relations

Overall, the analysis confirms that the EEA and Norway Grants help strengthen bilateral relations. The analysis found that many shared outcomes, such as joint studies, common methodologies etc., are the result of projects and programmes funded by the EEA and Norway Grants. The survey and interviews generally confirm that the EEA and Norway Grants have strengthened bilateral relations.

The survey and interviews conducted in the focus countries paint a very positive picture of the bilateral achievements of the programmes. Yet, the focus on bilateral relations is implicit, since the programme and project documents do not explicitly mention specific bilateral objectives. There are however a few, but significant barriers and problems that impede the achievement of the bilateral objectives.

Extent of
cooperation

A wide number of programmes and projects have DPPs and donor project partners respectively, both of whom are highly appreciated by stakeholders. In the focus countries, DPPs are attached to 65%⁵⁵ of the programmes and donor project partners to 20-79% of projects, averaging 28%. This is slightly higher than in the previous period where an estimated 25% of the projects had a donor project partner.

The evaluation shows that a better ratio of programmes with DPPs and projects with a donor project partner would be beneficial. DPPs are in high demand

⁵⁵ 65% equals 41 of 63; 58% of programmes have a DPP in all beneficiary states (87 of 150)

suggesting that there would be an interest in increasing the number of DPPs, if they were available and/or had more capacity.

The limited number of donor project partners is primarily due to lack of eligible donor project partners in the donor states. Project level stakeholders found this a key constraint to improving cooperation and enhancing bilateral relations.

Knowledge and understanding

Stakeholders from both beneficiary and donor states confirm that they have increased knowledge and understanding of their partners' culture and socio-economic environment as a result of the programmes and projects. Much learning is achieved through 'exposure' to different practices and another ways of doing things.

The programmes and projects contribute to awareness raising, attitude changes and trust building between cooperating organisations. According to stakeholder interviews, especially attitudes change and trust is developed by working jointly on projects towards common outputs or results.

At programme level, an important result of the introduction of the DPPs is increased awareness of the Grants among policy makers in the beneficiary states. The increased awareness and general cooperation between the DPPs and PO have in many cases also led to strategic cooperation between beneficiary and donor state institutions.

Shared results

The projects supported by the Grants lead to shared or common results, such as joint studies or common methodologies. Stakeholders at both project and programme level confirm the positive experiences of working towards common results during a programme or a project. These mutual experiences enhance bilateral relations more than traditional ways of providing external support, such as technical or expert assistance. Some DPPs and POs highlight that in order for them to develop a close cooperative relationship, it was also beneficial to work together on a concrete project (some DPPs and PO also work together on predefined projects).

Wider effects

Wider effects in terms of continued cooperation and development of networks are significant, and widespread results are seen from the implementation of the Research programmes. The benefits in terms of developing international and EU networks and learning about international initiatives in research are evident. The EEA and Norway Grants support these processes by being an important facilitator of the first international cooperation experience for both parties. However, the evaluation also shows that these networks and cooperations cannot always continue when external funding is no longer available.

What are the bilateral objectives?

The evaluation reveals that stakeholders have no shared understanding of bilateral objectives and what it takes to meet them. In a few programmes, bilateral results are formulated, but, in general, they are not explicitly mentioned at programme level (for example in the programme agreement). Notably, this fact does not imply understanding of the bilateral objectives of the programmes and projects all together does not exist, but rather that the implicit understanding causes it to be unfocused and potentially inconsistent across stakeholders.

Reporting on the bilateral objectives	The programme reporting has a mandatory section on the achievement of bilateral objectives. However, achievement reporting is generally vague or non-specific, e.g. a repetition of text from the bilateral guidelines and/or by simply describing activities.
Bilateral indicators in DoRIS	As mentioned above, reporting on the indicators for bilateral objectives in DoRIS is generally of low quantity. Only approximately 20% of the programmes report on the bilateral indicators in DoRIS (apart from obligatory reporting). For the bilateral indicators chosen by programmes by the setting of targets, achievements are often significantly higher than the targets. The evaluation found that there are several reasons for the non-use of bilateral indicators, such as lack of awareness of the indicators and the importance of being able to monitor progress also for the bilateral objective. The irrelevance of the standard bilateral indicators is probably also a major factor.
	Efficiency: What have been the common bottlenecks/facilitation factor in strengthening the bilateral relations at the different levels and what could be improved?
Overall	The overall conclusion on the efficiency of EEA and Norway Grants is that a number of dedicated tools to develop bilateral relations at programme and project level have been introduced. Most of these tools directly support the work of the programmes and projects towards developing bilateral partnership relations, shared results, knowledge and understanding and wider effects. DPPs, bilateral funds and donor project partners all support this goal. The main issue for DPPs and donor project partners is securing the availability of a sufficient number of partners to meet the demand. The main hindering factor identified across the programmes and projects is the administrative procedures (complicated, slow and time consuming) in the beneficiary countries and the fact that the systems used by the beneficiary states are very different systems. Another significant factor identified is the time frame of projects, which due to a late start-up of programmes, can have a very short implementation period.
Roles and responsibilities	<p>All three donor states make DPPs available for the programmes. Iceland is active in the Climate change and Research and Scholarships priority areas. Liechtenstein is also involved in the Research and Scholarships priority area. Norway has DPPs in almost all areas covered by the Grants. The roles and responsibilities of the different actors are clearly understood. The role of the DPP as a facilitator of the identification of donor project partners is seen as imperative. Interviewees emphasise that no other stakeholder can provide the equivalent knowledge of and access to donor project partners. Yet, despite the fact that the DPP model has ensured that a large number of donor states' institutions and organisations have become involved in cooperative activities, programme level stakeholders highlight that there is an additional demand for DPPs which is not met in the current phase of the EEA and Norway Grants.</p> <p>From a PO perspective, the DPP model plays an important role in promoting strategic cooperation between the partners. Furthermore, the DPP model helps strengthen administrative and expert cooperation between donor state and beneficiary state. In Research and Scholarships programmes, DPPs play an</p>

important role by facilitating partner search and participating in programme committees. In programmes with a capacity building aspect, stakeholders emphasise that the role of the DPP is often also that of an expert.

The evaluation indicates that there is a need to improve the match between the PO and the DPP in the next round of the programme. Examples provided by interviewed stakeholders at programme level include cases where a DPP with a focus on content was matched with an administrative PO.

Tools and processes – Bilateral funds

Bilateral funds at programme level are seen as useful, especially for project preparation and partner search (Measure A). In some of the countries, Measure A and the programme were launched simultaneously, or Measure A was launched shortly before launch of the call for projects in the main programme. Therefore, project promoters did not have sufficient time to make use of Measure A, and/or they were not aware of the possibilities provided by Measure A. Even project promoters that did not apply (e.g. due to a lack of time) find that Measure A would have been useful.

Some stakeholders expect that Measure B will not fully come into play in all programmes, as projects are too engaged in main project implementation. Measure B funds are therefore likely to be used for calls for small bilateral projects, which are not directly related to the mainstream programme.

Bilateral funds at national level are used for strategic, predefined projects, as well as calls for projects, in cases where the donor and beneficiary states can address a specific issue of mutual interest outside the main programme lines. The evaluation shows that many stakeholders perceive this as an interesting option at the strategic level. At the same time, stakeholders especially in the bigger countries find that the amount set aside for bilateral funds is too high and that the bilateral funds (national and programme) should be merged into one fund to maximise flexibility.

Facilitating factors

A key issue in achieving the bilateral objective is the lack of available partners in the donor states. Countries with a longer tradition of cooperation with Norway in particular (that at the same time are small countries) seem to have fewer issues finding partners (provided that they were not late in starting implementation). In some cases databases can be useful to identify partners, but in general the DPP is found by stakeholders to be more important in relation to identification of partners.

An important tool at programme level is the cooperation committee. In general, stakeholders see the cooperation committee as useful when discussing programme development. At the same time, they stress the importance of maintaining frequent contact between DPPs and POs outside the committee as well.

Hindering factors

For the projects that did have a partner, the survey and interviews highlight that bureaucratic rules (i.e. reporting, financial and procurement rules) and limited project implementation time frames are obstacles to spending time on the bilateral relations aspect. A number of countries decided to use the system they use for EU structural funds to implement the EEA and Norway Grants. Programme and project

stakeholders find that this system is too bureaucratic and that the financial rules are too cumbersome. The national structural funds system and procedures may not be very relevant to a partner/bilateral relation focused programme.

7.2 Recommendations

This section presents fourteen concrete recommendations derived from the above conclusions. Each recommendation is presented individually and ultimately listed in Table 7-2 below. The fourteen recommendations have been grouped under three headings. The first and second groups focus on recommendations specifically targeting the bilateral objective and bilateral tools. The third group includes recommendations that may improve effectiveness and efficiency for the Grants overall. The order in which the recommendations are presented reflects a prioritisation of importance within the group. Especially groups I and III are seen as important in order to improve the focus on bilateral relations and increase of implementation efficiency.

I. Establish and measuring of the bilateral objectives

Define and operationalise the bilateral objective (1)

If the EEA and Norway Grants wish to be able to measure progress on the bilateral objective, it is recommended that this emphasis is clearly explained to stakeholders at programme and project level. This in turn requires that the concept is clearly defined and operationalised. Currently, the concept is too difficult and abstract to operationalise for many stakeholders. More targeted communication, training and capacity building need to be undertaken to help stakeholders direct their programme and project activities towards the bilateral objectives and enable them to measure achievements against these objectives.

Introduce a bilateral objective at programme level (2)

It is recommended that a programme-specific objective for bilateral relations is formulated to create a consistent and shared understanding of the concept to which can be adopted by stakeholders at all levels. The objective should be SMART (specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-bound). Knowing the specific bilateral objective of the programme (e.g. is the programme aiming at establishing networks or something else?) would also help POs select and set targets for the specific programme and in turn help project promoters select appropriate output indicators for their project. By including a measurement expressed by a result indicator, the objective becomes measurable. The timeframe secures that the measurement period is agreed and fixed in time.

An example of an objective has been included in Box 7-1. The objective and the result indicator(s) should be part of the agreement.

Box 7-1 Example of a bilateral objective at programme level

An increase in the bilateral research cooperation between the donor state (s)) and beneficiary state (insert name) with xx%, compared to present level, in 2020.

A result indicator is used to measure the objective (output indicators measure the activities). Often, the objective cannot be measured directly but the indicator expresses a dimension of the objective and a way of measuring it. Discussions on

how to establish the baseline for the result indicator should be part of the preparation of the programme.

Box 7-2 Example of a result indicator

Title	Target	Target year	Baseline	Unit
Bilateral research networks developed	20%	2020	10	Number

Sometimes the baseline can only be established qualitatively (lack of figures or data). In these cases, a survey among relevant stakeholders could be carried out to assess the current situation, i.e. establish the baseline. At programme end, another survey should then be conducted to measure the progress.

Tailor the bilateral output indicators to the programmes (3)

The bilateral output indicators (and the regular indicators) are potentially a good tool to monitor the progress of the EEA and Norway Grants programmes. However, the bilateral indicators suffer from a 'one-size-fits-all' approach, and the regular indicators are characterised by the fact that many programmes developed their own programme indicators. Therefore, it has been necessary to 'organise' the regular indicators under the so-called derived indicators, due to the large amount of different indicators that cannot be aggregated.

It is therefore recommended to develop a set of bilateral indicators per programme or programme type, relevant to that particular sector or programme area. This will increase the relevance of the indicators and maintain the possibility of aggregating the indicators at programme or priority sector level. It is only possible to develop indicators once the programme area and contents are known. Naturally, these must be communicated in good time to the programme operators and not be 'attached' after the development of the programme. It is also recommended to include the programme operators and DPPs in the development of the indicators for priority areas. Early involvement of the stakeholders who will ultimately implement and monitor the system will ensure a better buy-in to the system.

Furthermore, it may be appropriate to replace the bilateral indicators in the shared results dimension with regular indicators (to avoid too many indicators). This seems to be happening already to a high degree, in the Research and Scholarships priority area. By developing sector-specific bilateral indicators, it is possible to limit the number of indicators to a few for each category, allowing subsequent aggregation at priority sector level.

Target setting (4)

Target setting for output indicators is another issue that needs to be addressed. In the current programme phase, programmes often set targets by accumulating the targets set by the individual projects. These targets are set very low often leading to 100% overachievement. Programme operators should feel more at liberty to plan programmes (and not be afraid to adjust expectations). In programmes based on applications, it can be very difficult to set targets as the programme operator does not know which type of project applications will be submitted. On the other hand, target setting is also a way of steering the programme and ensuring that the projects receive adequate support. This will contribute to the overall programme objective. In general, it is recommended to use tools such RACER (see Table 7-1) to assess the appropriateness of indicators.

Table 7-1 *RACER test of indicators*

RACER Criteria	Description
Realistic	Linked to the objectives to be reached
Accepted	Accepted by staff and stakeholders
Credible	Can be understood by non-experts, easy to interpret, clear (not to be misunderstood)
Easy	Easy to monitor, data collection at low cost and low complication; and clear responsibility
Robust	Cannot be manipulated/ misinterpreted

Result indicators at priority sector level (5)

The fact that there are no indicators (results) at priority sector level makes it difficult to measure overall whether the bilateral objective has been achieved. It is recommended to establish result indicators (and possibly also a more specific bilateral objective) at priority sector level, which in time can guide the programme in terms of their objectives and indicators. This would also help establish a hierarchy of objectives.

Clarify reporting requirements for the bilateral objective (6)

It is recommended that more instruction be given on the expected contents of reporting on the bilateral objective to avoid the current wide variations in reporting practice and style and the non-informative focus on bilateral activities. It is also recommended that the programme reports include the bilateral indicators selected for the programme. It is suggested that the example of one of the focus countries (Estonia) is adopted. In Estonia, the bilateral indicators are annexed to the report, complete with a justification/explanation of why they were chosen.

II. Bilateral tools

Continue the current programme model, including existing tools and structures (7)

Generally, the tools and models developed for the EEA and Norway Grants were considered useful albeit seldom highlighted as particularly important to the bilateral relations during interviews. However, this does not mean that the tools and models are not important to the implementation of the programmes as such, but that they all contribute. Therefore, it is recommended to continue using the existing programme model, including the current tools and structures.

The most important tools in relation to the bilateral objectives are highlighted below:

Timely availability of bilateral funds at programme level (8)

It is recommended that bilateral funds (Measure A) be made available in time, i.e. well in advance of the commencement of the mainstream programmes. As mentioned, it is the impression of the evaluator that the different activities in Measure A that support the identification of partners are particularly important. It is too early for this evaluation to make specific recommendations for Measure B (as the measure has hardly been implemented). However, it is recommended to make these funds available long enough also after project closure for projects to have real benefit of the funds for further development.

Focus on predefined projects under the bilateral national funds (9)

It is recommended that focus be directed towards the predefined projects under the bilateral national funds. As mentioned above, the predefined projects provide an interesting opportunity for strategic level cooperation. It is unclear whether the calls

at national level for smaller cooperation projects provide added value. Therefore, it is recommended that such calls be differentiated, either in terms of topic or timing, from the bilateral funds at programme level in order to for them to serve a real function (demand/meet a need).

Expand the use of DPPs and improve the matching of DPPs and POs (10)

It is recommended that donor state institutions and international organisations continue to function as DPPs, and encourage more donor state institutions to become involved. The evaluator recommends that the matching of DPP and the PO be improved by ensuring alignment between the DPP and PO organisations (with similar issues and challenges). It is also recommended to ensure that a DPP is not overburdened by having to cover too many programmes. Meeting this requirement is likely to include involvement of more DPPs in the EEA and Norway Grants. Certainty of this should be established by a careful assessment of how many programmes a particular DPP can cover.

Increase the availability of donor project partners (11)

More donor project partners need to be involved in the implementation of the projects. This is a prerequisite for the EEA and Norway Grants to be able to focus on the bilateral relations objective. It is not clear to the evaluator if and how this is possible, i.e. if there are organisations in the donor states that have not been involved and which could be mobilised.

III. General Grants implementation issues

Simplify procurement rules and approval of expenditures (12)

Almost all programmes and projects single out the implementation procedures as one of the key barriers. Hence, it is recommended that especially procurement rules and approval of expenditures be simplified in all countries. As mentioned in the analysis, the differences in the systems of the donor and beneficiary countries for partners impede cooperation. It is recommended to look at ways in which such partnership obstacles can be removed, e.g. by aligning systems of donor and beneficiary countries or by simplifying procedures to help overcome existing differences.

Standardise implementation between countries (13)

It is also recommended to standardise implementation systems and rules so that every programme does not have to 'reinvent the wheel' (and spend a lot of time doing this). Especially DPPs working on the same programme type in several beneficiary countries could benefit from similar/aligned rules of implementation.

Standardise general reporting requirements (14)

Reporting (all types) is of very uneven length and quality and follows somewhat different formats (the template is the same but the contents can vary significantly). This makes it difficult to use the reports for comparative studies and to extract qualitative or quantitative data. Particularly, data relevant to monitoring and assessment of the bilateral objective (results) are difficult to extract from some of the reports. Hence, the evaluator recommends that reporting requirements be standardised and clearly communicated to all relevant stakeholders (i.e. what content is required under which headings).

Table 7-2 provides an overview of the recommendations discussed above.

Table 7-2 *Recommendations checklist*

ID	Recommendation
I	Establish and measure the bilateral objective
1	Introduce bilateral objectives at programme level
2	Define and operationalise the bilateral objective
3	Reorganise and tailor the bilateral indicators of the programmes
4	Target setting (and RACER check) for indicators
5	Introduce result indicators at priority sector level
6	Clarify reporting requirements for the bilateral objective
II	Bilateral tools
7	Continue the current programme model, including existing tools and structures
8	Ensure timely availability of bilateral funds at programme level
9	Focus on predefined projects under the bilateral national funds
10	Expand the use of DPPs and improve the matching of DPPs and POs
11	Increase the availability of donor project partners
III	General Grants implementation issues
12	Simplify procurement rules and approval of expenditures
13	Standardise implementation between countries
14	Standardise general reporting requirements

Appendix A Evaluation Questions

Number	Evaluation questions	Country Chap. 6	Sector chapter
Group 1	Effectiveness 1. To what extent and how is progress in strengthening bilateral relations evident at the different levels?		
EQ1	1.I. Assessment of implementation of bilateral objectives within different Programme Areas, programmes and projects.		x
EQ2	1.II. What, if any, changes in awareness/attitudes/understanding/trust are evident among the actors involved e.g. understanding of the other country's cultural, political and socio-economic situation, knowledge about counterpart policies and institutions, etc. (Type 3 – Knowledge and mutual understanding)	x	
EQ3	1.III. a) At what administrative and/or political level does cooperation take place, and who are the main actors involved? (Type 1 –Extent of cooperation)	x	
EQ4	b) What are the main forms of cooperation?	x	
EQ5	c) How deep are the partnerships and networks and are they strengthening working relations? (Type 4 – Wider effects)	x	
EQ6	1.IV. To what extent are the programmes and projects a) of mutual interest and satisfaction? (Type 2 – Shared results)	x	
EQ7	b) creating a better understanding of the targeted sectors (Type 3)	x	
EQ8	c) and bringing about common/shared results? (Type 2)	x	
Group 2	Efficiency 2. What have been the common bottlenecks/facilitating factors in strengthening bilateral relations at the different levels? What could be improved?		
EQ9	2.I. To what extent, following MoU negotiations, were bilateral objectives clearly formulated and shared?	x	x
EQ10	How was the MoU process perceived?		x
EQ11	2.II. How are the roles and responsibilities of the different actors/entities understood?		x
EQ12	2.III. Which tools, processes and activities appear to have the most (positive or negative ?) influence on bilateral results e.g. availability of funds, measures A and B, database of partners, programme cooperation committees, complementary action, participation in development, previous collaboration, etc.?	x	
EQ13	2. IV. To what extent and how are donor programme partnerships (including with the Council of Europe) a key feature in achieving bilateral results at different levels?	x x	x
EQ14	Are DPP active in the roles that they have been given?	x	
EQ15	2.V. What organisational and management issues appear to facilitate or hinder bilateral results e.g. political changes, supply & demand, partner cost, capacity, turnover, bureaucracy, communication, clarity, etc.?	x	

Appendix B Intervention logic of EEA and Norway grants

The Guideline for strengthened bilateral relations as adopted by the FMO on 29 March 2012 set out the intervention logic and the indicators to be used in relation to the bilateral objective of the EEA and Norway Grants.

The bilateral indicators

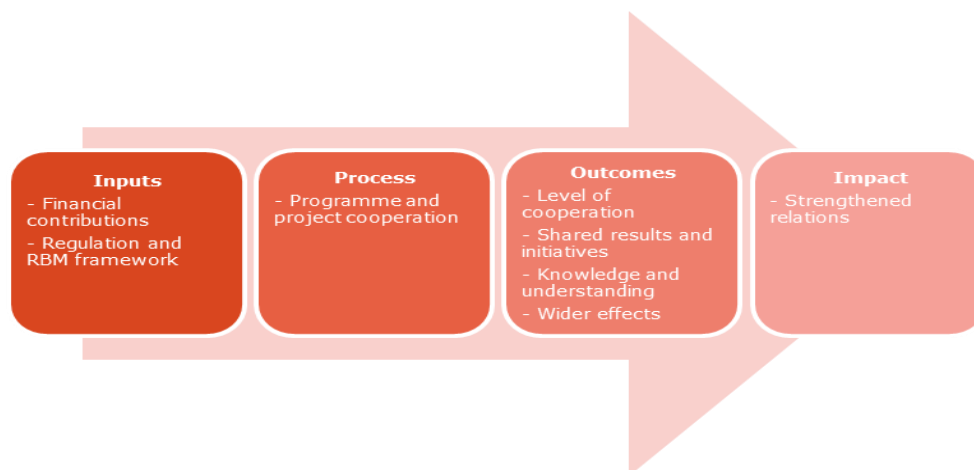
The guidelines categorise four dimensions of effectiveness and establishes a list of indicators organised according to these dimensions:

- › Extent of cooperation (dimension 1)
- › Shared initiative and results (dimension 2)
- › Knowledge and understanding (dimension 3)
- › Wider effects (dimension 4).

Hierarchy of objectives

The intervention logic of the EEA and Norway Grants as described in Figure Apx B-1 was included in the Bilateral Guidelines. The intervention logic assumes that the activities under the four dimensions will result in certain outputs and this will lead to strengthening of bilateral relations (impacts).

Figure Apx B-1 Intervention logic from the bilateral guidelines



The targets for the indicators at the programme levels are aggregated from the project level in most programmes. There is no real way of measuring the progress at overall level (EEA and Norway Grants) as there are no indicators or targets at this (impact level) level. Therefore, this analysis, uses the bilateral and derived indicator targets and achievements aggregated to either priority sector level or country level.

Intervention logic

Table Apx B-1 constitutes an expanded intervention logic for the EEA and Norway Grants in relation to the bilateral objective (based on Figure Apx B-1). The

intervention logic structures the levels of indicators, the sources of verification and the risks and assumptions were important inputs to the development of the evaluation framework applied in this evaluation.

Risks and Critical assumptions

The risk management strategy is included in the programmes as well as the means to mitigate these risks (not particular for the bilateral objective). The risks shown in Table Apx B-1 have been taken from different programme documents and programme reports for illustration. The critical assumption made in Table Apx B-1 is developed by the evaluator based on the initial desk research. Both risk and critical assumption were used when investigating the efficiency and effectiveness of the grants. In particular, they were used for developing the questionnaires for interviews and survey. The evaluation does not focus specifically on the risk as most programmes do not develop a specific framework for the bilateral objective but may include a bilateral element in the strategy.

Table Apx B-1 Expanded intervention logic

	Description of the dimension	Verifiable indicators	Sources of verification	Critical assumptions	Risks
Impact	Strengthened relations	Macro indicator (no programme or mechanism indicators)	Overall grants Reports	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difference in legal provision regulation the rules of cooperation - Political changes
Objectives (outcomes) The four dimensions of the bilateral objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent of cooperation; Formal partnerships or through more ad hoc exchange and collaboration financed by bilateral funds will increase cooperation. 	Bilateral indicators Data on cooperation	DoRIS data e-surveys; desk review of reports interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners (participants) on both sides available Interest in the cooperation Co-funding available (financial or human) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity of involved institutions not adequate to secure results - Failure to use project results in practice; - Lack of communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared initiatives and results; Sharing experience, knowledge, know-how and technology and working together for joint results such as the development of policies, laws, strategies or new knowledge or practice. 	Result indicators (according to sector) Bilateral indicators	DoRIS data e-surveys; desk review of reports interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible to find common ground and interest for cooperation Willingness to cooperate on sensitive issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Failure to achieve project objectives; - This is the desired result of a process of constructive and positive engagement.

	Description of the dimension	Verifiable indicators	Sources of verification	Critical assumptions	Risks
	› Knowledge and understanding; Bring people and institutions together and create space for improved knowledge and mutual understanding between individuals, institutions, states and the wider public.	Result indicators (according to sector) Bilateral indicators	DoRIS data e-surveys; desk review of reports interviews	› Availability of human resource in the project interested in the cooperation › Human resources and institutional structures capable for uptake	
	› Wider effects: Wider effects might happen as a result of institutions working together and finding common ground for extending their cooperation beyond the projects and programmes.	Bilateral indicators	DoRIS data e-surveys; desk review of reports interviews	› Replicability of project or project results › Resources available for further actions and cooperation › Instructional capacity for uptake of results	
Outputs	Deliverables, services, tangible results such as trainings, articles, common papers, participants, partnerships, etc.	Result indicators as objective 1 (depending on priority sector and programme area)	Reports, DoRIS	› Partners available on both sides › Projects developed	› - Costs for participation or involvement of partner too high › - Difficulty in initiating cooperation between beneficiary and donor state partners › - Lack of clarity of project/programme objectives
Activities	Financial contributions, regulations and RBM framework	Grants are provided to projects (disbursement)	DoRIS Reports	Funds available in time from the EEA Grants Programmes planned Call for proposal launched	› - Lack of interest in programme (beneficiary) › - Lack of interest in the programme (donor) › - Risk of erroneous project assessment resulting in financing to projects not meeting requirements; › - Procedures granting project slow and cumbersome (bureaucratic)

Data for the analysis	Data on bilateral indicators, derived indicators and other relevant data has been included in order to describe the progress on the bilateral objective. The DoRIS database contains data on the bilateral indicators, entered into DoRIS by the programme operators in the beneficiary countries.
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Appendix C Bilateral indicators

Bilateral indicators
<p>Type 1 results: Extent of cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Number of project partnership agreements in civil society › Number of project partnership agreements in the private sector › Number of project partnership agreements in the public sector › Number of women/men involved in exchange visits between beneficiary and donor states
<p>Type 2 results: Shared results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Number of projects with expected shared results (both partners are involved professionally in planning and implementation and can claim credit for achieved results). › Number of new policies, laws and regulations adapted, as a result of bilateral cooperation, under the grants. › Number of joint (bilateral) articles published, written by persons from both an institutions in a beneficiary and donor state, published in national or international publications, originated from a project financed by the programme. › Number of joint (bilateral) scientific papers written with co-researchers in at least one beneficiary and one donor state, and published in a national or international scientific publication, originated from a project financed by the programme. › Number of new technologies/new practises, including IT-systems, adopted in a beneficiary state, as a result of transfer of knowledge from a donor state partner. › Number of new technologies/new practices, including IT-systems, adopted in a donor state, as a result of transfer of knowledge from beneficiary state partners.
<p>Type 3 results: Knowledge and mutual understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Number of articles published in one country about the other partner country <p>Suggestions for additional quantitative indicators are welcome.</p>
<p>Type 4 results: Wider effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Number of replications of joint projects (or results) by other organisations in the same or another country › Number of professional networks between institutions in beneficiary and donor states established and operational › Number of European and international networks where project and programme partners participate together › Number of joint, sector-wide initiatives, in a beneficiary or donor state, beyond the programme › Number of joint initiatives in the European or international arena or multilateral organisations › Number of cooperation activities or initiatives in international fora between senior decision makers / politicians, as a result of joint projects or programmes <p>Wider effects might be difficult to plan for ex ante, but might be relevant to report on if they happen as a spin-off of the programme or project cooperation.</p>

Appendix D Programmes covered by the evaluation

	Country	Programme Area	ID	Programme name
1	Estonia	PA16	EE05	Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage
2	Estonia	PA23	EE06	Research cooperation
3	Estonia	PA19+PA24	EE10	Scholarship
4	Estonia	PA11	EE04	Children and Youth at Risk
5	Latvia	PA16 + PA17	LV04	Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage
6	Latvia	PA19+PA23+PA24	LV05	Research and scholarships
7	Latvia	PA25	LV07	Capacity-Building and Institutional Cooperation between Latvian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities
8	Latvia	PA32	LV08	Reform of the Latvian Correctional services and police Detention Centres
9	Romania	PA16	RO12	Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage
10	Romania	PA17	RO13	Promotion of Diversity in Culture and Arts within European Cultural Heritage
11	Romania	PA18	RO14	Research within priority sectors
12	Romania	PA19	RO15	Scholarships
13	Romania	PA15	RO18	Capacity-building and Institutional Cooperation between Romanian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities
14	Romania	PA11 (PA12)	RO10	Children and Youth at Risk and Local and Regional Initiatives to Reduce National Inequalities and to Promote Social Inclusion
15	Romania	PA32	RO23	Correctional Services, including Non-custodial Sanctions
17	Slovakia	PA16+PA17	SK05	Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage & Promotion of Diversity in Culture and Arts within European Cultural Heritage
18	Slovakia	PA19	SK06	EEA Scholarship Programme
19	Slovakia	PA26	SK08	Cross-border Cooperation
20	Slovakia	PA12	SK04	Local and Regional Initiatives to Reduce National Inequalities and to Promote Social Inclusion
21	Poland	PA16	PL08	Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage
22	Poland	PA17	PL09	Promotion of Diversity in Culture and Arts within European Cultural Heritage (Donor Partnership Programme)
23	Poland	PA19+PA24	PL10	EEA Scholarship Programme; Norwegian-Polish Scholarship Programme
24	Poland	PA23	PL12	Bilateral Research Cooperation
	Capacity building			
25	Bulgaria	PA25	BG11	Capacity-building and Institutional Co-operation
26	Czech Republic	PA25	CZ10	Capacity-building and Institutional Cooperation between Beneficiary State and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities
27	Lithuania	PA25	LT10	Capacity-Building and Institutional Cooperation between Beneficiary State and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities
28	Malta	PA25+PA32	MT04	Norwegian Financial Mechanism Programme – No APR!

Appendix E List of interviews

	Name	Organisation	Role	Email	Date
1	Marion Kindle Kühnis	AIBA	DPP (LI) Scholarship		05.11.15
2	Brit Holtebeek	Arts Council Norway (ACN)	DPP		17.09.15
3	Aleksandra Witczak Haugstad	Research Council Norway	DPP		13.09.15
4	Viðar Helgason	The Icelandic Centre for Research - RANNÍS	DPP		01.10.15
5	Elita Cakule	Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)	DPP		02.10.15
6	Veena Gill	Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU)	DPP		Written Comments received.
7	Andrea Pietras	FMO	Country Officer		30.11.15
8	Frodedal Fjeldavli	FMO	Country Officer		20.11.15
9	Andreas Aabel	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Norway	Donor HQ		05.11.15
10	Noelle Dahl-Poppe	Directorate for culture	DPP		24.11.15
11	Zsolt Tószegi	FMO	Country officer		16.11.15
12	Dominik Marxer	Mission of Liechtenstein to the EU	Counsellor		13.05.16
13	Christian Larsen	FMO	Country Officer		03.11.15

EEA and Norway Grants – evaluation of the bilateral objective - Interview list for Estonia

	Name	Organisation	Role	Email	Date
1	Pille Pikker	Ministry of Education and Research	PO	Pille.pikker@hm.ee	10.11.15
2	Dagfinn Sørli, Piret Marvet	Norwegian Embassy	Donor (Ambassador, adviser)	Piret.marvet@mfa.no	10.11.15
3	Ülle Lobjakas	Ministry of Finance	NFP	Ulle.lobjakas@fin.ee	10.11.15
4	Iige Maalman	Estonian Research Council	Programme Partner	iige.maalman@etag.ee	11.11.15
5	Tiina Maiberg, Kattri-Helina Raba	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Desk officer for Norway, contact point for financial mechanisms	Tiina.maiberg@mfa.ee	11.11.15
6	Riin Alatalu	Ministry of Culture	PO	Riin.alatalu@km.ee	11.11.15
7	Maie Tibar	Tallinn Technical Secondary School	Project partner (project manager)	Maie.tibar@ttg.edu.ee	12.11.15
8	Anne Hütt	Archimedes Foundation	Programme Partner	Anne.hutt@archimedes.ee	12.11.15
9	Maarja Urb, Karmen Paul	Viimsi School	Project partner (project manager, headmaster)	Maarja.urb@viimsi.edu.ee	13.11.15
10	Karin Sein	Tartu University	Project partner (project manager)	Karin.sein@ut.ee	17.11.15
11	Rein Drenkhan	Estonian University of Life Sciences	Project partner (project manager)	rein.drenkhan@emu.ee	17.11.15
12	Signe Leidt	Hiiu-Suuremõisa manor school	Project partner (project manager)	signe@hak.edu.ee	17.11.15
13	Tarvi Sits	Ministry of Culture	Strategic level	Tarvi.sits@kul.ee	17.11.15
14	Aare Vilu	Ministry of Education and Research	PO	Aare.vilu@hm.ee	18.11.15
15	Kåre Lilleholt	University of Oslo	Donor project partner	kare.lilleholt@jus.uio.no	20.11.15
16	Kristjan Kõljalg	Koigi municipality (currently Member of Parliament)	Project partner (project manager)	kristjan.koljalg@riigikogu.ee	20.11.15
17	Helmut Hinrichsen	Fjölbrautaskólinn við Ármúla	Donor project partner	helmut@fa.is	23.11.15
18	Gerttu Aavik	Estonian Youth Work Centre	Programme Partner	gerttu.aavik@entk.ee	25.11.15
19	Pille Soome	Ministry of Social Affairs	Project partner (project manager)	Pille.soome@sm.ee	30.11.15

EEA and Norway Grants – evaluation of the bilateral objective - Interview list for Latvia

	Name	Organisation	Role	Email	Date
1	Steinar Egil Hagen	Royal Norwegian Embassy, Ambassador	Donor	Steinar.Hagen@mfa.no	28.10.15
2	Agnese Cimdiņa	Royal Norwegian Embassy	Donor	Agnese.Cimdina@mfa.no	27.10.15
3	Guntra Želve Signe Gulbe Inga Vajevska	Ministry of Finance	NFP	Guntra.Zelve@fm.gov.lv Signe.Gulbe@fm.gov.lv Inga.Vajevska@fm.gov.lv	28.10.15
4	Sanita Rancāne-Delekolē	Ministry of Culture	PO	Sanita.Rancane-Delekole@km.gov.lv	28.10.15
5	Ilze Krieva Solvita Ciganska Natālija Slaidiņa	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development	PO	Ilze.Krieva@varam.gov.lv Solvita.Ciganska@varam.gov.lv Natalija.Slaidina@varam.gov.lv	28.10.15
6	Gunta Arāja	Ministry of Education and Science	PO	Gunta.Araja@izm.gov.lv	29.10.15
7	Alise Lūse Jana Sīle Reinis Tralmaks	State Education Development Agency	IA	Alise.Luse@viaa.gov.lv Jana.Sile@viaa.gov.lv Reinis.Tralmaks@viaa.gov.lv	29.10.15
8	Harijs Ginters	State Regional Development Agency	IA	Harijs.Ginters@vraa.gov.lv	02.11.15
9	Laura Dimitrijeva	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development	PP	Laura.Dimitrijeva@varam.gov.lv	27.10.15
10	Ligita Pudža	Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments	PP	Ligita.Pudza@lps.lv	30.10.15
11	Ilze Zariņa	Municipality Agency of Kuldīga District Council „Kuldīga Culture Centre”	PP	ilzeizarinai@inbox.lv	10.11.15
12	Vadims Bartkevičs Sandra Strole	University of Latvia	PP	Vadims.Bartkevics@lu.lv Sandra.Strole@lu.lv	13.11.15
13	Ilona Asare	Cesis Municipality	PP	Ilona.Asare@cesis.lv	13.11.15
14	Elisabeth Seljevold Fladmoe	Frogn Municipality	DPP	elisabeth.seljevold.fladmoe@frogn.kommune.no	20.11.15
15	Imants Jurevičius	State Probation Service	PP	imants.jurevicius@vpd.gov.lv	10.12.15
16	Agris Batalauskis	Ministry of Justice	PO	agris.batalauskis@tm.gov.lv	14.12.15

EEA and Norway Grants – evaluation of the bilateral objective - Interview list for Poland

	Name	Organisation	Role	Email	Date
1	Karolina Tylus-Sowa,	Ministry of Culture	PO PL08/PL09	ktylus@mkidn.gov.pl	07.12.2015
2	Karsten Klepssvik, Ingrid Norstein, Karolina Gradowska – Karpińska,	Royal Norwegian Embassy in Poland	Donor Country	kkl@mfa.no ; Ingrid.Norstein@mfa.no ; Karolina.Karpinska@mfa.no	07.12.2015
3	Przemysław Derwich, Małgorzata Zalewska, Urszula Demidziuk,	Ministry of Development, Dpt. of Assistance Programmes	NFP	przemyslaw.derwich@mir.gov.pl ; malgorzata.zalewska@mir.gov.pl ; urszula.demidziuk@mir.gov.pl	07.12.2015
4	Agnieszka Ratajczak, Maciej Jędrzejek,	The National Centre for Research and Development, Head of Unit – International Programmes, Programme Management Department;	PO PL12	agnieszka.ratajczak@ncbr.gov.pl ; maciej.jedrzejek@ncbr.gov.pl	08.12.2015
5	Katarzyna Aleksandrowicz,	Foundation of the Development of the Education System	PO PL10	kaleksandrowicz@frse.org.pl	08.12.2015
6	Prof. Józefa Bałachowicz, Prof. Ligia Tuszyńska, Ewa Lewandowska, Anna Witkowska-Tomaszewska, Adamina Korwin-Szymanowska , Zdzisław Nitak – Project Team members	The Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education	Project Promoter PL10 “Environmental Education for Sustainable Development in Initial Teacher Education”	baljola@aps.edu.pl ltuszyńska@aps.edu.pl ewalew@aps.edu.pl a.witkowska_tomaszewska@interia.pl adamina_k@wp.pl ; zs.nitak@gappolska.org ;	08.12.2015 (focus group participants)
7	Kirsti Vindal Halvorsen	Agder University in Kristiansand	DPP PL10 “Environmental Education for Sustainable Development in Initial Teacher Education”	kirsti.v.halvorsen@uia.no	08.12.2015 (participatio n in focus group interview via skype)
8	Sviataslau Valasiuk, Technical Co- ordinator Prof. Tomasz Żylicz, Project expert	University of Warsaw, Faculty of Economic Sciences	Project Promoter PL 12 “Value of Transboundary Nature Protected Areas Situated near the EU Outer Borders”	sviatsviat@gmail.com	08.12.2015 (focus group)

	Name	Organisation	Role	Email	Date
					participants)
9	Prof. Wiesław Winiecki, Project Co-ordinator prof. Roman Z. Morawski, Project expert	Warsaw University of Technology, The Faculty of Electronics and Information Technology	Project Promoter PL 12 "Care support for elderly and disabled people by radar sensor technology"	w.winiecki@ire.pw.edu.pl r.morawski@ire.pw.edu.pl	08.12.2015 (focus group participants)
10	Małgorzata Kulesza, Project Co-ordinator	XIII High School in Krakow	Project Promoter PL10 "School -teacher of life"	mkulesza@gmail.com	11.12.2015 (telephone interview)
11	Małgorzata Więckowska- Frąckiewicz, Project Co-ordinator	Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań	Project Promoter PL10 "Mobility"	gosiافر@amu.edu.pl	11.12.2015 (telephone interview)
12	Bogna Mrozowska, Project Co-ordinator	Information Society Development Foundation	Project Promoter PL09 "Library as a meeting place for many cultures"	bogna.mrozowska@frsi.org.pl	16.12.2015
13	Trond Hjelle, Director	Atlanten Videregående Skole Kristiansund	DPP PL10 Project: "School – teacher of life"	Trond.Hjelle@mr fylke.no	17.12.2015 (telephone interview)
14	Szymon Wierzbński, Project Co-ordinator	The Grażyna and Kiejstut Bacewicz Academy of Music in Łódź	Project Promoter PL09 "Promotion of cultural diversity by establishing cooperation between The Grażyna and Kiejstut Bacewicz Academy of Music in Łódź and Telemark Chamber Orchestra"	szwierzbinski@amuz.lodz.pl	18.12.2015 (telephone interview)
15	Joanna Dobrzańska, Project Co-ordinator	The Fryderyk Chopin Institute	Project Promoter PL09 "Between national identity and a community of cultures: from Chopin and Tellefsen to XXI century"	jdobrzanska@nifc.pl	17.12.2015
16	Łucja Koch, Project Co-ordinator	Museum of the History of Polish Jews	Project Promoter PL09 "Jewish Culture Heritage"	Lkoch@polin.pl	18.12.2015

EEA and Norway Grants – evaluation of the bilateral objective - Interview list for Slovakia (16.12.15)

	Name	Organisation	Role	Email	Date
1	Jaroslav Mojžiš Martina Szabóová	Governmental Office, Slovakia	Focal point	martina.szaboova@vlada.gov.sk	01.12.2015
2	Rannveig Skofteland Eva Gašperanová Soňa Sulíková	Royal Norwegian Embassy Bratislava	Stakeholder	rannveig.skofteland@mfa.no	01.12.2015
3	Natália Ďurková	Governmental Office, Slovakia	Programme manager SKO5	natalia.durkova@vlada.gov.sk	02.12.2015
4	Barbora Gonzales	Governmental Office, Slovakia	Programme manager SKO4	barbora.gonzales@vlada.gov.sk	02.12.2015
5	Jana Dacková Livia Pitoňáková	Governmental Office, Slovakia	Programme manager SKO8	jana.dackova@vlada.gov.sk	02.12.2015
6	Žofia Gulášová	SAIA Slovakia, NGO	Programme manager SKO6	zofia.gulasova@saia.sk	02.12.2015
7	Branislav Rezník Pavol Ižvolt	Monument Board of the Slovak Republic	Managers; Predefined project Pro Monumenta; SKO5	Branislav.Reznik@pamiatky.gov.sk	03.12.2015
8	Iveta Plšeková Martina Tichá	Magistrate Capital City Bratislava	Vice-lord mayor; Project manager Project NKP Hrad Devín SKO5	martina.ticha@bratislava.sk	03.12.2015
9	Vlasta Kunová Eugen Ružický Ján Lacko	Pan-European High School	Vice-rector; Dean; Project manager Project: InovEduc SKO8	eugen.ruzicky@paneurouni.com	03.12.2015
10	Jana Tomova	Private secondary school Kremnica eMKLub Kremnica	Director of beneficiaries from projects 8515/2013 8514/2013; SKO4	cezdetikrodine@gmail.com	04.12.2015
11	Zuzana Lisoňová	Comenius University Bratislava, Faculty of Philosophy	Project manager; SKO6	zuzana.lisonova@uniba.sk	07.12.2015
12	Iveta Kohanová	Comenius University Bratislava, Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Informatics	Project manager SKO6	kohanova@fmp.uniba.sk	07.12.2015
13	Stanislav Kološta	Matej Bel University, Faculty of Economics	Project manager, SKO6	stanislav.kolosta@umb.sk	15.12.2015
14	Jozef Facuna	Slovak Pedagogic Institute	Project manager; Pre-defined project; SKO4	Facuna.Jozef@statpedu.sk	On line
15	Oddbjørn Bukve	Institute of Social Science; Sogn og Fjordane University College	Norwegian partner	oddbjorn.bukve@hisf.no	17.12.15

EEA and Norway Grants – evaluation of the bilateral objective - Interview list for Romania (update 130116)

	Name	Organisation	Role	Email	Date
1	Diana Săcărea - Norway Grants/ EEA Grants Officer	Royal Norwegian Embassy		diana.sacarea@mfa.no	17.11.15
2	Mihaela Terchilă - General Director;	Ministry of European Funds	National Focal Point for EEA and Norway Grants	mihaela.terchila@fonduri-ue.ro	17.11.15
3	Diana Duma - Operational Leader	Ministry of European Funds	National Focal Point for EEA and Norway Grants and PO for RO18 - <i>Capacity-building and Institutional Cooperation between Romanian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities</i>	diana.duma@fonduri-ue.ro	17.11.15
4	Monica Calotă – Director; Adrian Georgescu – Deputy Director	Ministry of Education - National Agency for EU Programmes in Education and Vocational Training	PO for RO-15 Scholarships and inter-institutional cooperation at Higher Education level	monica.calota@anpcdefp.ro ; adrian.georgescu@anpcdefp.ro	18.11.15
5	Bogdan Trîmbaciu - Director	Ministry of Culture – Programme Management Unit	PO for RO12 <i>Conservation and revitalisation of cultural and natural heritage</i> and for RO 13 – <i>Promotion of diversity in culture and arts within European cultural heritage</i>	bogdan.trimbaci@umpcultura.ro	18.11.15
6	Cătălin Amza – Director of CAMIS Center	University Politehnica of Bucharest	Project <i>Augmented Reality for Technical Entrepreneurs (ARTE)</i>	acata1@camis.pub.ro	18.11.15
7	Anca Ghinescu – Senior Adviser and RO EEA Research Program Coordinator; Alexandra Vancea - Cousellor	Ministry of Education – National Authority for Scientific Research and Innovation	PO for RO 14 <i>Research within Priority Sectors</i>	anca.ghinescu@ancs.ro ; alexandra.vancea@ancs.ro	19.11.15
8	Diana Mihaela Popescu – Director	Ministry of Justice – Department for European Programmes	PO for RO 20, 23 and 24	DPopescu@just.ro	07.12.15
9	Marius Diaconescu – Project manager	University of Bucharest, History Department	Project "Digitizing Medieval Documents in the Romanian National Archives " within RO12 <i>Conservation and revitalisation of cultural and natural heritage</i>	mariusdiaconescu2008@gmail.com	07.12.15
10	Cosmina Goagea – Project manager Constantin Goagea – Project team member	“Zeppelin” Association	Project “Halele Carol” within RO 13 – <i>Promotion of diversity in culture and arts within European cultural heritage</i>	cosmina@e-zeppelin.ro	09.12.15
11	Mihaela Peter – Deputy Director	Romanian Social Development Fund	PO for RO 10 - <i>Children and young people at risk, regional and local initiatives to reduce national inequalities and promote social inclusion - CORAI</i>	mpeter@frds.ro	09.12.15

	Name	Organisation	Role	Email	Date
12	Cantemir Ciurea – Project manager	Romanian National Authority for the Control of Nuclear Activities (CNCAN)	Project “Regional Excellence Project on Regulatory Capacity Building in Nuclear and Radiological Safety, Emergency Preparedness and Response in Romania” <i>within</i> RO18 - <i>Capacity-building and Institutional Cooperation between Romanian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities</i>	cantemir.ciurea@cncan.ro	10.12.15
13	Cristian Plesa - Head of International Co-operation and Programs Service	Romanian National Administration of Penitentiaries - Ministry of Justice	All projects within RO 23 - <i>Correctional Services, including Non-custodial Sanctions</i>	cristi.plesa@anp.gov.ro	10.12.15
14	Leif Marsteen and Hai-Ying Liu – Project team members	Norwegian Institute for Air Research (NILU)	Project ROKIDAIR within RO 14 <i>Research within Priority Sector</i>	Hai-Ying.Liu@nilu.no Leif.Marsteen@nilu.no	10.12.15
15	Ileana Farcasanu – Project manager Ioana Pintilie – Project manager Jihong Liu-Clarke – Project team leader Gudmundur Halfdanarson – Project team leader	University of Bucharest National Institute of Materials Physics Norwegian Institute for Bioeconomy Research University of Iceland	Projects within RO 14 <i>Research within Priority Sector</i>		10.12.15
16	Iuliu Oana - Project manager	Romanian National Administration of Penitentiaries - Ministry of Justice	Project “Strengthening the capacity of the Bacau prison for minors and youngsters to comply with the relevant international human rights instruments” within RO 23 - <i>Correctional Services, including Non-custodial Sanctions</i>	Iuliu.oana@anp.gov.ro	11.12.15
17	Stefania Iordache – Project manager	University Valahia Targoviste	Project ROKIDAIR within RO 14 <i>Research within Priority Sector</i>	stefania.iordache@yahoo.com	11.12.15
18	Ramona Onciu - Erasmus Institutional coordinator	Babes Bolyai University Cluj – Erasmus+ Office	Mobility project within RO-15 <i>Scholarships and inter-institutional cooperation at Higher Education level</i>	ramona.onciu@ubbcluj.ro	17.12.15
19	Teodora Hrib – officer Department for Central and Western Europe	Ministry of Foreign Affairs		teodora.hrib@mae.ro	22.12.15
20		Norwegian Embassy Bucharest – Ambassador			

Appendix F Bibliography⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Project documentation and DPP reports used for the evaluation are not listed in the bibliography

- 1 End review. EEA and Norway Grants 2004-2009. Final report, NCG, January 2012.
- 2 EEA and Norway Grants Solidarity and cooperation in Europe. Report to the Stortinget (white paper). Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Meld. st. 20 (2011-2012)
- 3 Quantitative public opinion survey developed in order to assess the visibility and transparency of EEA and Norwegian 2009-2014 Financial Mechanisms in Romania, April 2014
- 4 Awareness and evaluation of Norway grants and EEA grants in the Polish society. Findings from quantitative study commissioned by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development. Warsaw, February 2014
- 5 Strategic Report on Implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009–2014 in Latvia, January – December 2013
- 6 The Office of the Auditor General's investigation of the EEA and Norway Grants. Document 3:15 (2012-2013)
- 7 Kruse, Stein Erik and Kaya, Zozan (2013) Baseline Study on Bilateral Relations EEA Norway Grants, Nordic Consulting Group (NCG)
- 8 The EEA and the Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2009-14. Terms of Reference for Donor State public entities acting as donor programme partners. (no date)
- 9 DPP-report. EEA and Norway Grants. Lesson Learned from the implementation period. 29.05.2015.
- 10 Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2009-2014.
- 11 Guideline for Strengthened Bilateral Relations, EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014 (2012) Adopted by Financial Mechanism Office.
- 12 Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 (last amended 2 July 2014).
- 13 Arbeidsgrupperapport. Norske DPP-erfaringer. Erfaringsoppsummering fra arbeidet med EØS-midler 2009-2014. Arbeidsgruppen. 12.03.2013
- 14 Evaluation of the sector academic research under the EEA/Norway Grants. EEA/Norway Grants. Final Report. November 2011
- 15 EVALUATION OF THE SECTOR CULTURAL HERITAGE UNDER THE EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS 2004-09 – Final Report Ljubljana, April 2012

- 16 MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE SECTOR CULTURAL HERITAGE UNDER THE EEA GRANTS 2009-2014. Centre for Strategy & Evaluation Services. August 2015.
- 17 A synthesis and assessment of reporting information and analytical framework related to the overall objective of the EEA and Norway grants: Strengthened Bilateral Relations
Prepared by Veena Gill (Project leader), Dag Stenvoll, Marthe Vaagen and Eirik Nesheim.
Bergen 11 December 2014

Appendix G Survey questionnaire (only programme level)

Assessing progress in strengthening bilateral relations under the EEA and Norway Grants

Dear Madam/Sir,

In order to assess the progress of the EEA and Norway Grants scheme for the period 2009-2014, the Financial Mechanism Office has launched a mid-term evaluation of the support to strengthened bilateral relations under the Grants.

The main purpose of the evaluation is to assess to what extent and how the EEA and Norway Grants contribute towards strengthening bilateral relations between the donor and beneficiary states.

Your input is valuable for us to evaluate the progress and results in strengthening bilateral relations, which is why we kindly ask you to fill out the questionnaire that follows.

The survey takes 15-20 minutes to complete. The survey needs to be completed by 19 October at the very latest.

Thank you for your time.

Should you experience any problems with the survey, please contact Ramon Wessel by e-mail at rawe@cowi.dk or by phone through +45 56 40 71 25].

The evaluation is conducted by COWI consultancy on behalf of the Financial Mechanism Office.

Stine Andresen, Director, FMO.

The following section will go into basis information about the survey respondent

A. Which function/institution do you represent? Below you can see the choices within the three presented options:

1. Strategic level:

- ☐ Donor/embassy
- ☐ Donor/HQ
- ☐ International organisation
- ☐ National Focal Point
- ☐ Representative FMO

2. Programme level

- ☐ Donor Programme Partner
- ☐ Donor programme partner and donor project partner
- ☐ Other relevant institutions at programme level
- ☐ Programme Operator
- ☐ Representatives from Cooperation Committees (other than DPP)

3. Project level

- ☐ Donor project partner
- ☐ Project Partner
- ☐ Project Promoter

- ☐ Strategic level
- ☐ Programme level
- ☐ Project level

A - Strategic. Which function/institution do you represent?

In the event that you have more than one role please indicate the main role.

- ☐ Donor/embassy
- ☐ Donor/HQ
- ☐ International organisation
- ☐ National Focal Point
- ☐ Representative FMO
- ☐ Do not know

Other, namely:

A - Programme. Which function/institution do you represent?

In the event that you have more than one role please indicate the main role.

- ☐ Donor Programme Partner
- ☐ Donor programme partner and donor project partner
- ☐ Other relevant institutions at programme level
- ☐ Programme Operator
- ☐ Representatives from Cooperation Committees (other than DPP)
- ☐ Do not know

Other, namely:

A1. Does your programme have a donor programme partner?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

B. Which sector does your organisation belong to?

- ☐ Civil Society
- ☐ Education
- ☐ International Institution
- ☐ Private Sector
- ☐ Public Sector: Government ministry
- ☐ Public Sector: National agency
- ☐ Public Sector: Regional or local authority
- ☐ None

Other sector, namely:

C. Which function(s) do you have in the implementation of the programme?**Please rank:**

Planning and preparation

Member of cooperation committee/programme committee

Programme management

Technical experts

Other, please specify:

D. Is your role clearly defined?

Very unclear

Very clear

1

2

3

4

5

Please score:

☐☐☐☐☐**E. In which country are you located, or which country do you represent?**

- ☐ Norway
- ☐ Iceland
- ☐ Liechtenstein
- ☐ Estonia
- ☐ Latvia
- ☐ Poland
- ☐ Romania
- ☐ Slovakia
- ☐ Bulgaria (only PA25)
- ☐ Lithuania (only PA25)
- ☐ Malta (only PA25)
- ☐ Czech republic (only PA25)
- ☐ International organisations
- ☐ Do not know

Other, namely:

F. To which priority sector does your programme/project belong?

- ☐ Carbon Capture and Storage
- ☐ Civil Society
- ☐ Climate Change
- ☐ Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue
- ☐ Environmental Protection and Management

- ☐ Green Industry Innovation
- ☐ Human and Social Development.
- ☐ Justice and home affairs
- ☐ Protecting Cultural Heritage
- ☐ Research and Scholarships
- ☐ General (no specific priority sector)
- ☐ More than one priority sector
- ☐ Not applicable

**G1. Please indicate which programme area (s) that you are involved at
In the event your programme has more programme areas and belong to more than one priority sector.**

- ☐ PA20 - Carbon capture and storage (CCS)

**G2. Please indicate which programme area (s) that you are involved at
In the event your programme has more programme areas and belong to more than one priority sector.**

- ☐ PA10 - Funds for non-governmental organisations

**G3. Please indicate which programme area (s) that you are involved at
In the event your programme has more programme areas and belong to more than one priority sector.**

- ☐ PA05 - Energy efficiency
- ☐ PA06 - Renewable energy
- ☐ PA07 - Adaptation to climate change
- ☐ PA08 - Maritime sector
- ☐ PA09 - Environmental and climate change-related research and technology

**G4. Please indicate which programme area (s) that you are involved at
In the event your programme has more programme areas and belong to more than one priority sector.**

- ☐ PA22 - Global fund for decent work and tripartite dialogue

**G5. Please indicate which programme area (s) that you are involved at
In the event your programme has more programme areas and belong to more than one priority sector.**

- ☐ PA01 - Integrated marine and inland water management
- ☐ PA02 - Biodiversity and ecosystem services
- ☐ PA03 - Environmental monitoring and integrated planning and control
- ☐ PA04 - Reduction of hazardous substances

**G6. Please indicate which programme area (s) that you are involved at
In the event your programme has more programme areas and belong to more than one priority sector.**

- ☐ PA21 - Green Industry Innovation
- ☐ PA41 - Energy efficiency (Norway)

**G7. Please indicate which programme area (s) that you are involved at
In the event your programme has more programme areas and belong to more than one priority sector.**

- ☐ PA11 - Children and youth at risk
- ☐ PA12 - Local and regional initiatives to reduce national inequalities and to promote social inclusion (EEA grants)
- ☐ PA13 - Public health initiatives (EEA grants)
- ☐ PA14 - Mainstreaming gender equality and promoting work-life balance (EEA grants)
- ☐ PA15 - Institutional framework in the asylum and migration sector
- ☐ PA25 - Capacity-building and Institutional Cooperation between Beneficiary State and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities
- ☐ PA26 - Cross-border cooperation
- ☐ PA27 - Public health initiatives (Norway grant)
- ☐ PA28 - Mainstreaming gender equality and promoting work-life balance (Norway grant)
- ☐ PA38 - Civil Society Support
- ☐ PA40 - Local and regional initiatives to reduce national inequalities and to promote social inclusion (Norway grants)

**G8. Please indicate which programme area (s) that you are involved at
In the event your programme has more programme areas and belong to more than one priority sector.**

- ☐ PA29 - Domestic and Gender-based violence
- ☐ PA30 - Schengen cooperation and combating cross-border and organised crime, including trafficking and itinerant criminal groups
- ☐ PA31 - Judicial capacity-building and cooperation
- ☐ PA32 - Correctional services, including non-custodial sanctions
- ☐ PA37 - Justice and Home Affairs

**G9. Please indicate which programme area (s) that you are involved at
In the event your programme has more programme areas and belong to more than one priority sector.**

- ☐ PA16 - Conservation and revitalisation of cultural and natural heritage
- ☐ PA17 - Promotion of diversity in culture and arts within European cultural heritage
- ☐ PA39 - Cultural heritage

**G10. Please indicate which programme area (s) that you are involved at
In the event your programme has more programme areas and belong to more
than one priority sector.**

- ☐ PA18 - Research within priority sectors
- ☐ PA19 - Scholarships
- ☐ PA23 - Bilateral research cooperation
- ☐ PA24 - Bilateral scholarship programme

**G11. Please indicate which programme area (s) that you are involved at
In the event your programme has more programme areas and belong to more
than one priority sector.**

- ☐ PA01 - Integrated marine and inland water management
- ☐ PA02 - Biodiversity and ecosystem services
- ☐ PA03 - Environmental monitoring and integrated planning and control
- ☐ PA04 - Reduction of hazardous substances
- ☐ PA05 - Energy efficiency
- ☐ PA06 - Renewable energy
- ☐ PA07 - Adaptation to climate change
- ☐ PA08 - Maritime sector
- ☐ PA09 - Environmental and climate change-related research and technology
- ☐ PA10 - Funds for non-governmental organisations
- ☐ PA11 - Children and youth at risk
- ☐ PA12 - Local and regional initiatives to reduce national inequalities and to promote social inclusion (EEA grants)
- ☐ PA13 - Public health initiatives (EEA grants)
- ☐ PA14 - Mainstreaming gender equality and promoting work-life balance (EEA grants)
- ☐ PA15 - Institutional framework in the asylum and migration sector
- ☐ PA16 - Conservation and revitalisation of cultural and natural heritage
- ☐ PA17 - Promotion of diversity in culture and arts within European cultural heritage
- ☐ PA18 - Research within priority sectors
- ☐ PA19 - Scholarships
- ☐ PA20 - Carbon capture and storage (CCS)
- ☐ PA21 - Green Industry Innovation
- ☐ PA22 - Global fund for decent work and tripartite dialogue
- ☐ PA23 - Bilateral research cooperation
- ☐ PA24 - Bilateral scholarship programme
- ☐ PA25 - Capacity-building and Institutional Cooperation between Beneficiary State and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities
- ☐ PA26 - Cross-border cooperation
- ☐ PA27 - Public health initiatives (Norway grant)
- ☐ PA28 - Mainstreaming gender equality and promoting work-life balance (Norway grant)
- ☐ PA29 - Domestic and Gender-based violence
- ☐ PA30 - Schengen cooperation and combating cross-border and organised crime, including trafficking and itinerant criminal groups

- ☐ PA31 - Judicial capacity-building and cooperation
- ☐ PA32 - Correctional services, including non-custodial sanctions
- ☐ PA37 - Justice and Home Affairs
- ☐ PA38 - Civil Society Support
- ☐ PA39 - Cultural heritage
- ☐ PA40 - Local and regional initiatives to reduce national inequalities and to promote social inclusion (Norway grants)
- ☐ PA41 - Energy efficiency (Norway)
- ☐ Do not know

Programme specific questions

The questions are structured into four groups. Each group contains around 3-6 questions, there are around 20 questions in total. Most of the questions ask for a scoring on a 5-scale, for example ranging from “agree to a very low extent” to “agree to a very high extent”. There are also questions where you are asked to either make a ranking, or select one or more options amongst multiple choices. Some questions are open and a free text answer is required.

The 4 question groups:

1. Planning and Process
2. Implementation and Organisation
3. Output and Results
4. Effect and Impact

1. Planning and Process

1a. Did you receive adequate information about the opportunities for establishing programmes/project partnerships?

	To a very low extent				To a very high extent
	1	2	3	4	5
Please select:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What would you require of additional information or different information?

1b. From whom did you receive information about the EEA and Norway Grants during the preparation of the programme/project:?

- ☐ Donors
- ☐ Donor Programme Partner
- ☐ Financial Mechanism Office
- ☐ National focal point
- ☐ Programme operator

Other, please specify:

2. Were you involved in the programme preparation and planning process?

	To a very low extent				To a very high extent
	1	2	3	4	5
Please select:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. How do you assess the degree to which the programme objectives are shared objectives between the beneficiary organisation and the programme partners?

	To a very low extent				To a very high extent	
	1	2	3	4	5	Do not know
Please select:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Has the bilateral objective (strengthened relation between the EEA EFTA states (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) and the beneficiary states) been prioritised within the programme?

	To a very low extent				To a very high extent	
	1	2	3	4	5	Do not know
Please select:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Implementation and Organisation

5. Which type of actors are involved in the implementation of the programme/your project?

Please select (more options possible):

- ☐ Civil Society
- ☐ Education
- ☐ International Institution
- ☐ Private Sector

- ☐ Public Sector: Government ministry
☐ Public Sector: National agency
☐ Public Sector: Regional or local authority
☐ Do not know

Other (please specify):

6. Do you assess that the donor programme partner contributes to developing bilateral relation (and thereby reaching the bilateral objective)?

	To a very low extent			To a very high extent		
	1	2	3	4	5	Do not know
Please score:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Could you elaborate on the value added of the donor programme partner in your programme (max 255 characters):

7. How do you assess the involvement of the donor programme partner in the listed roles:

	To a very low extent			To a very high extent		
	1	2	3	4	5	Do not know
Programme planning and preparation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member of cooperation committee/programme committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technical experts (to selection committees)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme reporting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify):

8. To what extent do you assess that the listed tools support the development of bilateral relations?

Please score each of the following options:

	To a very low extent			To a very high extent		
	1	2	3	4	5	Do not know
Annual meetings on a National level	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bilateral funds at national level	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cooperation Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Donor Programme partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expert advice on how to design the programme to integrate bilateral aspects;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feasibility studies for bilateral cooperation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Funds for complementary actions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Networking and exchange of experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project preparation and partner search	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Study tours for POs or other potential programme partners to the donor states	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are there any additional tools that would support the development of the bilateral relations?
(please specify):

9. Which organisational and management issues facilitate the development of bilateral relations?

Please make a ranking of the top 3 (1-3) in terms importance:.

Availability of human resource in the project interested in the cooperation	_____
Call for proposal launched in time	_____
Co-funding available (financial or human)	_____
Information and support	_____
Interest in the cooperation	_____
Institutional capacity for uptake of results	_____
Funds available in time from the EEA Grants	_____

Human resources and institutional structures available	_____
Partners (participants) on both sides available	_____
Possible to find common ground and interest for cooperation	_____
Programmes planned in time	_____
Projects developed	_____
Replicability of project or project results	_____
Resources available for further actions and cooperation	_____
Willingness to cooperate on sensitive issues	_____
Other, namely:	_____

10. Which organisational and management issues hinder the development of bilateral relations?

Please make a ranking of your top 3 in terms importance:

Capacity of involved institutions not adequate	_____
Costs for participation or involvement of partners too high	_____
Difference in legal provisions regulating the rules of cooperation	_____
Difficulty in initiating cooperation between beneficiary and donor state partners	_____
Failure to achieve project objectives;	_____
Failure to use project results in practice;	_____
Lack of communication	_____
Lack of clarity of project/programme objectives	_____
Lack of interest in programme (beneficiary)	_____
Lack of interest in the programme (donor organisation)	_____

Political changes _____
Procedures for granting projects slow and cumbersome (bureaucratic) _____

Other, namely:

3. Output and Results

11. Do you assess that the programme/project raised your/the awareness of the donor states efforts to assist beneficiary states?

	To a very low extent				To a very high extent	
	1	2	3	4	5	Do not know
Please score:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. Do you assess that the programme (s)/project (s) has (have) strengthened bilateral relations between the donor and your/the beneficiary country?

	To a very low extent				To a very high extent	
	1	2	3	4	5	Do not know
Please score:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. To what extent do you assess that listed aspects have been developed through the programmes/projects of the EEA and Norway grants?

Please score each of the following options:

	To a very low extent			To a very high extent		
	1	2	3	4	5	Do not know
Awareness of the other country/institution has increased	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attitudes of organisation towards each other has improved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trust between organisation has been developed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

When possible, please elaborate with examples:

14. Has your programme/project lead to a better understanding of the partner country in the following manner?

	To a very low extent			To a very high extent		
	1	2	3	4	5	Do not know
Understanding of culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding of the political situation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the specific socio-economic development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the Institutions – difference and similarities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify):

15. Do you assess that the programme/project is creating a better understanding of (your) programme/project sector?

	To a very low extent			To a very high extent		
	1	2	3	4	5	
Please score:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

16. Do you assess the programme/project results in 'common and shared results' as listed below?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

16b. Which common/share results are the three most important on the list?

Please make a ranking of your top 3 in terms importance:

Number of joint (bilateral) articles published, written by persons from both an institutions in a beneficiary and donor state, published in national or international publications, originated from a project financed by the programme.	_____
Number of joint (bilateral) scientific papers written with co-researchers in at least one beneficiary and one donor state, and published in a national or international scientific publication, originated from a project financed by the programme.	_____
Number of new policies, laws and regulations adapted, as a result of bilateral cooperation, under the grants.	_____

Number of new technologies/new practices, including IT-systems, adopted in a beneficiary state, as a result of transfer of knowledge from a donor state partner. _____

Number of new technologies/new practices, including IT-systems, adopted in a donor state, as a result of transfer of knowledge from beneficiary state partners. _____

Number of projects with expected shared results (both partners are involved professionally in planning and implementation and can claim credit for achieved results). _____

Other (please specify): _____

17. Do you assess that beneficiary institutions/organisation/person involved (in programme or project) have increased their capacity?

	To a very low extent				To a very high extent	
	1	2	3	4	5	Do not know
Please score:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Effect and Impact

18. Did the donor programme/project partners contribute to strengthening bilateral relations between (project) actors in donor states and in the beneficiary state?

	To a very low extent				To a very high extent	
	1	2	3	4	5	Do not know
Please score:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19. Do you assess that the partner dialogue and cooperation will be maintained beyond the participation in the programme/project?

	To a very low extent				To a very high extent	
	1	2	3	4	5	Do not know
Please score:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20. Do you assess that partnerships and networks has resulted in (wider effects):

Please select (more options possible):

- ☐ Number of cooperation activities or initiatives in international fora between senior decision makers / politicians, as a result of joint projects or programmes
- ☐ Number of European and international networks where project and programme partners participate together
- ☐ Number of joint initiatives in the European or international arena or multilateral organisations
- ☐ Number of joint, sector-wide initiatives, in a beneficiary or donor state, beyond the programme
- ☐ Number of professional networks between institutions in beneficiary and donor states established and operational
- ☐ Number of replications of joint projects (or results) by other organisations in the same or another country

Please elaborate on the spin-offs in two sentences (max 255 characters):

Thank you for participating, your time and effort is very much appreciated. If you have any questions regarding this survey, you can contact Ramon Wessel from COWI: rawe@cowi.dk or [Fill in] from FMO: [e-mail]

Please click on "Done" below to complete the survey.

Appendix H Interview questionnaire (only project level)

Interview guide and reporting format – project level stakeholders (update 091115)

Date of interview:	
Name and organization:	
Country:	
Programme/programme area	
Function/role in EEA and Norway grants:	
Interview conducted by:	

Guidance to interviewer:

- Target group: project level; project promoter, project partner, donor project partner
- Donor project partners can be responsible for more than one project
- Will not necessary know details related to programme implementation (larger picture)
- Project are in focus (insert focus programme areas)
- Please consult the list of indicators

Number	Evaluation questions
Group 1	Effectiveness
PCLQ1	How do you assess that bilateral relations have been developed in the project? Could you describe how (type of)?
PCLQ2	Do you assess that the bilateral relations have had an influence sectorial/local/national policy in either the beneficiary or donor countries? If yes, could you provide an example?
PCLQ3	Is it your impression that a) awareness b) attitudes and/or c) trust has changed among actors involved? Can you describe how?
PCLQ4	Do you assess that the understanding of the other country's culture or political/socio economic situation has increased among project partners? Please describe how?
PCLQ5	Do you assess that the understanding counterpart policies and institutions, etc. has increased? Can you describe how?
PCLQ6	Can you describe at what administrative and/or political level the cooperation takes place, and who are the main actors involved?
PCLQ7	What kind of cooperation (exchange of experience/knowledge, best/good practices, capacity building, etc.) takes place in your project?

Number	Evaluation questions
PCLQ8	Do (or will) your partnership and network provide access to the participation in regional and international networks? Please describe which?
PCLQ9	Does the project create spin offs in terms of new or additional partnerships? Do (or will) you meet you partners in other contexts as well?
PCLQ10	Do you assess that the project creates a better understanding of the targeted sector? Please describe how?
PCLQ11	Have you developed shared or common results in the project? If yes, could you name the types (refer to list bilateral indicators)?
Group 2	Efficiency
PCLQ12	Do you find that the development of bilateral relations was clearly formulated (e.g. using objectives and indicators) in the project?
PCLQ13	Were you involved in the project development? If yes – in which role?
PCLQ14	Is it your impression that stakeholders understand and appreciate their roles and responsibilities? Do you have any example where this was not the case?
PCLQ15	Are there particular tools in your project (s) that appear to influence the development of bilateral relations e.g. availability of funds, partner search, database of partners, partnership matching, others?
PCLQ16	Which processes and activities influence the bilateral relations in the project e.g. participation in the development, previous collaboration, project steering committees, etc.? Could you describe how?
PCLQ17	Do you assess that donor project partnerships (dpp) are important or play a particular role in achieving the bilateral relations? Could you describe how?
PCLQ18	Do the dpps have relevant roles and are active in the roles that they have been given? Would you see the dpps involved in other activities (or are there they should not)?
PCLQ19	Do you assess that particular organisational and management issues facilitate bilateral results (e.g. institutional structures, common interest, availability of human resources, etc.)?
PCLQ20	Do you assess that particular organisational and management issues hinder bilateral results e.g. political changes, supply & demand, partner cost, capacity (human resources), turnover, bureaucracy, communication, clarity, etc.?
PCLQ21	Do you have suggestions to improvement in the planning and/or implementation of the EEA and Norway grants at programme and project level?
PCLQ30	Other comments or reflections (open question) (please qualify the response with an example)

PCLQ31 - Interviewers comment/reflection:

About the EEA and Norway Grants

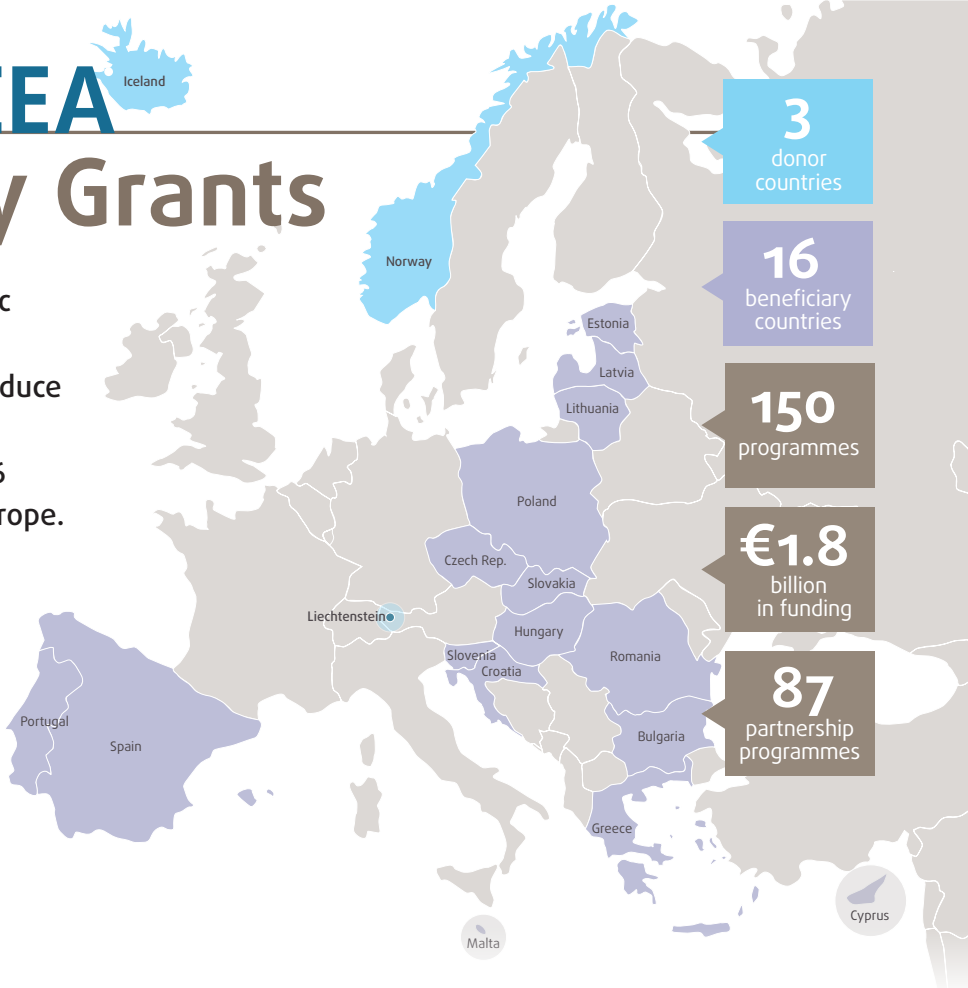
Through the EEA (European Economic Area) and Norway Grants, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway help to reduce economic and social disparities and strengthen bilateral relations with 16 countries in Central and Southern Europe.

EEA Grants:

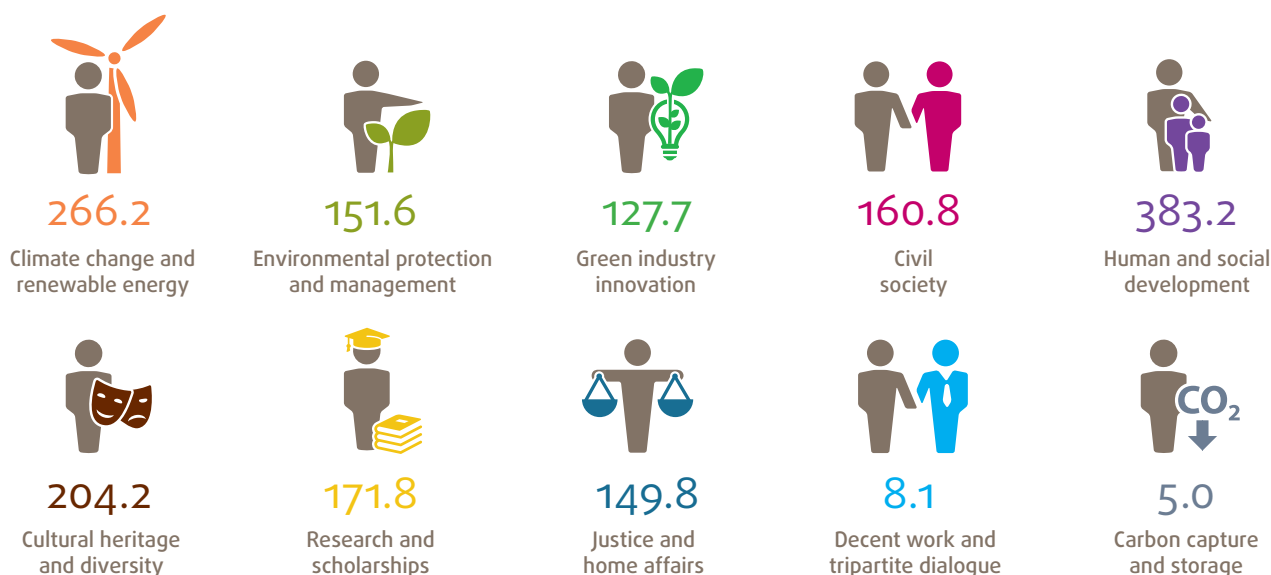
€993.5 million (Norway: 95.8%,
Iceland: 3.0%, Liechtenstein: 1.2%)

Norway Grants:

€804.6 million (Norway: 100%)



Areas of support (€ million)



Financial Mechanism Office
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1000 Brussels, Belgium
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www.eeagrants.org
www.norwaygrants.org