

RAPID ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH PROGRAMMES 2004-2009 and 2009-2014

Technical Annexes
to the Final Report

November 2017

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1 Introduction

Coffey International Development Coffey was contracted to carry out the Rapid Assessment of Research Programmes 2004-2009 and 2009-2014. The study was carried out over six months, from April to September 2017. The main goal of the assessment was to document and assess the results of EEA and Norway Grants' support to research, including the extent to which the EEA and Norway Grants are leading to sustainable partnerships, which support applications for EU research-funding.

This rapid assessment focused on research programmes in the years 2004-2009 and 2009-2014 in three beneficiary countries: [Estonia](#), [Poland](#) and [Romania](#).

This document contains:

- The [suggestion for the follow-up plan](#) for the recommendations stemming from the assessment,

as well as the detailed findings from the data collection:

- Results of the [online survey](#) of Project Promoters in Estonia, Poland and Romania and the Donor project partners;
- Findings from the [in-depth interviews](#) with a selection of Donor project partners;
- [Documentation review](#): structured review of a sample of Project Reports from the three countries;
- List of the visited [project sites](#)
- List of [publications](#) resulting from the 19 visited projects
- Findings from the [focus groups with Project Promoters](#) in the three case-study countries;

It should also be noted that as a part of this assessment we conducted in-depth interviews with the Research Council of Norway and the Programme Operators and national research administrations in the three case study countries. As those interviewees are personally known to the FMO, it would be impossible to anonymise the individual interview findings. For this reason, the findings from those interviews are not included in this document.

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2 Suggested follow-up plan

2.1 Assessment recommendations

In terms of **prospective changes** to the Research Programme, the assessment offered seven recommendations, which can be summarised as follows¹:

- 1 Ensure that the new Research Programme has an **evaluation system** built in to its design.
- 2 Consider creating an **additional strand** of the EEA and Norway Grants Research Programme **focused solely on research management capacity building** in the Beneficiary States' research institutions as opposed to supporting conducting research .
- 3 Consider creating a programme area to **support mid-career researchers** in establishing their first research groups.
- 4 Consider creating an additional small grant scheme (**follow-up funding**) destined only for organisations that have already completed another Grants-supported project to fully mine and process the data they obtained.
- 5 Consider introducing a **dedicated budget line** in all projects for **administrative staff** being hired by the project to provide management support.
- 6 Where feasible, **increase standardisation of the reporting requirements** and data harvesting for Project Promoters across countries, and provide clear instructions to Programme Operators regarding which of the indicators and requirements are mandatory.
- 7 Consider making it clear to the Programme Operators that the project duration of three years is not a strict time limit. **Prolongation of project duration** beyond three years could significantly improve educational outcomes, particularly for the PhD students. Consideration should also be given to **discouraging** Programme Operators from **establishing financial ceilings** on PhD scholarships.

2.2 Temporal scope

The 'Blue Book' containing the priority sectors and programme areas for the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 has been finalised in September 2016. Since then, the Donor States are in the process of negotiating Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with each Beneficiary State. The MoU specify the programme areas to be funded in each beneficiary country. The aim is to tailor the support from the EEA and Norway Grants to each country on the basis of its needs, aims and capacity, as well as on any particular bilateral interest shared by at least one donor and a beneficiary country.

Once the respective MoU has been signed, the nominated Programme Operators will draft the programmes under the programme areas specified in their country, again based on needs, aims and capacity as well as on bilateral interest.

¹ For the full recommendations, please see the Executive Summary in the main body of the Final Report.

According to the information shared by the FMO the progress in signature of the MoUs in the countries which will have a research programme in the next financial period is as follows:

- Romania – signed in October 2016
- Portugal – signed in April 2017 it is our understanding that Portuguese research programme, the *Blue Growth* Programme, will focus on innovation, education and research, not strictly bilateral research cooperation
- Estonia – signed in May 2017
- Czech Republic – signed in September 2017
- Poland – expected to sign in 2018
- Latvia – expected to sign in 2018
- Lithuania – expected to sign in 2018
- Hungary – expected to sign in 2018, *caeteris paribus*.

2.3 Suggestions for follow-up

Recommendation 1

The first recommendation is related to the results management system operated used by the FMO. The Results and Evaluation Unit is the natural lead for developing the evaluation system for the Research Programme. The Unit will need to work together with the Senior Sector Officer for Research.

We recommend this consultation takes place as soon as possible, giving the Sector Officer time to prepare relevant communication for the technical seminars described in the ensuing section .

Recommendations 2-7

These recommendations deal with the structure of any future research programmes in individual Beneficiary States. As events with Programme Operators have already been planned in November and December 2017, we recommend that the FMO use these events to communicate about the programme strands to be included in the national research programmes. The events provide face-to-face opportunities for questions and answers with all Programme Operators.

It would be desirable for the FMO to inform the Programme Operators that the details of the suggested changes to the programming will be communicated and elaborated in details during the technical seminars.

The activities of Programme Operators in the new programming period are laid out in Chapter V of the *Guideline for Research Programmes: Rules for the establishment and implementation of programmes falling under the Programme Area "Research" of the EEA Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021* (henceforth "Guideline").

Recommendations 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 are directly linked to the following points in Chapter V of the Guideline:

... responsibilities of the Programme Operator in research programmes shall include ...

i developing and publishing guidelines, including but not limited to, a guideline for evaluators in English, a guide for applicants in English and an implementation guide for Project Promoters and partners in English;

j in consultation with the Donor Programme Partner s, where applicable, developing and publishing templates, including but not limited to, template project contracts, partnership agreements and reporting documents, in English

We suggest that the FMO organises a set of **technical seminars** with the Programme Operators grouped according to the signature time of their states' MoUs, as follows:

| | Proposed dates | Proposed participating POs |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Technical seminar, Lot 1 | December 2017 / January 2018 | Romania Portugal Estonia |
| Technical seminar, Lot 2 | August 2018 | Czech Republic Poland |
| Technical seminar, Lot 3 | October 2018 | Latvia Lithuania Hungary, <i>caeteris paribus</i> . |

Participation in the technical seminar should be obligatory for the Programme Operators. We also recommend participation of the relevant FMO country officers.

Each lot of the technical seminars would follow a similar format, in order to ensure consistency of information received by the POs from different Beneficiary States.

During the seminar the FMO should present and discuss with the POs at least the following topics:

- that the POs consider creating a dedicated strand of their research programme focused solely on **research management capacity building** in the Beneficiary States' research institutions as opposed to supporting conducting research
 - should be based on peer-to-peer learning between the Beneficiary States' and Donor States' research institutions via exchanges and joint seminars
 - can involve support in joining organisations like EARMA, the European Association of Research Managers and Administrators

- that there will be a dedicated budget line for administrative staff required in all projects. These staff will be hired by the project with the sole purpose of providing administrative and management support:

- the budget line should be equal to a salary of at least one person full time throughout the duration of the research project
- the administrative staff should be able to communicate in English

- that the POs set aside part of the whole programme budget for preparation of a follow-up funding, destined only for organisations that have already completed another Grants-supported project:
 - the calls for the follow-up grants would only be announced no sooner than 2021 after the "main" research projects have finished
 - the projects could be from 20,000 to 10,000 EUR and could only be used to fully mine and process the data obtained in another, already completed, EEA and Norway Grants supported research project
 - the calls for proposals and reporting requirements should involve very light-touch administrative processes, to minimise administrative burden as much as possible.

- that POs include a call for proposals for mid-career researchers, with the aim to support them in establishing their first international research groups

- that POs provide greater clarity on administrative requirements what is required and what is not required to Project Promoters and Donor project partners, as this is not currently effective:
 - The POs should explicitly require the Project Promoters not to introduce heavier reporting duties than unequivocally demanded by the PO.

- ways to standardise the reporting requirements and data harvesting for Project Promoters across countries

- clear instructions to Programme Operators about the indicators, including mandatory requirements.
 - To discuss this, previous intra-FMO discussions, as outlined under suggestions for Recommendation 1 would need to have taken place prior to the technical seminars.

- that the POs do not to introduce any financial ceilings for PhD scholarships, and that they workshop ways that would allow PhD students to complete their degrees within a given project duration.

3 Online survey of Project Promoters and Donor project partners

The study team implemented an online survey of Project Promoters (PPs) and Donor project partners (Dpps) in the three case study countries (Estonia, Poland and Romania).

The purpose of the survey was to gather wide-ranging and comparable information in relation to PPs' experiences of following-up their projects with other EU-funded research initiatives, the success rate of their consortia, applicability of project results, and research management support they received. The survey also allowed us to compare the experiences of the PPs with those of the Dpps.

The questions posed were intended to explore potential positive outcomes, which are not necessarily required results, considered as desirable by the Financial Mechanism Office. This information is not systematically captured through standard project reporting.

The potential survey participants were identified from the Doris database: the project managers and Donor project partners in the respective research programme areas from the periods 2004-2009 and 2009-2014:

| country | 2004-2009 | 2009-2014 |
|--------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Estonia | 11 projects | 13 projects |
| Poland | 20 projects | 75 projects |
| Romania | 2 projects | 23 projects |
| TOTAL | 33 projects | 111 projects |

In order to add gravitas to the survey and highlight its importance to the participants, the FMO emailed invitations to participate in the survey to the identified contacts. To maximise the response rate, the survey remained open throughout the whole summer holiday period (from 31 May 2017 to 4th August 2017).

During the site visit to Poland in June 2017, we identified that the Polish National Focal Point was conducting its own survey of Project Promoters at the same time. This resulted in an initial low response rate from the Polish PPs. Additional follow-up invitations were then sent to the Polish PPs, amended to highlight the fact that the FMO survey was part of a separate appraisal. This significantly increased the response rate. The final round of survey reminders was sent by the FMO on 24th July.

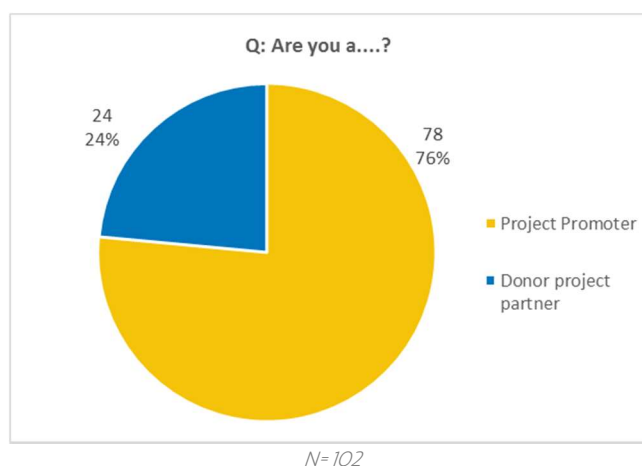
A total of **102 responses** were received to the survey, equal to a 53% response rate among all Project Promoters in the three selected countries.

3.1 Respondents' profiles

Division of respondents

As depicted in Figure 1 below, close to three-quarters of the survey respondents were Project Promoters, and just under 25% were Donor project partners.

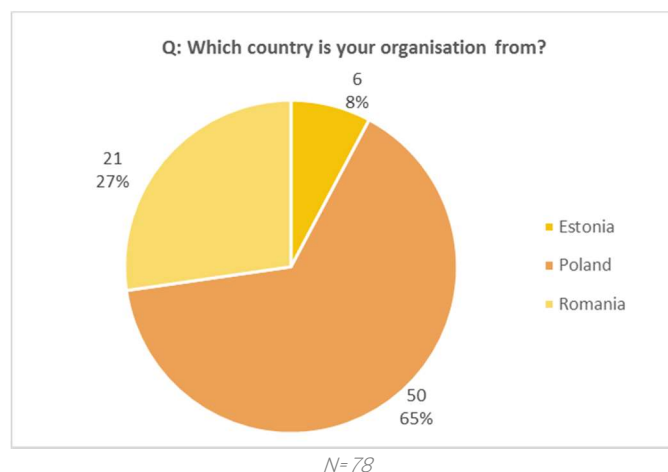
Figure 1: Types of respondents



Location of supported institutions

Out of the Project Promoters surveyed, a majority 64.9% originated from Poland, followed by 27.3% from Romania and 7.8% from Estonia. This spread reflects the number of PPs within the Research Programme in the three countries who were invited to take part in the survey.

Figure 2: National origin of the Project Promoters

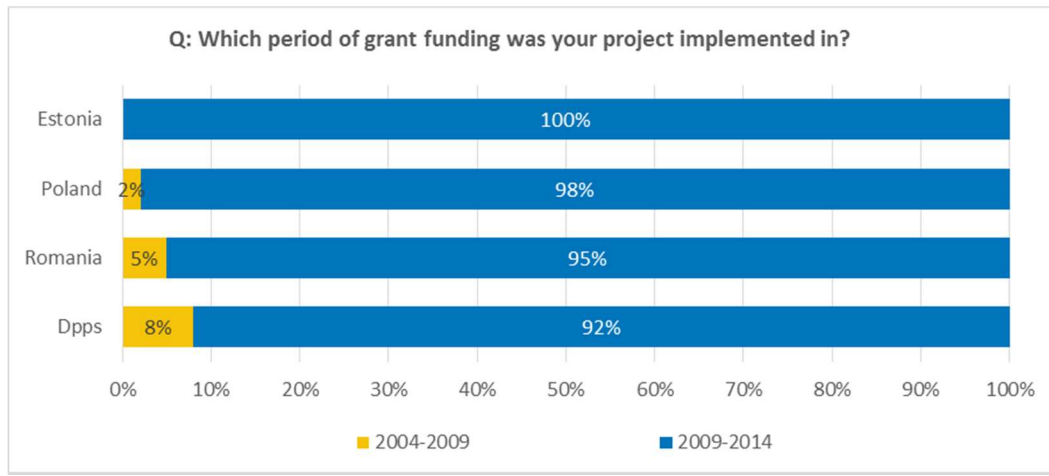


Funding periods of participants' grants

As illustrated in Figure 3 overleaf, the majority of the survey respondents implemented their projects during the 2009-2014 financial period, which suggests the survey responses are most likely referring to projects which have been completed very recently. Out of Project Promoters surveyed, only 5% or less implemented projects during the 2004-2009 financial period none of the Estonian PPs who took part

in the survey implemented their projects then). Only 8% of the Dpps have participated in projects implemented under the 2004-2009 financial period.

Figure 3: Financial periods of the projects

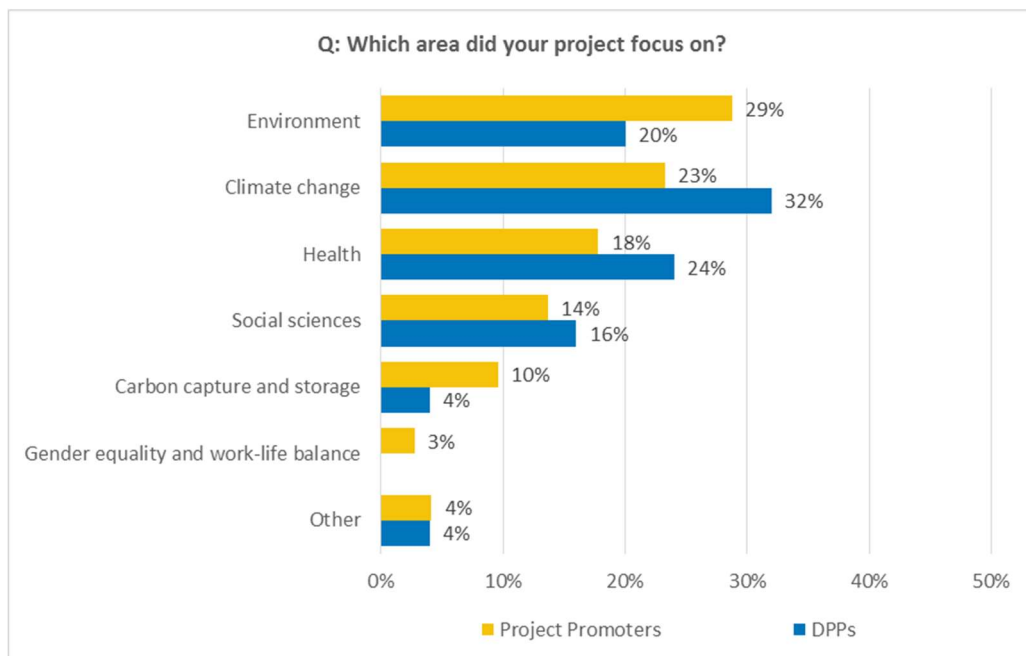


EE N=6; PL N=49; RO N=20; Dpp N=24

Research areas

The majority of the projects implemented by the surveyed project promoters focused on the environment 29% and climate change 23%. This was followed by research in health 18%, social sciences 14%, carbon capture and storage 10% and gender equality and work-life balance 3% - two projects. The surveyed Dpps primarily took part in projects in the field of climate change 32% and health 24%, followed by projects in fields of environment 20%, social sciences 16% and carbon capture and storage 4%. The "other" areas were named as engineering.

Figure 4: Projects' research areas



PPs N=73; Dpps N=24

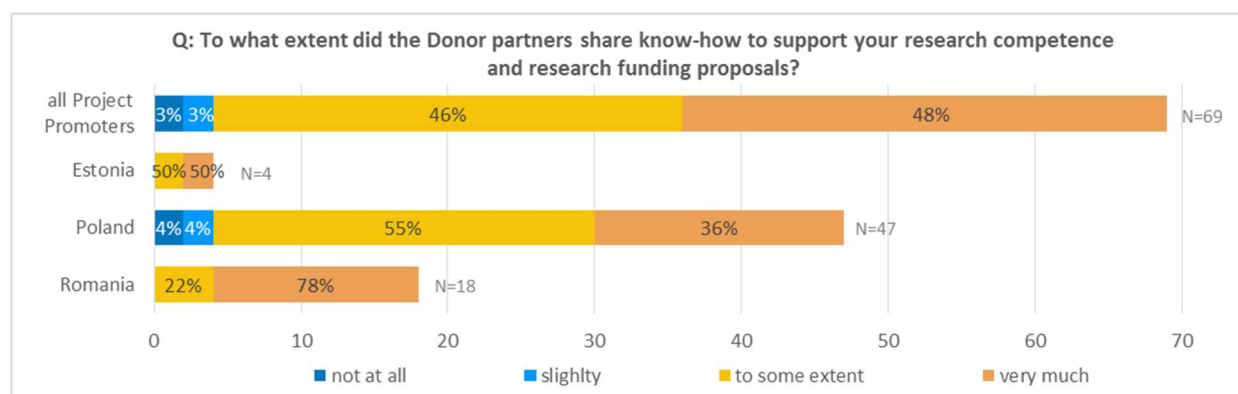
3.2 Transfer of knowledge²

Sharing know-how

The results presented in Figure 5 suggest that the research partnerships were mostly successful in facilitating transfer of knowledge between the Donor partners and Project Promoters. When it comes to transfer of know-how to support research competence and research funding proposals, close to 50% of the total of surveyed Project Promoters reported that the Dpps shared their know-how to a large extent, with additional 46% reporting the Dpps sharing "to some extent".

In the individual beneficiary states, the programme appears to have been the most successful in Romania, where 78% of PPs i.e. 14 respondents indicated that the Dpps have shared their know-how in this field to a large extent, and 22% believed that the partners have shared their know-how to some extent. In Estonia, 50% of the project promoters believed they have benefitted from the Dpps' know-how very much, and 50% to some extent. In Poland 36% of PPs (17 respondents) indicated the partners have shared their know-how to a large extent, 55% (26 respondents) believed this happened to some extent, while the remaining respondents were of the opinion that the partners did not share their know-how at all (4%), or only slightly (4%).

Figure 5: Sharing know-how to support research competence and research funding proposals



Out of the 55 PPs who described in more detail the type of know-how shared, the majority mentioned that the partners have shared know-how related to **methodology** (22 respondents), or specific **research techniques** (10 respondents). Survey participants indicated that partners shared knowledge relating to specific **content** in the field (11 respondents) or provided know-how on access to a specific **technology** (7 respondents). Nine respondents mentioned that they benefitted from partners sharing know-how on how to **apply for funding, write proposals and reports** and publish results. Further three noted that the partners provided useful insights **on the application of research** – through policy advice, research consulting or bringing products to market. Other topics mentioned by respondents were gender equality, life-work balance, and project management.

Impact on research competence

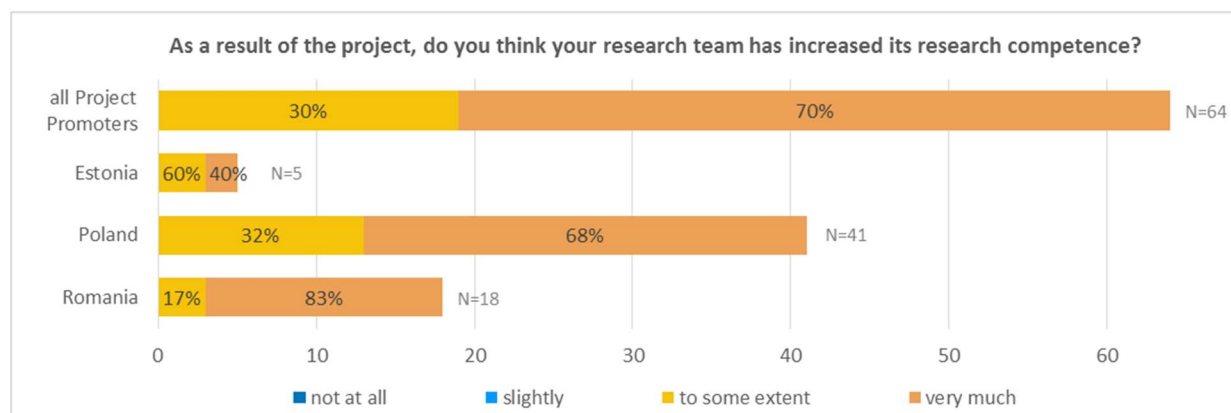
As visible in Figure 6, 70% of all Project Promoters who responded to this question indicated that as a result of the project their research teams have increased their research competence to a large extent.

² Only the participants who indicated they are Project Promoters were asked the questions regarding transfer of knowledge.

What is more, 30% of all PPs reported that this happened to "some extent". None of the responding PPs disagreed.

On individual country level, 83% of the project promoters in Romania 3 respondents , 64% in Poland (28 respondents and 40% in Estonia 2 respondents indicated that their teams have increased their research competence very much. The remaining respondents in each country believed that as a result of the project their team has increased its research competence to some extent. This result suggests **that the programme has had a positive impact on the research competence of researchers in Poland, Estonia and Romania.**

Figure 6: Increase of research competence

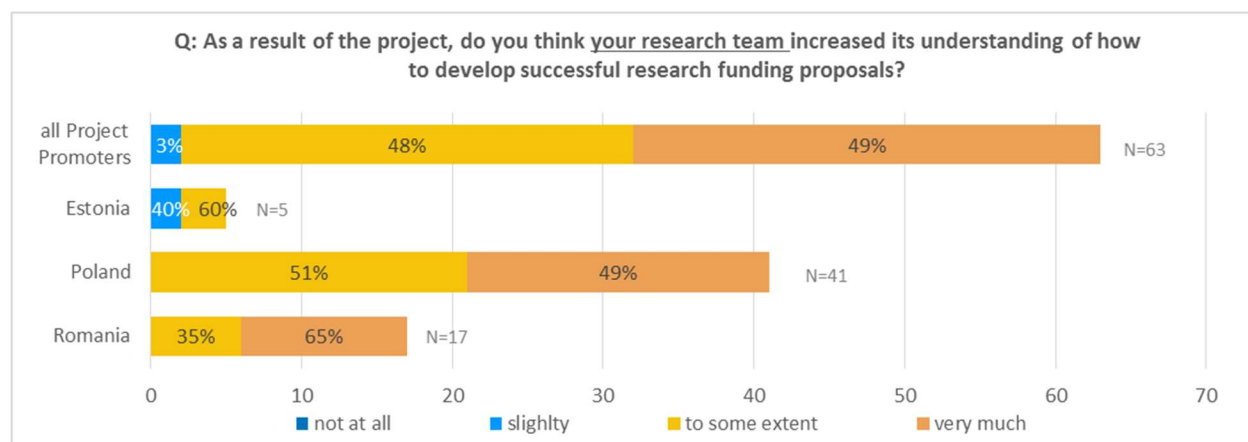


Impact on developing successful research proposals

Figure 7 suggests that, overall, the projects increased PPs' research teams' understanding of how to develop successful research proposals: almost 50% of all Project Promoters believed they increased the understanding "very much", with a further 48% agreeing that this took place "to some extent". Only 3% of all PPs believed this has taken place "slightly".

On individual country levels, findings suggest that all of the project teams whose representatives took part in the survey from **Poland and Romania have increased their understanding of how to develop successful research funding proposals.** Respondents from Estonia indicated that involvement in the project had less impact on research funding proposals: 60% 3 respondents believed that as a result of the project their research team has very much increased its understanding of developing successful research proposals, and 40% 2 respondents believed that the teams have developed their capacity in this field only slightly.

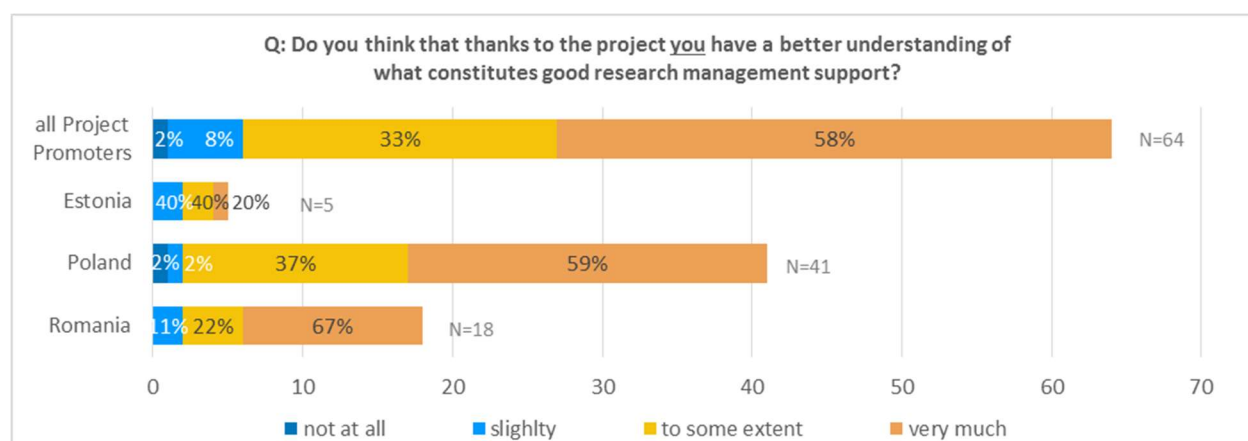
Figure 7: Increase of understanding how to develop successful research proposals



3.3 Research management support³

The survey results presented in Figure 8 show that the programmes have largely succeeded in fulfilling the objective of increasing awareness of good research management support for individual researchers, although there exists a room for improvement. More than half of all of the surveyed PPs have indicated that thanks to the project they had significantly better understanding of what constitutes good research management support corresponding to 20% in Estonia, 59% in Poland and 67% in Romania. A third of all PPs also believed that thanks to their participation, their understanding has increased to some extent 40% in Estonia, 37% in Poland and 22% in Romania. Only in Poland one respondent believed that their participation in the project did not help them to better understand what constitutes good research management support.

Figure 8: Understanding of research management support - individual researchers' level

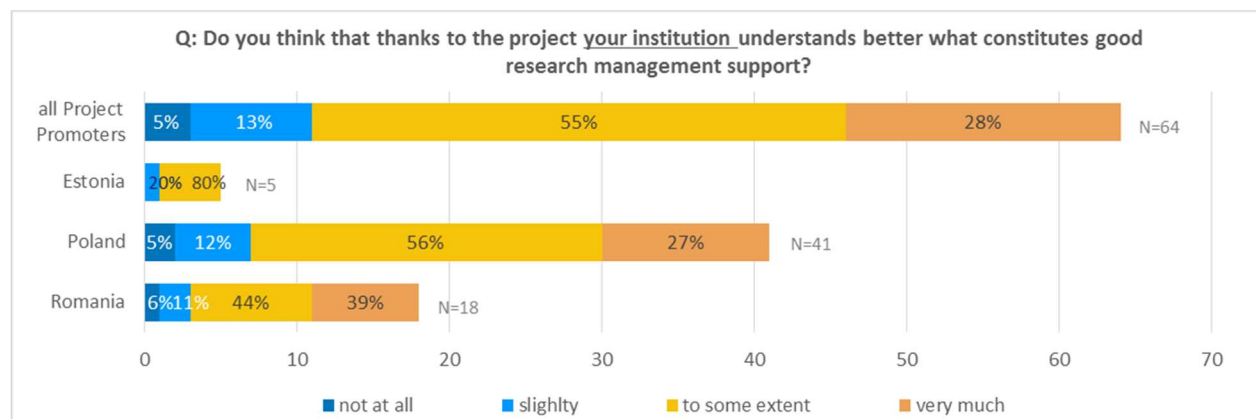


With regards to the Grants potential to increase understanding of good research management support in the PPs' institutions Figure 9 overleaf, the survey results suggest that the programmes have achieved

³ Only the 78 participants who indicated they are Project Promoters were asked the questions regarding research management support.

their objective of promoting strong research management skills in the Beneficiary States, on an institutional level, at least to some extent: **circa 80% of Project Promoters in each beneficiary country believed that participation in the project has enhanced their institutions' research management capacity.** Between 15 and 20% of PPs in Estonia, Poland and Romania, felt their institutions have benefitted from improved research management skills only slightly or not at all.

Figure 9: Understanding of research management support - institutional level



PPs were asked to elaborate on the specific research management skills that have been enhanced within their institution as a result of their engagement with the Grants. Fifty-one survey participants answered this question.

- Most respondents 23 pointed to **specific management capacities** gained by the institutions, project participants and the managers, such as:
 - project management, including management of international research projects,
 - organisation and coordination skills,
 - documenting and reporting of projects,
 - coordination of research work,
 - planning activities, and
 - financial management.
- 14 respondents pointed out that their institutions had benefitted from being exposed to **research-based international cooperation.**
- 7 **respondents** acknowledged that their institution's ability **to work in international teams** had been enhanced as a result of their participation in the project.
- 5 respondents gave specific examples of how their **institution had developed** through its participation of the project, for instance through:
 - learning how to simplify bureaucratic procedures,
 - creating a new administrative unit responsible for grant support,
 - improving relations between research personnel and administrative personnel.
- 4 respondents highlighted that the project had helped their institution to improve its **communication skills.**

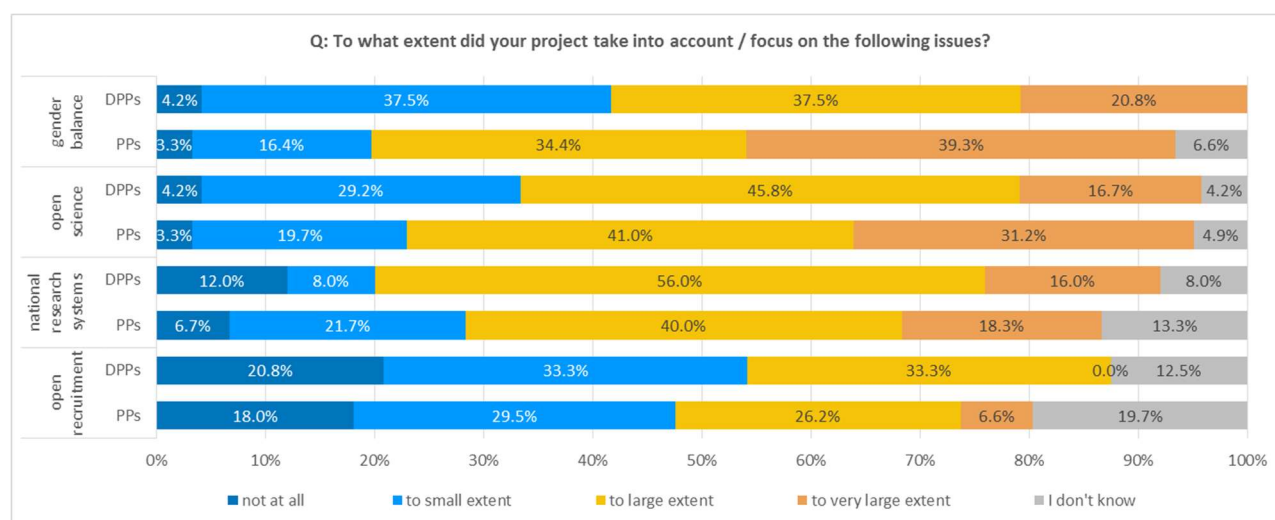
3.4 Coherence with European Research Area ERA priorities

Next the survey investigated the extent to which the programmes had contributed to implementation of the European Research Area ERA priorities, such as contributing to improving national research systems, an open labour market for researchers, gender equality and gender mainstreaming in research, and access to open science.

As is visible from the figure presented below, an open labour market for researchers is an area that appears to have most room for improvement, among all PPs and Donor project partners. Only 2 projects executed by organisations from Estonia, a fifth in Poland, less than half in Romania and a third in the Dpps have placed a large or very large focus on open recruitment, while 25.89% of all respondents indicated that their projects did not focus on this issue at all, or only to a small extent. Gender balance was an area of focus to a large extent or a very large extent for 77% of all of the PPs: 3 of the organisations in Estonia, 28 of the organisations in Poland and 13 in Romania, compared to 58% of Dpps.

The DPP respondents and organisations from Romania were more likely than others to place emphasis in their projects on promoting effective national research systems: 72% of DPP respondents' projects and 77% of organisations from Romania took this aspect into account to a large extent or a very large extent, compared to only a quarter of respondents in Estonia and half of respondents in Poland.

Figure 10: Projects' focus on ERA objectives



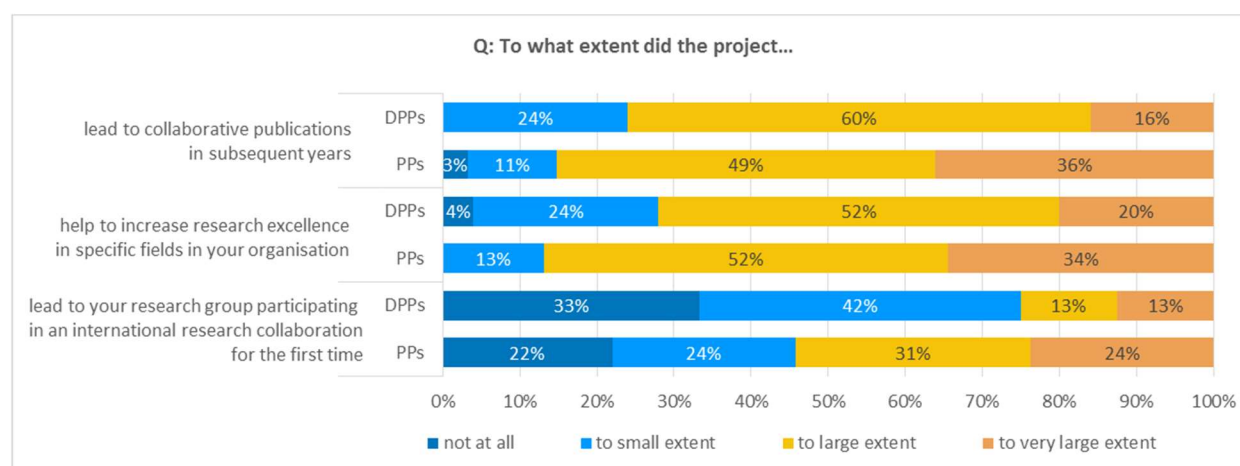
Dpps N= 24, PPs N= 76

3.5 Projects' results and outcomes

In terms of project outcomes, as depicted in Figure 11, the survey results suggest that the projects most often led to collaborative publications in subsequent years. All of the Romanian respondents agreed that this had happened to a large or very large extent, a view supported by close to 80% of Estonian and Polish respondents. Most PP respondents also agreed that the projects helped them to increase research excellence in their specific fields. The increase in research excellence seemed to also apply to their Norwegian and Icelandic partners, as 72% of them believed their research excellence increased to a "large" or "very large" extent.

For most survey respondents projects didn't tend to lead to their participation in international research collaborations for the first time. The projects seemed to have this type of outcome most often in Romania, where a majority reported that this happened to "large" or "very large" extent.

Figure 11: Project outcomes



Dpps N= 24, PPs N= 76

Factors contributing to improved research capacity

Respondents to the survey were asked to name **three main factors** in the projects that **improved their research capacity**. The responses from the surveyed Dpps and PPs suggest that both the donor country partners and the beneficiary state partners recognised the international exposure, opportunity to collaborate internationally and the networking opportunities afforded by projects as important factors contributing to strengthened research capacity. Both Dpps and PP partners mentioned the importance of access to funding and infrastructure. Finally, project participants listed a number of factors contributing directly to their research excellence.

Donor project partners

Among the surveyed Dpps, 23 have provided answers to this question, with each mentioning up to three concrete outcomes. Most indicated that they benefited from **international collaboration** 14 responses and **networking opportunities** 7 responses .

In many instances, the projects provided very tangible benefits and resources: nine respondents pointed out that their research capacity had improved thanks to additional funding available through the project. Two respondents pointed out that they were able to **hire additional staff** thanks to the project while a further two benefitted from **improved administrative procedures** and organisational performance.

When it comes to research excellence, nine respondents pointed out that they had benefitted from being exposed to a **novel approach or methodology** that they had not used before. Seven indicated that they were exposed to **new knowledge** or a **new field of investigation**. Other respondents pointed out that they benefitted from **access to new data** 4 respondents or new sample populations or data collection areas 4 respondents . A further two respondents benefitted from being able to access **new infrastructure** that helped them conduct their research. Finally, two respondents pointed out that they benefitted from working in **interdisciplinary teams** .

Project Promoters

Fifty-four Project Promoters from the beneficiary states answered the above question, with each stating up to three factors that improved their research capacity. The most frequently cited factor was the opportunity to **collaborate internationally** 40 responses . Moreover, 11 respondents mentioned they benefitted from being able to **collect data** that were of interest to them, with a further 10 benefitting from **networking opportunities** .

When it comes to research and academic excellence, 19 participants noted that they benefitted from learning and mastering new **methods and methodologies** . Sixteen benefitted from the **knowledge and expertise** shared by their partners and a further eight believed that the project participants benefitted from **improved research competencies** . The respondents also mentioned benefitting from conducting **interdisciplinary research** 6 responses , being exposed to **new knowledge area** 5 responses , and getting access to **new data** 6 responses . Six respondents indicated that their research capacity has improved thanks to the fact that they managed to **publish** the results of their research in recognised international journals.

Concrete outcomes of the projects

The respondents were also asked to name three concrete outcomes of their projects.

Donor project partners

Among the surveyed **Donor project partners**, 21 answered the question, each mentioning up to three concrete outcomes. The most frequently mentioned outcomes were:

- **generation of new knowledge** thanks to the project 15 responses
- **collecting data** that can be used to advance research 7 responses
- **publications** 11 responses , and
- **application of research** 5 responses , for example implementation of new snow observation and avalanche detection service or implementation of cervical cancer screening infrastructure in the beneficiary country.
- Some of the Dpps mentioned **partnership and networking** 11 responses as a concrete outcome of the project.

Two respondents pointed to **negative outcomes** of their participation in the project, including financial losses unpaid invoices and excessive amount of bureaucracy.

Project Promoters

Out of the 78 **Project Promoters** surveyed, 54 answered the question and also provided up to three concrete outcomes. The most frequently mentioned outcome was **creating new knowledge in their field** mentioned 42 times . Other outcomes were:

- **publications** 30 responses ,
- concrete **applications of research** 24 responses ,
- developing **new methods and methodologies** 17 responses ,
- **patent applications** or **granted patents** 7 responses
- gathering **new data** that can be used in research process 7 responses

- creation of **new infrastructure** for research in beneficiary organisation 2 responses
 dissemination channels and tools conferences, online resources, toolboxes .

Finally, the respondents pointed out that their organisations' participation in the project resulted in increase of **networking opportunities and partnerships** 17 responses , provided opportunities for **career development of research staff** 5 responses and contributed to **knowledge exchange** between institutions one response .

3.6 Links with EU funding

As depicted in Figure 12, among the Project Promoters from Poland and Romania, as well as the Dpps, the number of respondents that indicated that they applied for EU research funding after or in parallel to the project funded by EEA and Norway Grants, was lower than the number of respondents that had applied for EU research funding before they participated in the project funded by EEA and Norway Grants. The exception is Estonia, where 2 respondents 40% have applied for EU research funding after completing the project funded by EEA and Norway Grants, compared to one before, and one in parallel. Additionally, close to a half of Romanian organizations and the Dpps reported that they have not applied for EU research funding.

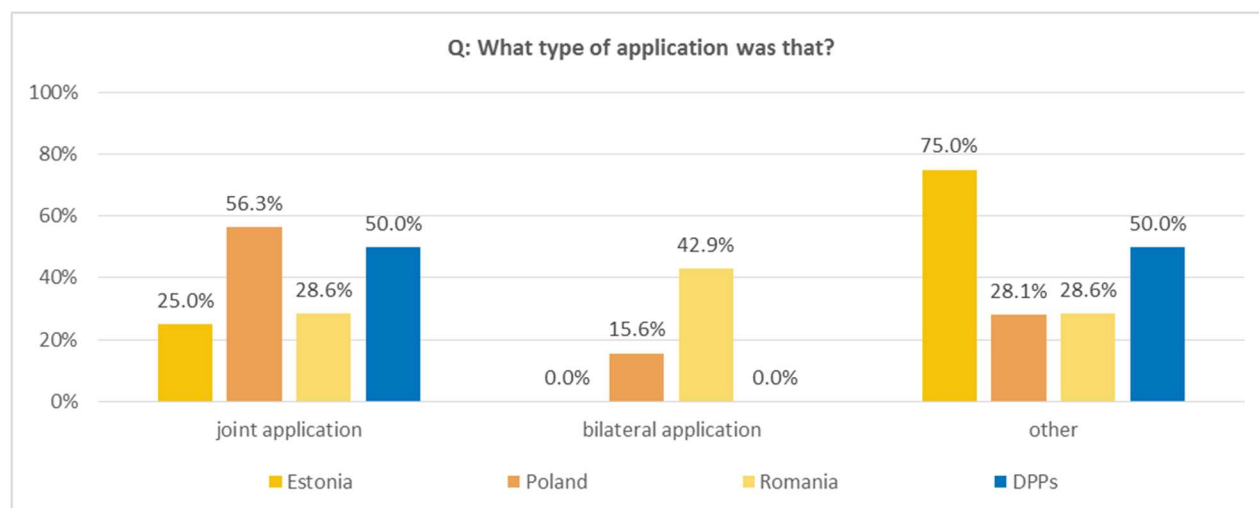
Although this might suggest that participation in the research programmes has not encouraged the Project Promoters and the Dpps to apply for EU research funding, this has a strong caveat: the result is likely to be influenced by the timeframes involved. Most of the survey respondents took part in projects in the 2009-2014 financial period.

Figure 12: Timing of applications for EU research funding



Figure 13 overleaf demonstrates that among the respondents who indicated that their institutions have applied for EU research funding, the majority submitted joint applications where all or more than two of the partners of the project applied together. Only Polish and Romanian PPs reported submitting bilateral applications (only including the Project Promoters' organisation and the Donor project partner). The organisations in Poland were more likely to submit a joint application rather than a bilateral application, while the Romanian organisations were more likely to submit a bilateral application over a joint application.

Figure 13: Types of EU research funding applications



EE N=5, PL N=38, RO N=15, Dpps N=22

Those respondents that indicated that their institutions submitted other types of applications were asked to specify their answers. Out of the six Dpps respondents, three stated that their applications did not involve the original PPs. One stated that not all PPs were involved, but more than two were. One DPP respondent indicated that they had applied for the FP7 funding.

Three PPs from Estonia specified their answers. One organisation unsuccessfully applied for EU funding on a related topic, without partners. One joined an international consortium with some project partners involved. Finally, one gained funding to invite a Norwegian partner to Estonia as an expert.

Out of the nine PPs from Poland, four specified that they had applied for projects with other partners. One indicated that it had applied for projects with all the project partners and others, in a big international research consortium. The others named the specific funding they had applied for, without specifying the profile of the project partners.

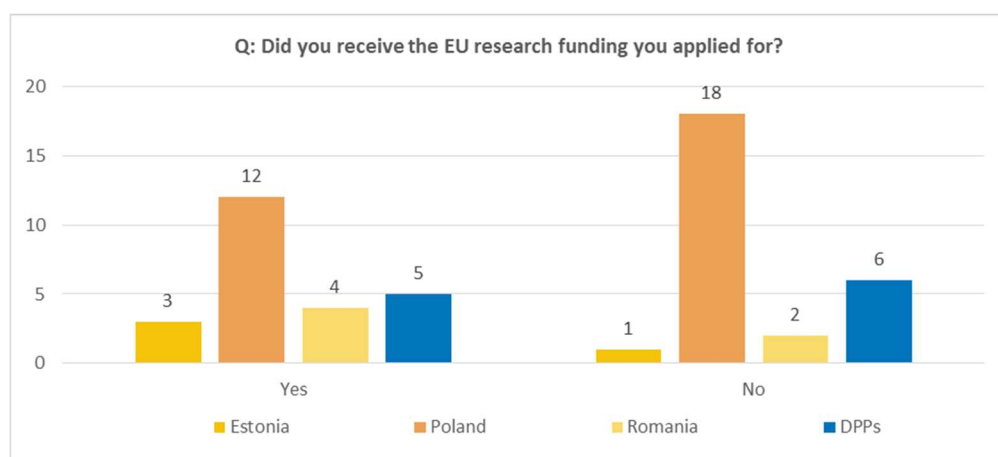
From the two Romanian PPs, that specified their answer, one indicated that the organisation applied for a project with all recent project partners and other partners, while the other named the specific funding applied for.

Successful applications

Out of all the survey participants, 53 specified which type of EU research funding they have applied for. The majority of the respondents had either applied for the [Horizon2020](#) funding 15 respondents or the [Framework Programmes for Research](#) FP5, FP6 or FP7 14 respondents. Five respondents indicated that they had applied for funding under the [Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions scheme](#), while a further 12 respondents indicated [other types of EU funding](#) that they have applied for. Three respondents indicated that they have applied for more [EEA or Norway grants](#).

As depicted in Figure 14, 3 respondents from Estonia, 12 respondents from Poland, 4 respondents from Romania and 5 of the Dpps have received the funding that they have applied for. Overall, from the surveyed organizations, 53% were successful in securing EU funding.

Figure 14: Success of the EU research funding applications



Among the respondents who specified the answers on the funds that they applied for and indicated whether they received the funding or not:

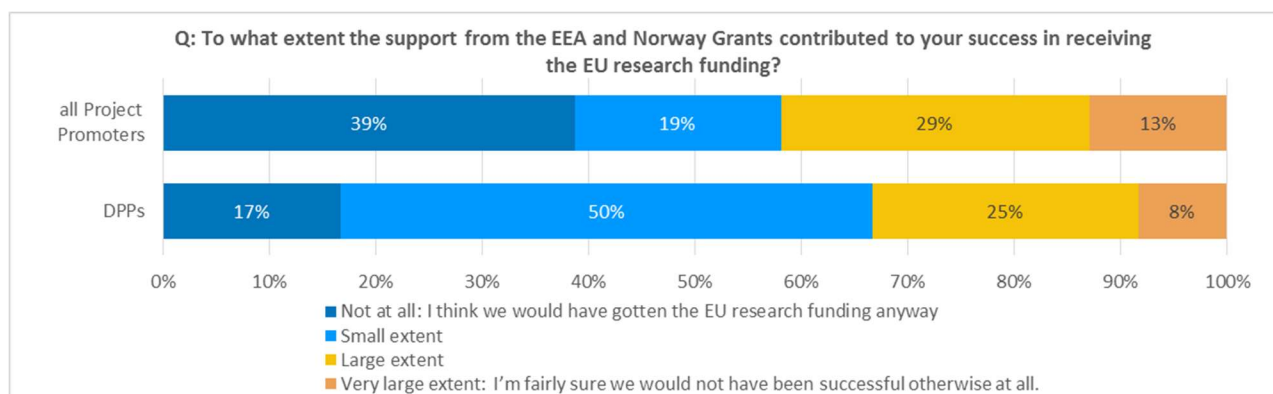
- eight were successful in receiving funding from the [Framework Programme for Research](#), and six were unsuccessful.
- Six were successful in receiving funds under the [Horizon2020](#) programme, while seven were unsuccessful.
- Four were successful in receiving funding from [other EU](#) calls and programmes, while seven were unsuccessful.
- One was successful in receiving funding from the [Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions](#), while three were unsuccessful.
- Two were successful in receiving further [EEA Grants](#), and one was unsuccessful.

Attribution of success to project participation

The extent to which the programme participants attribute their success in receiving the EU research funding to them taking part in the research project supported by EEA and Norway Grants is presented in Figure 15. Close to 60% of all Project Promoters believed that participating in the Grants-supported project did not help them at all, or only helped to a small extent. Just over 40% believed otherwise.

A third of the Dpps believed that the support they have received from the EEA and Norway grants have helped them to secure the EU funding to a large extent or a very large extent, while 66.7% believed the support they have received have not contributed to their success at all or only to a small extent.

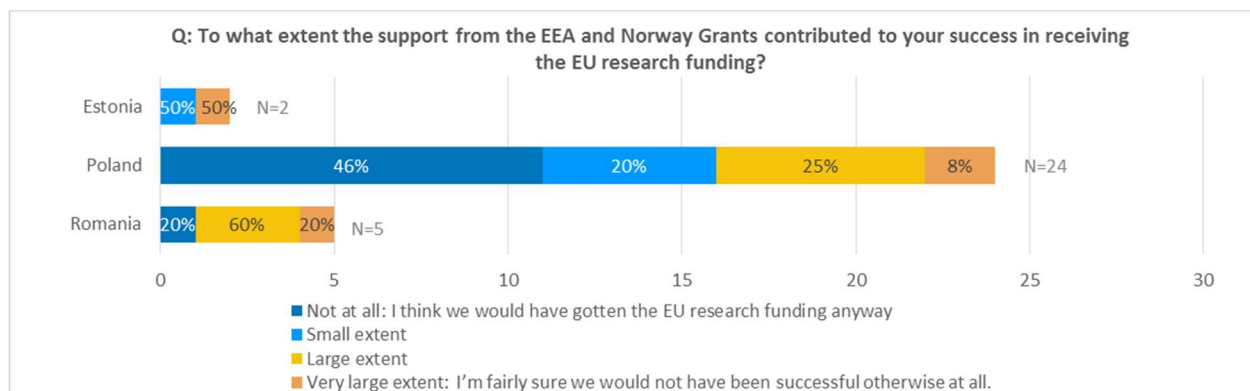
Figure 15: Attribution of EU research funding success to project participation: PP-Dpp comparison



Dpps N= 11, PPs N= 31

The opinions of survey participants from different beneficiary states varied. In Romania, one respondent believed they would not have been successful without the support from the EEA and Norway Grants, and three believed that the support they received has contributed to a large extent to their success. Only one believed they would have gotten the EU research funding anyway. Among the organizations in Estonia, one respondent each believed that they would not have been successful without the support from the EEA and Norway grants, and believed the support from EEA and Norway grants contributed to a small extent to their success. On the other hand, among the Polish organizations, eleven believed they would have gotten the EU research funding anyway, and only two believed they would not have been successful if it was not for the support they have received from the EEA and Norway grants.

Figure 16: Attribution of EU research funding success to project participation - beneficiary states



3.7 Quality of partnerships

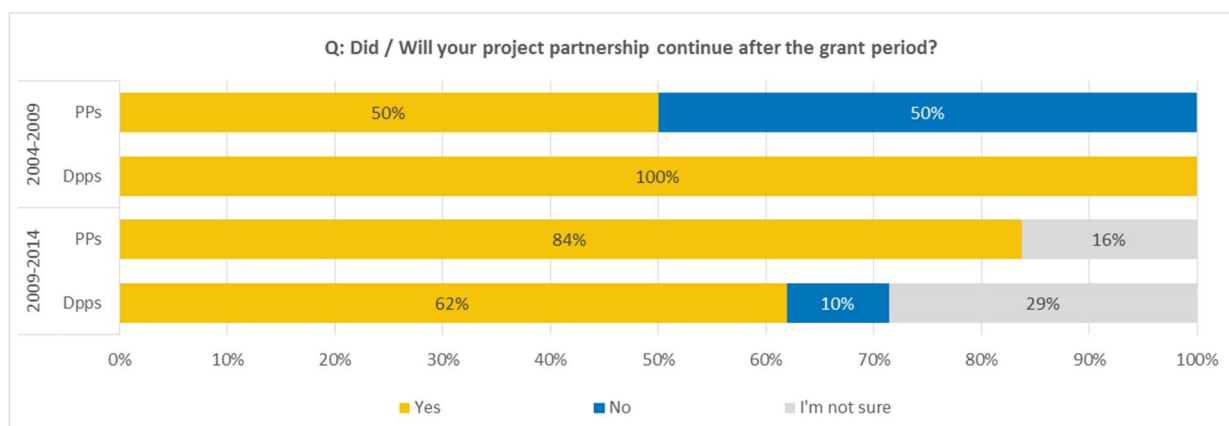
Sustainability of partnerships

The survey results presented in Figure 17 suggest that the programmes were very successful in achieving their objective of building strong research partnerships, which continued after the grant period.

The programme also supported the Norwegian and Icelandic organisations in forming successful partnerships with the organisations from Beneficiary States: All of the DPP partnerships from the first

funding period and 62% from the second period have continued / will continue after the grant period has finished.

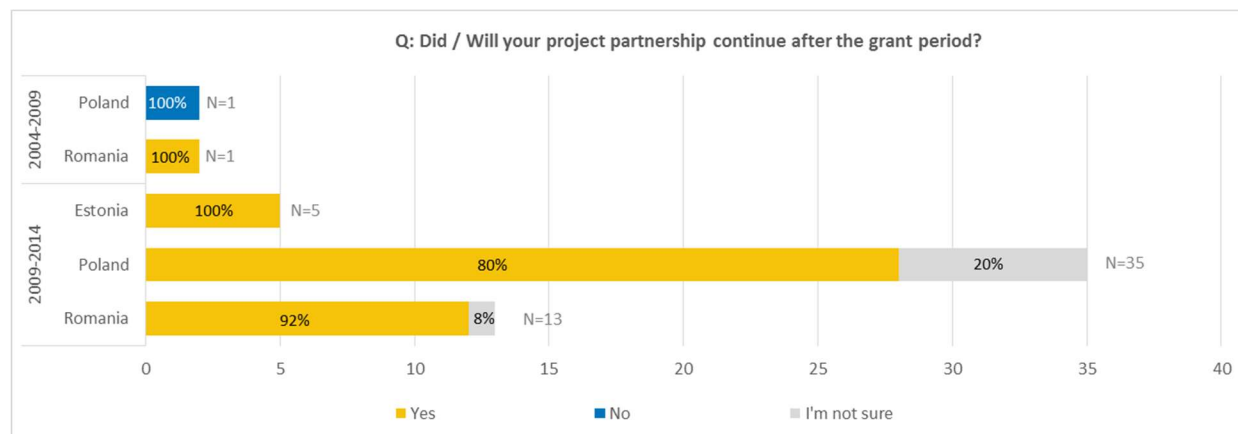
Figure 17: Continued partnerships: PPs-Dpps comparison



Dpps 2004-2009 N=1, Dpps 2009-2014 N=21, PPs 2004-2009 N=2, PPs 2009-2014 N=49

On individual country level, although the partnerships formed by the two organisations from Poland who participated in the first funding period and answered this survey did not continue beyond the 2004-2009 grant period, 80% of the partnerships 23 responses formed in the second funding period have continued. All of the partnerships formed by the Romanian organisations taking part in the survey in the first funding period and 92% 12 responses formed in the second period have continued beyond the grant period. All of the partnerships formed by organisations in Estonia where survey respondents only participated in the second funding period were set to continue after the grant period.

Figure 18: Continued partnerships: beneficiary states



Accessing research networks

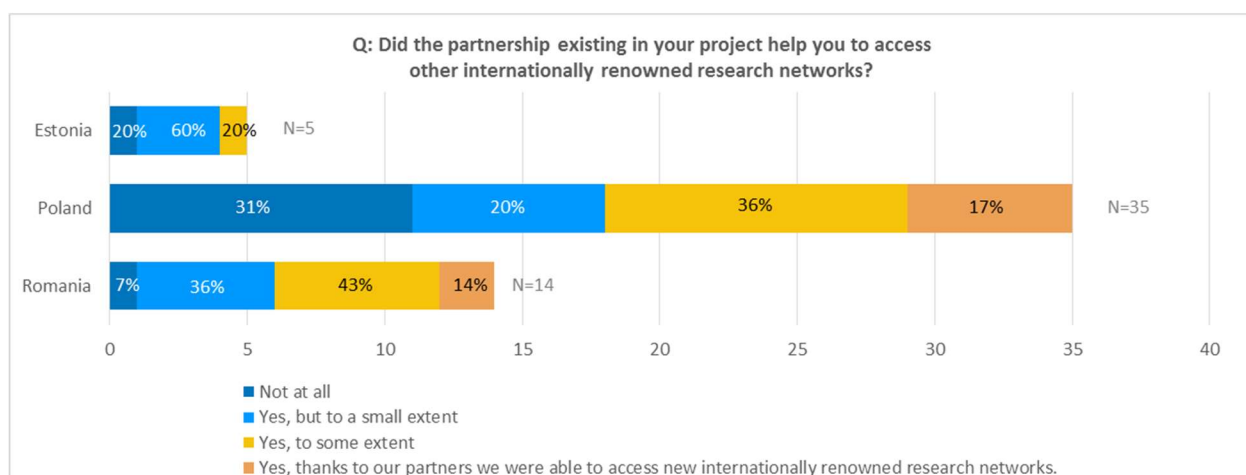
The extent to which the partnerships built helped beneficiaries access internationally renowned research networks is depicted in Figure 19 and Figure 20 overleaf. Overall, the results were split. Close to a quarter of PPs and Dpps reported the projects did not contribute to them accessing other networks and at the same time almost a half of PPs and 45% of Dpps believed the projects did help them to access the networks, at least to some extent.

Figure 19: Accessing internationally renowned research networks: PPs- Dpps comparison



On individual country level, 49% of organisations in Poland 17 responses , 57% of organisations in Romania 8 responses believed that the partnerships they formed during the project definitely or to some extent helped them access internationally renowned research networks. In Estonia, only 1 respondent believed that this was the case. Eleven respondents from Poland and one each from Estonia and Romania were of the opinion that the partnerships formed during the project did not help them at all in accessing internationally renowned research networks.

Figure 20: Accessing internationally renowned research networks: beneficiary states



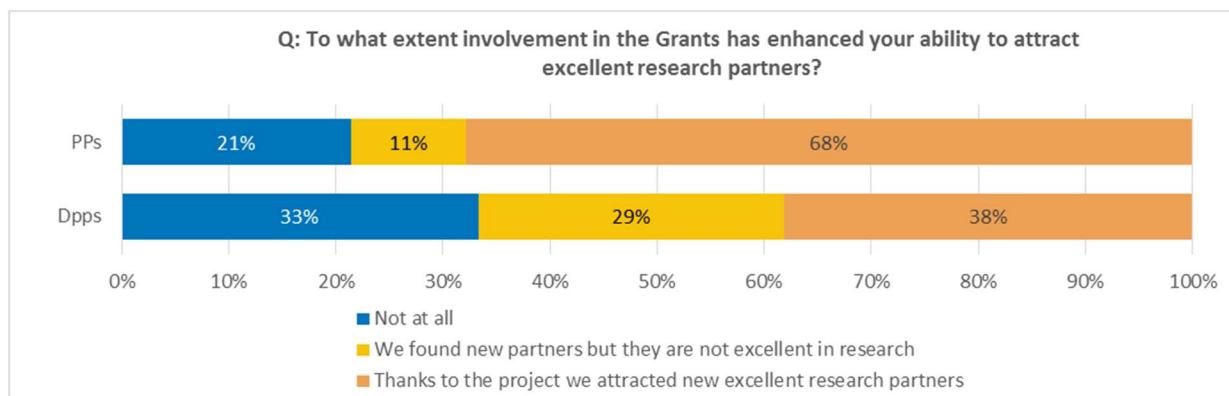
From the Dpps respondents, five answered the question asking them to name the specific research networks that they were able to access thank to the partnership existing in the project. Only one respondent named a specific network M-ERA.NET, while others indicated they formed good connections and partnerships and indicated thematic areas in which they are likely to continue to work on with their established project partners.

Out of the surveyed PPs 19 answered the above question. Out of those, 11 mentioned the specific research networks COST actions, ILCCO, BEARCONNECT, Nordic Network on Disability Research, European Sociological Association, SuperSmartRack, M-ERA.NET, Community and sanction working group of ESC, European and Global Geopark Network while others explained that although thanks to their participation in the projects they have built partnerships and relations that were likely to extend into the future, those did not translate into a participation in an official research network.

Attracting research partners

When it comes to the ability to attract excellent research partners, the programme seems to have benefitted the organisations from the beneficiary states more than the Dpps.

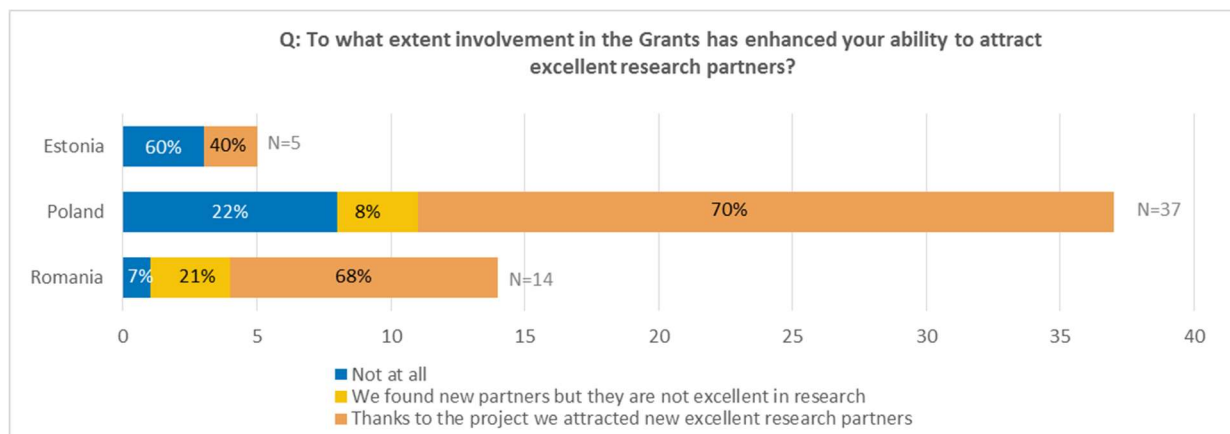
Figure 21: Attracting excellent research partners: PPs-Dpps comparison



PPs N=56 Dpps N=21

Approximately 70% of the respondents from Poland and Romania (26 and 10 responses, respectively), as well as 40% from Estonia (equal to 2 responses) believed that involvement in the Grants allowed them to attract new excellent research partners. Only 1 of the organisations in Romania and 8 organisations in Poland indicated that the involvement in the Grants has not enhance their ability to attract excellent research partners at all.

Figure 22: Attracting excellent research partners: beneficiary states



Changes to programming support

The survey respondents were asked to offer comments on whether there were any changes to programming of the research support from the Grants that would allow participants from beneficiary states to achieve greater visibility or participation with international research collaborations.

Eleven of the Dpps responded to this question. Out of those, three indicated that to ensure the sustainability of the programme itself, and the Nordic institutions' interest in it, it was essential that the funds were distributed more equally. The financial resources provided through the grants to the Nordic partners were said to be very limited, putting the Dpps at a disadvantage and making them less willing

to participate in the future. Three respondents also indicated that during the collaboration they were faced with excessive bureaucratic requirements imposed by the partner institutions from beneficiary states, and that the project administration often lacked transparency.

When it comes to the visibility of the participants from beneficiary states itself, the respondents suggested open access publishing, provision of language assistance to beneficiary PPs to facilitate publication in English, more emphasis placed on conducting long-term research and focusing the program reporting on publications, rather than "ticking boxes".

Out of the beneficiary PPs, 40 have responded to the above question:

- eight indicated that the programme, and the beneficiary states organisations' visibility, could be improved if the projects were more long-term 2 responses or if there was a possibility of continuing successful projects 6 responses .
- three respondents pointed out that it was essential that the formalities related to project management and reporting were reduced and eased, as those have taken significant amount of time and resources away from the research itself.
- one respondent suggested that more funding could benefit the visibility, while additional two respondents pointed to the areas to which funding could extend to achieve improved visibility e.g. R&D projects, research visits .
- one respondent pointed out that more emphasis must be placed on producing publications and promoting conference attendance.

4 Interviews with Donor project partners

The last question of the online survey asked the participants who were willing to discuss their projects in more detail to state their contact details. Seven Donor project partners expressed their willingness to be contacted, and the interviews with them were carried out throughout July and August 2017.

| Position | Organisation |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Professor, School of Science and Engineering | Reykjavik University |
| Professor, Department of Psychosocial Science, Faculty of Psychology | University of Bergen |
| Head, Research Department | Cancer Registry of Norway |
| Scientist, Division for Maps and Statistics | Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research |
| Senior Research Economist | Institute of Transport Economics |
| Chief Scientist, Head of Section for Earth Observation | Norwegian Computing Centre |
| Chief Scientist, Medical Technology | SINTEF |

4.1 Reasons for participating in the projects

The interviewed Dpps tended to have similar reasons for which they participated in the projects. The **broad themes** of the calls made the Grants particularly appealing in their eyes, as it allowed them to submit tailor-made proposals and building on existing research streams and partnerships. This was contrasted with applications to EU research funding streams: for Horizon 2020 projects for instance, researchers often had to try to fit the projects to the call text, which is perceived as limiting by researchers and prevents them from focusing on their strengths.

The bilateral nature of the partnerships was also sometimes - but not always - seen as an added value to the research project, as it facilitated comparative studies and required rethinking methodologies to adapt them to the local context. Others did not consider the bilateral nature to be any more or less attractive than other projects.

4.2 Programme results

In terms of concrete project outcomes, the examples put forward by the Dpps were diverse. They included scientific publications in national and international journals, new open access software, one book in the making, and the establishment of new research networks, workshops, conferences, and specialist seminars.

The majority of interviewees confirmed that they were **hoping to continue the partnerships** and build on the research results of the projects. One interviewee also suggested that following the Grant, he/she was more interested in bilateral partnerships than before, as the coordination effort was limited for this kind of project and was conducive to synergies between organisations.

4.3 The link between the EEA and Norway Grants and EU-funded research initiatives

Some interviewees believed that the projects effectively contributed to the success in EU research funding applications. For one of the projects, the networks developed through the project were perceived as useful, as the project coordinators were able to build on them to apply for further funding.

Interviewees also suggested that using the EEA Grant as a reference came handy when applying to Horizon 2020 Grants. They also found that the research results e.g. new methods, patents, data sets from the project itself could in theory be useful, as these could be used when submitting applications.

The Dpps felt that EEA could contribute further to the success in EU research funding applications. One Interviewee noted that it would have been useful for the **application process to be more similar to the Horizon 2020 proposals**. These required more level of detail in terms of setting out the research methods used, as well as the specific outcomes expected from the project. This would arguably contribute to making the EEA grant application process itself a learning point, as it would give the BS a better idea of what to expect when applying for Horizon 2020 Grants.

Moreover, the interviewee believed that the short time given for preparing the proposals i.e. 3 months, as well as the relatively open ended EEA requirements, posed problems further down the line when implementing the project. The lack of time and **vague instructions for submitting proposals** meant that the projects ended up being based on relatively open-ended proposals. As a result, many important decisions had to be taken mid-flight. In his/her words: *'This means you don't have a very clear of the project itself how to do it, the expected impact. I did not think what we produced was a winning proposal. Yet we won.'*

All of the interviewed Dpps had already been involved in international research collaborations, suggesting that in this regard the involvement in an EEA grant project did not give the researchers an edge.

4.4 Quality of partnerships

According to one interviewee, strong research project partnerships are most of the time based on previous successful collaborations, as the project partners 'do not have to start from scratch'. When new collaborations had emerged as a result of the EEA Grant, the interviewed Dpps were keen to continue the collaboration.

One interviewee stressed that the EEA grant had allowed him/her to partner with organisations he/she would usually struggle connecting with for EU projects: as an academic interested in 'pure research', he/she was able to connect and work with more applied researchers. This is something that the interviewee valued and felt might help with future Horizon 2020 applications, since he/she felt that 'pure researchers' were less likely to receive funding in an increasingly applied / business-oriented funding environment.

In terms of factors enabling and hindering strong research project partnerships, several aspects were highlighted. Interviewees stressed that the collaboration had allowed to exploit synergies between partners which led to higher quality research outputs, as well as more cost-effective research projects. For instance, the majority of interviewed project promoters found that bilateral projects were **comparatively straightforward to manage** compared to other international research projects in which

they had previously been involved with. From their experience, it reduces the coordination efforts, makes communications easier and is conducive of a clear division of tasks.

Nevertheless, some interviewees highlighted that **language barriers** made it difficult at times for partners to effectively communicate. In addition, there were marked **differences between partners** in terms of the **data collection methods** used as well as the standards across the partner countries. As a result, data collection methods had to be adjusted while the project was running, which sometimes led to delays in the delivery of research outputs.

It also emerged from the interviews that some project promoters felt the proportion of the Grant given to Norway was too small for them to fully develop the opportunities of the research partnership. Some suggested that with additional funding, they would have liked using the Grant for example to **employ PhD's** and further develop the project outputs. They stressed that since a large proportion of the Grants went to the beneficiary states and only few Norwegian researchers were involved in each project, on occasions they felt that they only had a **limited say** in the direction that projects took.

4.5 Transfer of knowledge

According to the interviewees, the technical expertise of some of Norway's research institutions was effectively transferred throughout the different project phases. One interviewed Dpps suggested that the experience from past projects, as well as state of the art expertise in Norway was effectively used to inform strategies and recommendations in the BS. These were in turn were taken into account by the relevant stakeholders e.g. the municipality. However, for a different project, the recommendations from Norwegian researchers who were world leading in the field regarding the technology and equipment which ought to be used to complete the project, were not taken into account. The approach that the BS took instead was perceived as a waste of money and resources by the Dpps, confirming that for knowledge to be transferred successfully, the **project partner needs to be willing to accept advice**.

4.6 Research management support

One interviewee defined 'good research management support' as the kind of support that would allow researchers to focus on getting work done, rather than having to worry about compliance and financial reporting. For these Grants, the majority of the reporting was done by the BS, which significantly reduced the burden for Dpps. As a result, Dpps were on average quite satisfied with the support.

Another interviewee mentioned that the financial assistant who was present in Norway was very helpful in dealing with any requests the BS partners may have, which in his/her eyes was good research management support. Overall, there was a strong emphasis on the financial side of things when asking about management support.

The interviewed Dpps were, in general, not able to tell whether research management skills had been enhanced within their own institutions, since they often acted as project managers themselves with little involvement from the institutions.

For the project teams, the interviews suggest they had learned a lot from the partnership dynamics', and had also a clearer idea of which parts of the collaboration had been more or less successful or **would need to change for future bilateral collaborations**. Donors felt for example that they would need to

be **more involved during the proposal writing phase of the project** so as to have more of a say on the project as a whole.

4.7 Recommendations for the future

The interviews suggest that the bilateral Grant model had strengthened research capacity in both Norway and the Beneficiary States, be it through the sharing of knowledge, equipment, as well as through maximising the utility of the Grant. Nevertheless, the Dpps feel that they ought to be more closely involved in the allocation of Grants as well as the research design, as this would go towards ensuring the impact and sustainability of the projects.

One interviewee raised serious concerns about the way Grants are being attributed to projects, as he/she perceived the Grant allocation process as 'obscure', lacking quality control and leaving room for conflicts of interest. Given that the allocation of Grants was centralised and the donors had very little say in the process, the Dpp was under impression that the process was vulnerable to lobbying and lacked **quality control** by experts. In his/her view, this lack of transparency, priority setting and evaluation was **in need of change**.

Some interviewees also felt that the DS had **not enough of a say** in shaping the final project outputs e.g. whether the findings should be presented as journal articles or as a book. Some felt this was partially due to the small amount of the grant that the Norwegian researchers received, as it reduced their 'bargaining power'. It also arguably affected the sustainability of the projects, as in some cases it was difficult for Norwegian partners to build on project findings given the small proportion of the grant that was made available to them.

One suggestion was that **the application process itself could be closer to the H2020 application process** for BS to have a better idea what to expect when applying for those grants. However, given the very specific requirements from the H2020 grants, it seems unlikely that in practice the researchers would be able to use their findings without heavily tailoring them to the call.

5 Desk review

This section contains a detailed review of the available project level documentation, which consists of a selection of annual project reports from Estonia, Poland and Romania.

5.1 Introduction

We undertook a desk-based review of a selection of project reports received from the Programme Operators in the three case study countries. We took the approach of selecting the projects at random order following the list of project numbers, aiming to create **a sample of 50% of all of the projects** from the period 2009-2014, maintaining a representative balance of research areas the projects represented. There were 111 projects in the total cohort: 13 in Estonia, 75 in Poland and 23 in Romania. We proposed reviewing 56 projects: 7 from Estonia, 37 from Poland and 12 from Romania see Table 1.

Table 1: Documentation covered in the review

| Country | Estonia | Poland | Romania | TOTAL |
|------------------------------------------|---------|--------|---------|-------|
| Total Number of Projects | 13 | 75 | 23 | 111 |
| Number of Final Project Reports Reviewed | 7 | 36 | 12 | 56 |

Table 2: Total projects reviewed per research area

| Research areas | # of reviewed projects |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| environment | 14 |
| health | 13 |
| climate change | 12 |
| social sciences | 10 |
| gender | 4 |
| carbon capture | 3 |

This element of the study aimed to get insights into the impact that the EEA Grants have had in terms of:

- project outcomes in each country,
- the sustainability of the project collaborations, as well as
- the influence it had on bettering the prospects for Grant recipients to securing EU research funding.

As a first step, we identified the **main indicators i.e. the project's quantifiable target outcomes** which were available in the final project reports. This allowed us to systematically review the overall project results against the Assessment Questions Matrix AQM, as well as getting a sense of how the projects had performed in each country.

It is important to note that **programme reporting varied for each of the three countries, both in format and substance**. The programme targets were not included in Estonia's project reports, making it difficult to assess whether the proposed objectives and research of the programme aims were formally met. The reporting for the Polish projects on the other hand was more helpful in as a range of

quantitative indicators covered the main outcomes of the projects. In particular, they include baseline values, target values, as well as the final project outcome, making it easier for the evaluators to assess whether the project achieved what it set out to do. Similarly to Poland, Romania's reporting distinguished between the planned outcomes and the achieved outcomes.

Nevertheless, the evaluators are aware that the target values and planned outcomes - which were set by the beneficiaries - need to be taken with a pinch of salt. These indicators were intended to provide an overall sense of direction for the programming and were therefore non-binding. However, researchers in Beneficiary States might not have been necessarily aware of that, as the workshop with Donor Programme Partners⁴ revealed. It is therefore plausible that the targets which were set by the BS were quite low, so as to be easily achievable, or that there might have been cases of over-reporting.

⁴ Participants in the workshop originated from the Research Council of Norway and the Icelandic Centre for Research RANNIS.

5.2 Indicators

This section outlines **the main quantitative indicators, which could be drawn from the three case study countries final project reports** . The tables below show the aggregated numbers for the reviewed projects i.e. for Estonia, a total of 11 Masters students participated in the seven reviewed projects . When relevant, the data was included in the analysis as part of the 'Findings' section.

- Estonia 7 projects

| Participating Masters Students | Participating PhD Candidates | Total Participants Estonia | New scientific methods acquired | Norwegian scientists' visits to Estonia | Researchers staff exchanges | Doctoral students exchanges | Masters students exchanges | Scientific publications |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 11 | 5 | 58 | 15 | 17 | 17 | 12 | 7 | 73 |

- Poland 36 projects

| Long term cooperation new projects resulting from the partnership | | | International peer reviewed publications | | | | Subset: joint publication authored by project participants from both BS and DS | | | | PhD students and Postdocs trained within the project | | Researchers in leadership positions | | Researchers and PhD students undertaking research and educational activities within the project | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------|------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Under preparation | Submitted | Funded | Under preparation | Submitted | Published | Target Value | Under preparation | Submitted | Published | Target value | All | female | All | female | All | female |
| 14 | 24 | 7 | 116 | 91 | 232 | approx. 170 | 65 | 39 | 57 | approx. 50 | 103 | 55 | 216 | 81 | 649 | 332 |

| How was the cooperation established? | | | | | | | How did the project contribute to strengthening bilateral relations? | | | | | Will the cooperation with the donor partner s continue after the project is completed? | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Previous cooperation | Match making event under the Programme | Embassy assistance | Helsinki Committee assistance | Independent search for partner | Programme / Fund operator | Other | Ad hoc collaboration / exchange of experience with entities in the Donor States e.g. study visits, conferences, meetings | Wider effects beyond the project generated through joint initiatives with an entity in the Donor states, or at regional or European level towards EU and its institutions | Shared results achieved e.g. solved a particular issue through sharing experience, knowledge, know-how or working together for joint results | Improved knowledge and mutual understanding developed between entities involved | Cooperation led to increased visibility e.g. media coverage in connection with bilateral activity | Yes, a formal cooperation agreement is in place | Yes, continued cooperation is planned | Contact may continue, but no concrete plans for cooperation | No, the cooperation will not continue |
| 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 4 | 3 | 25 | 15 | 28 | 29 | 10 | 5 | 24 | 5 | 0 |

- Romania 12 projects

| | internationally referred joint scientific publications | internationally referred scientific publications | Patents / patent applications | Postdocs and / or PhD students involved in joint research project | Researchers involved in joint research project | New investments in R&D infrastructure in thousands of LEI and EUR | Average level of use for purchased R&D equipment % | Number of conferences/seminars | Project proposals submitted to other calls under Horizon 2020 or European/ international programs/ initiatives | Thesis master, PhD, other | Other |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------|
| Total Planned | 27 | 34 | 4 | 61 | 183 | 608 | 450.9 | 10 | 29 | 5 | 52 |
| Total Achieved | 82 | 149 | 11 | 77 | 185 | 614 | 551.35 | 16 | 46 | 19 | 136 |

5.3 Summary of the results

The findings below are structured per assessment theme and individual research questions contained therein, as outlined in the Assessment Questions Matrix AQM. Within each question, the findings are presented separately for each of the three countries subject to this assessment. Please note that the desk review focussed on a sub-set of the questions originally presented in the AQM. These were the questions most relevant to this source of evidence.

We used the desk review to provide an idea of the impact that the Grants had on all three case-study countries. We structured the summary along the key themes/ which were set out in the AQM and systematically provide the evidence for each country. We begin by looking at 1 the overall programme results. We then present the evidence on 2 the link between the EEA and Norway Grants and EU-funded research initiatives, as well as 3 the transfer of knowledge. We move on to showing the extent to which the partnerships were conducive of 4 good research management support. We conclude by providing 5 recommendations for the future which emerge from the desk review.

5.3.1 Programme results

The Desk Review showed that the reporting varied in form and in substance for all three case study countries. The Workshop with DPPs revealed that they had evolved during the lifetime of the EEA Grants. For the Estonia programme, which was one of the first countries benefiting of the Grant, there was little emphasis (**if any**) on the impact of the Grant in increasing the number of applications for research funding for Horizon 2020. As a result, there is very little evidence on this matter in the reports. This changed for subsequent programmes, including Poland and Romania, for which there is much more data on the impact of the Grants on the number of subsequent applications for H2020 funding.

Overall, the most significant programme results seem to be:

- the large number of **scientific publications** mainly for **primary research** ;
- the number of researchers and PhD candidates involved in the projects supported
- the number of planned and actual applications for additional research funding, including to Horizon2020, and
- the extent that were plans for future collaboration between PPs and DPPs, even if this was not formalised at the time of writing the reports.

In terms of **most and least effective interventions**, projects which resulted from already established cooperation were more likely to continue their bilateral relations, and to mutually benefit from the partnerships.

- Estonia

A review of Estonia's project reports shows that **the Grants were conducive for transferring knowledge and know-how between Donor States and Beneficiary States** and have often helped boosting the Beneficiary States' university research capacity. Some projects highlighted that Norway partners had helped the BS partners to integrate different skills and knowledge Beneficiary States, which result in more successful publishing of primary research. On average, Estonia's projects published between 5 and 8 scientific papers. Moreover, **the majority of project partners were keen for the collaboration to continue**, suggesting overall satisfaction with the partnership and project results.

The number of joint publications is a good indicator for research excellence amongst the projects we reviewed. The project reports show that **the programme contributed to producing high quality publications and developing the respective disciplines of the projects**. In addition, in some project publications were circulated beyond academic circles and influenced national policy. For example in Romania the project RO14-0012 Cervical Cancer Control for Roma and Other Disadvantaged Groups in the North-Western Region of Romania contributed to introducing changes in national legal framework: the HPV tests were integrated in the screening instead of Papa-Nicolau tests, thus making Romania the 7th European country to introduce the HPV test in their cancer screening programmes. Nevertheless, the number of publications produced for each project varied greatly, which indicates that there are disparities in terms of the success of the Grants in increasing research excellence. For instance, one project lead to 43 scientific publications, while another did not publish any.

As would be expected, the majority of project reports show that **there is a strong appetite for future collaboration amongst project partners**. Several partners were searching for research schemes and funding to finance future cooperation. Others found that the project had led to the establishment of a 'solid platform' upon which further cooperation could be built. However, **only a minority had already concrete evidence that future collaboration would be supported with appropriate funding**. The lack of evidence in the reports needs to be nuanced, as several projects were waiting to hear back about the results of grant applications when the report was written.

In Estonia, the only differentiator between projects that could be identified in the reports was the thematic area on which its activities focused e.g. 'environment', 'climate change', 'social sciences' and 'health'. Some trends emerge from the reports. For instance, **programmes in the 'environment' field were particularly prolific in terms of publishing scientific papers, and also performed above average in terms of the number of scientific methods acquired** i.e. 3 new scientific methods acquired per project, as compared to an average of 2 for the remainder of the projects. One environment project stands out in terms of the number of published scientific publications i.e. 43 publications in total. It is also the project with the highest number of PhD students involved i.e. 3 students, compared to 1 or no student for other projects, which might go towards explaining the high number of publications.

- Poland

The projects led to the publication 232 scientific papers, around 50 more than originally planned. Out of these, **57 were joint publications involving at least one researcher from the Donor State and Partner State**. Most projects met their set target of joint publications, and overall 7 more papers than planned were published. Moreover, 649 researchers and PhD students undertook research and educational activities within the reviewed sample of projects.

The Project Promoters emphasized in the reports that they were planning for the collaborations to continue, yet **few had formalised these at the time of writing the final project reports**. A review of the reports shows that while three quarters of the projects were planning to continue the cooperation, only a small number had a formal cooperation plan already in place, and some of the projects had no plans for the cooperation to continue at all.

In Poland, **projects which resulted from previous cooperation's were more likely to further develop the bilateral relations and to harness synergies between the project partners**. Conversely, when the cooperation was established through the independent search for partners or through fund operators, the cooperation was less likely to continue after the project. This suggests a need for additional efforts to be made when new collaborations are established and the FMO could consider whether any

structural/programming changes could be made. In specific research domains, the continuity of research is particularly important given the nature of the subject of the research. Some researchers highlighted that the established relationships, as well as the databases and tools developed during the projects, formed a solid basis for new long-term collaboration.

- Romania

The project reports reveal that POs and national research agencies **successfully reached, and at times also exceeded, the project proposals' expectations**. Several projects had a notably higher number of international publications than planned, as well as higher number of researchers involved. Several reports also highlighted that **projects had led to significant scientific advancements in their respective fields**, while at the same time contributing to educational outcomes through the involvement of MSc and PhD students in the project. Some also pointed out that **the project's research findings may lead to better governance and policy making** in both countries.

The reports suggest that the partnerships were **conducive to research excellence in participating universities**. Some reports emphasise that the significance of **the complementary expertise of the partners**, describing the synergies, which resulted from the collaboration. On several occasions, **the combination of state-of-the-art facilities in Romania and cutting-edge methodology from Norway resulted in high-quality research**, as evidenced by the number of peer reviewed papers that were published in international journals i.e. 149 publications for 13 projects. These publications also increased the international visibility of the partner universities, and were accompanied by the participation in international scientific events, as well as an increased mobility of researchers. There are also reports which highlight the applied relevance of the research projects.

From the reports, project coordinators were keen for the collaborations to continue, albeit in the form of continuation of bilateral relations in areas of common interest or through applications for additional funding. The majority indicated that **they were keen to build on the projects' findings and to further develop the networks that resulted from each project**. For example, at the time of writing, several POs were thinking of applying for further funding. There are also cases in which the implementation of the project contributed to establishing a long-term cooperation amongst partners.

In Romania, **projects mainly focused on two types of R&D activities**, 'Basic Research' and 'Applied Research'. Only one of the reviewed projects focused solely on 'Experimental Development' activities, and an additional 4 had an 'Experimental Development' element to it. Evidence suggests that in Romania, projects including 'experimental development' types of R&D activities were most prone to submitting and winning proposals to other calls under Horizon 2020, and also tended to lead to a higher than average number of publications.

5.3.2 The link between the EEA and Norway Grants and EU-funded research initiatives

There is some evidence that a few of the supported projects led to successful subsequent applications joint or bilateral under Horizon 2020 and other EU funded research initiatives. The number of applications from Poland as well as Romania is quite considerable, but no evidence of funding yet from the review of Estonia's project reports. Certain country by country trends can be observed regarding the kind of research activities that were most successful in securing funding.

- Estonia

There is some evidence in the reports that **Estonian projects that received EEA / Norway Grants were applying for Horizon 2020 and EU funding**. For instance, some of the reports revealed that steps had been taken towards applying for Horizon 2020 and EU funding yet the reviewed reports offer **no evidence that any of the projects had been successful** in securing funding.

- Poland

A review of the final project reports shows that the number of applications per project was relatively low in Poland, with a total of 38 planned or submitted and an additional 7 funded applications for 36 projects. Performance amongst projects varied. Out of the 36 projects, 8 hadn't taken any steps towards applying for EU funding at the time the final reports were published. **Out of the 7 funded projects that were reported, 2 received funding from H2020 funded research initiatives, and one from Erasmus+ KA2, the remainder were national or non-EU Grants**. All three Grants were given to either Environment or Climate Change themed projects.

- Romania

A review of the final project reports shows that **projects in Romania have exceeded its set targets for submitting proposals to calls under Horizon 2020 by over 150%**. However, the large majority of these proposals were submitted by 2 projects, who submitted 29 out of the total 46 proposals. Interestingly, both of these projects included 'experimental development' type of R&D activities, suggesting that **projects involved with 'experimental development' activities are more likely to submit and win proposals in Romania**. As it is, these projects **submitted in total 24 proposals** to calls under Horizon 2020, **of which 11 were successful**. An additional 2 projects received EU funding for 2 subsequent research projects.

5.3.3 Further evidence of the application of research results

Regarding further evidence of the application of research results, this varied from project to project. The application of results most often included the establishment of formal networks, the creation and distribution of open access software, as well as achieving new patents.

- Estonia

One project report highlighted that researchers outside of the projects used the data which had been made publicly available for further analysis. On another project, Estonian project participants acted as independent advisors for the Estonian government by drafting legislative amendments related to the project.

- Poland

There is evidence that research results have been effectively used for dissemination purposes and will be expanded in future projects. For some projects, outputs have been disseminated beyond academic circles and were also going to be made accessible for free for specific stakeholders. Moreover, new networks and relationships were established as a result of the project, leading to new collaborations with researchers outside of the programme. The reports also stress that databases and tools developed during the projects will be subsequently used in future research projects, be it to develop or build on the research findings.

- Romania

There is some evidence that there were outcomes beyond those initially set out in the proposal, including the development of formal international research networks, as well as the presentation of findings – which were turned into recommendations – to stakeholders e.g. parliamentarians . Romania's projects also achieved a total of 11 patents and are exploring possibilities of monetizing these.

5.3.4 Transfer of knowledge

Project partners shared knowledge and technical expertise as evidenced through the publication of co-authored scientific publications, research exchanges/ country visits from both sides, as well as the sharing of research methods and technological equipment.

- Estonia

There is some evidence that the programmes helped transfer knowledge between DS and BS researchers. Some of the reviewed reports emphasise that **the expertise of Norway's institutions in research design and implementation, as well as the technical knowhow in using technological equipment, contributed to sharing knowledge with the BS** . All but one project reported having acquired new scientific methods as a result of the collaboration, with an average of 2 new scientific methods being acquired per programme. According to one of the BS, experiencing Norway's R&D environment also added value to the programme, suggesting that learning the context within which R&D evolves in another country is deemed valuable. In addition, one project lead to synchronising study protocols.

- Poland

The desk review confirms that the programmes facilitated knowledge transfers between BS and DS. This is evidenced by the **high number of PPs reporting that the programme had led to achieving shared results** e.g. solved a particular issue through sharing experience, knowledge, know-how or working together for joint results . There were also knowledge transfers in terms of working culture, such as interdisciplinary, which in the case of Poland is still not commonly used as suggested in one of the reports. Moreover, some projects benefited of having to design methodologies that were adapted to the context of both countries, increasing the research capacity of researchers. The majority of projects successfully **submitted joint publications authored by project participants from both BS and DS** , suggesting that the projects were truly collaborative.

- Romania

The large majority of project reports highlight that **Norwegian partners contributed to developing the research competence of BS by providing expertise, know-how, state of the art methodology as well as scientific and technical solutions throughout the different project phases** . More specifically, contributions were made during the research phase as well as the proposal and research designs phases. In addition, the work visits as well as engagement with PhD and Masters Students also led to the transfer of knowledge. This has arguably lead to enhancing the research competence of the BS. In terms of proposal writing, several project reports stress that Norway's support during the proposal writing process was substantial.

5.3.5 Good research management support

There is scarce evidence in the Project Reports of the programme enabling the BS to build strong research management skills on an institutional level. Overall, Norwegian researchers' expertise in managing complex international research projects was perceived as useful by the Project Partners, but there is little evidence that this knowledge has been institutionalised.

One of the key outcomes confirming research management skills **is the successful completion of complex research projects involving a large number of researchers in different countries**. While there is evidence that the knowhow of the DS institutions in managing large, complex and interdisciplinary research projects substantially contributed to achieving the outcomes of many projects, **there is little evidence in the reports suggesting that this knowhow has been institutionalised by the BS**. The only notable exception is Poland, where several project reports highlighted that effective forms of communication between partners have been institutionalised, which is crucial for the effective management of this type of research projects.

5.3.6 Recommendations for the future

Drawing on the review of Project Reports, several comments can be made as to how the programming could be improved in the future to enhance results related to the key questions:

- From an M&E perspective, **making the reporting requirements more uniform across Beneficiary Countries would help producing comparable results**. For example, including the set project targets which was the case for Romanian and Polish projects in the final report would help assessing the performance of individual projects, as well as the programme as a whole.
- The project reports only give limited insights into the extent that EEA grants were conducive of successful H2020 funding. Compared to EEA Grants, H2020 calls for applications are very specific. As a result, researchers often have to wait for a relevant call to appear or bend the project to match the proposal to be able to submit a H2020 proposal. The available information provided by the final project reports is hence limited, as it only captures the applications researchers were able to submit during the project lifetime. Moreover, partners were arguably not able to use the full results of the project at the time of applying. It would be necessary to do continuous monitoring at the programme level to capture the extent to which EEA grants were conducive of successful H2020 funding.
- From the final project reports, development of research management support in the beneficiary countries appears to be a secondary concern and only indirectly addressed in the reporting. More effort would need to be put at the programming level to communicate the importance/value of research management support to raise awareness amongst Project Promoters and their institutions on the topic

6 List of the visited project sites

| # | Project Title | Case number | Project Promoter | Partner |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Emission of nitrous oxide and methane from Estonian agricultural landscapes - variation among various ecosystems and possible mitigation strategies. | EE0012 | Institute of Geography, University of Tartu | Bioforsk Norwegian Institute for Agricultural and Environmental Research, Norway |
| 2 | Probable locations of windfarms in the open sea in relation to most favourable meteorological, hydrographical, ice and environmental conditions | EE0015 | Tallinn University of Technology, Marine Systems Institute | Institute of Marine Research, Bergen |
| 3 | Understanding policy change: Financial and fiscal bureaucracy in the Baltic Sea Region | EE06-0011 | Tallinn University of Technology | Hedmark University College |
| 4 | Language and auditory brain: studies on central sound representation in auditory cortex | EE06-0005 | University of Tartu | University of Bergen |
| 5 | Innovative solutions for wastewater management in rural areas | PL0271 | University of Gdansk | Bioforsk Norwegian Institute for Agricultural and Environmental Research |
| 6 | Automated Assessment of Joint Synovitis Activity from Medical Ultrasound and Power Doppler Examinations using Image Processing and Machine Learning Methods | PL12-0015 | Silesian University of Technology | Helse Forde |
| 7 | Mobility and Migrations at the Time of Transformation - Methodological Challenges | PL0272 | University of Warsaw; Faculty of Economic Sciences | Centre of Immigration Research CIRRA, Iceland Institute of Social Sciences and Labour Market FAFO, Norway |
| 8 | Development of the method for reconstruction of primary hydrological conditions in Kampinos National Park in order to restrain nature degradation and improvement of biodiversity status | PL0268 | Warsaw University of Life Sciences | University of Oslo - Department of Geosciences, Norway |
| 9 | Mires and climate: towards enhancing functional resilience of fen peatlands | PL12-0082 | University of Warsaw | Norwegian University of Science and Technology |

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|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10 | Atlantic Water Pathways to the Arctic: Variability and Effects on Climate and Ecosystems | PL12-0083 | Institute of Oceanology Polish Academy of Science | Institute of Marine Research |
| 11 | Role of the FTO dioxygenase in development of obesity - multidisciplinary study on selected model systems. | PL12-0037 | Institute of Biochemistry and Biophysics PAS | Oslo University Hospital |
| 12 | Influence of bio-components content in fuel on emission of diesel engines and engine oil deterioration | PL0261 | Oil and Gas Institute | Western Norway Research Institute Vestlandsforskning, Norway |
| 13 | Multifield CO2 Storage for Environment and Energy | PL12-0090 | AGH University of Science and Technology | University of Stavanger |
| 14 | Gender equality and quality of life - how gender equality can contribute to development in Europe. A study of Poland and Norway | PL12-0066 | Jagiellonian University in Krakow | Center for Gender Research at the University of Oslo |
| 15 | Integrated micro CCHP - Stirling Engine based on renewable energy sources for the isolated residential consumers from South-East region of Romania | RO0054 | Dunarea de Jos University of Galati | SINTEF - Energy Research, Norway |
| 16 | Remote sensing model and in-situ data fusion for snowpack parameters and related hazards in a climate change perspective | RO14-0011 | National Meteorological Administration | National Institute for Hydrology and Water Management |
| 17 | Monitoring human impact in show caves - a pilot project on monitoring protocols and remediation techniques to be implemented in Romanian show caves | RO14-0009 | Emil Racovita Institute of Speology of Romanian Academy | University of Bergen |
| 18 | Cervical Cancer Control for Roma and Other Disadvantaged Groups in the North-Western Region of Romania | RO14-0012 | Ion Chiricuta Institute of Oncology | Oslo University Hospital |
| 19 | Early literacy in Roma children from Romania: Predictors, literacy levels and enhancement strategies | RO14-0020 | 'Babes Bolyai' University of Cluj Napoca | University of Oslo |

7 List of publications

This section contains the list of publications for the projects which were visited as a part of this assessment. It includes all peer reviewed scientific publications both joint and independent, as well as forthcoming publications and papers currently under review.

The list of publications was created using the information contained in the final project reports that were made available to the study team, as well as the information obtainable from the project websites. For some of the projects from the 2004-2009 programme, none of the above could be accessed, meaning that a list of publications could not be gathered at this point in time.

1. Emission of nitrous oxide and methane from Estonian agricultural landscapes - variation among various ecosystems and possible mitigation strategies EE0012)

Country: Estonia

Research Area: Environment

Peer reviewed publications: No access to publications. The project website could not be accessed via the project platform: https://eeagrants.org/project-portal/project_04-09/EE0012

2. Probable locations of windfarms in the open sea in relation to most favourable meteorological, hydrographical, ice and environmental conditions EE0015)

Country: Estonia

Research Area: energy

Peer reviewed publications: No access to publications. The project website could not be accessed via the project platform: https://eeagrants.org/project-portal/project_04-09/EE0015

3. Understanding policy change: Financial and fiscal bureaucracy in the Baltic Sea Region EE06-0011

Country: Estonia

Research Area: Social Sciences

Peer reviewed publications:

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|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Raudla, R.; Cepilovs, A.; Kuokštis, V.; Kattel, R. 2016 . Fiscal Policy Learning from Crisis: Comparative Analysis of the Baltic Countries. Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis, 1-16.10.1080/13876988.2016.1244947. |
| 2 | Juuse, E. 2016 . Regulatory Convergence, Financialization and Hollowing Out of the State: The Case of Financial System in Estonia. Halduskultuur - Administrative Culture, 17 1, 19-46. |
| 3 | Karo, E.; Kattel, R.; Raudla, R. 2017 . Searching for exits from the Great Recession: Coordination of fiscal consolidation and growth enhancing innovation policies in Central and Eastern Europe. Europe-Asia Studies, xx-xx [forthcoming]. |

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| 4 | Karo, E.; Kattel, R.; Raudla, R. 2015 . Aftermath of the Great Recession: Challenges of coordinating fiscal consolidation and growth enhancing innovation policies in Central and Eastern Europe. Working Papers in Technology Governance and Economic Dynamics, 63, 1-28. |
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Submitted papers currently being reviewed:

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|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Karo, E.; Kattel, R.; Raudla, R. 2017 . Searching for exits from the Great Recession: Coordination of fiscal consolidation and growth enhancing innovation policies in Central and Eastern Europe. Europe-Asia Studies, xx-xx [forthcoming]. |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

4. Language and auditory brain: studies on central sound representation in auditory cortex EE06-0005

Country: Estonia

Research Area: Health

Peer reviewed publications:

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|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Kremláček, J.; Kreegipuu, K.; Tales, A.; Astikainen, P.; Pöldver, N.; Näätänen, R.; Stefanics, G. 2016 . Visual mismatch negativity vMMN: A review and meta-analysis of studies in psychiatric and neurological disorders. Cortex, 80, 76-112. |
| 2 | Westerhausen, R., Bless, J., Kompus, K. 2015 . Behavioral laterality and aging: the freerecall dichotic-listening right-ear advantage increases with age. Developmental Neuropsychology, 313-327. |
| 3 | Westerhausen, R., Bless, J. J., Passow, S., Kompus, K., Hugdahl, K. 2015 . Cognitive Control of Speech Perception Across the Lifespan: A Large-Scale Cross-Sectional Dichotic Listening Study. Developmental Psychology, 806-815. |
| 4 | Kompus, Kristiina; Westerhausen, René; Craven, Alex R.; Kreegipuu, Kairi; Pöldver, Nele; Passow, Susanne; Specht, Karsten; Hugdahl, Kenneth; Näätänen, Risto 2015 . Restingstate glutamatergic neurotransmission is related to the peak latency of the auditory mismatch negativity MMN for duration deviants: An 1H-MRS-EEG study. Psychophysiology, 52 9, 1131-1139.5 |
| 5 | Kaivapalu, A. 2016 . Dihhoolilise kuulamise adapteerimine ja rakendamine: ülevaade ning seosed helilisuse algamise ajaga. /Dichotic listening adaptation and application: review and the interactions with voice onset time/. Master's thesis, University of Tartu. |

5. Innovative solutions for wastewater management in rural areas PL0271)

Country: Poland

Research Area: Environment

Peer reviewed publications:

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|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Hanna Obarska-Pempkowiak, "Hydrophyte systems usage in the light of the regulations EU", Treatment Wetlands for Environmental Pollution Control, pp.15-87 2005 |
| 2 | A. M. Paruch, T. Mæhlum, H. Obarska-Pempkowiak, M. Gajewska, E. Wojciechowska and A. Ostojki, "Rural domestic wastewater treatment in Norway and Poland: experiences, cooperation and concepts on the improvement of constructed wetland technology", Water Science and Technology, 2011:63.4. |
| 3 | Hanna Obarska-Pempkowiak, Magdalena Gajewska, Ewa Wojciechowska, Janusz Pempkowiak "Treatment Wetlands for Environmental Pollution Control", Springer (2011 |

6. Automated Assessment of Joint Synovitis Activity from Medical Ultrasound and Power Doppler Examinations using Image Processing and Machine Learning Methods PL12-0015)

Country: Poland

Research Area: Health

Peer reviewed publications:

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Mielnik, Paweł, et al. "Challenges in introduction of artificial intelligence in medical practice—a review of clinical trials concerning adaptation of artificial intelligence in medicine." <i>Studia Informatica</i> 37.3B 2016 : 21-32. |
| 2 | Martins, Nelson, et al. "A new active contours approach for finger extensor tendon segmentation in ultrasound images using prior knowledge and phase symmetry." <i>IEEE Journal of Biomedical and Health Informatics</i> 2017 . |
| 3 | Popowicz, Adam, and Bogdan Smolka. "Fast image colourisation using the isolines concept." <i>Multimedia Tools and Applications</i> 76.14 2017 : 15987-16009. |
| 4 | Kusnik, Damian, Bogdan Smolka, and Boguslaw Cyganek. "Application of the local similarity filter for the suppression of multiplicative noise in medical ultrasound images." <i>Real-Time Image and Video Processing</i> 2016. Vol. 9897. International Society for Optics and Photonics, 2016. |
| 5 | Szczepanski, Marek, and Krystian Radlak. "Escaping path approach for speckle noise reduction." <i>Seventh International Conference on Machine Vision ICMV 2014</i> . International Society for Optics and Photonics, 2015. |
| 6 | Adam Popowicz, Bogdan Smolka, Isoline based Image Colorization, UKSim 2014 - International Conference on Computer Modelling and Simulation, IEEE Digital Library, 2014 |
| 7 | Bogdan Smolka, Adam Andrzejczak, Pawel Nabialkowski, Adam Nelip, Thresholded Median Filter for the Impulsive Noise Removal in Digital Images, IISA 2014 -International Conference on Information, Intelligence, Systems and Applications, IISA-2014 Proceedings will be published by IEEE, 2014 |
| 8 | Krystian Radlak, Bogdan Smolka, Visualization Enhancement of Segmented Images Using Genetic Algorithm, ICMCS'14 International Conference on Multimedia Computing and Systems, IEEE Digital Library, 2014 |

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| 9 | Krystyna Malik, Bernadetta Machała, Bogdan Smółka, Novel Approach to Noise Reduction in Ultrasound Images Based on Geodesic Paths, International Conference on Computer Vision and Graphics ICCVG 2014 |
| 10 | Krystian Radlak, Bogdan Smolka, Adaptive Non-Local Means Filtering for Speckle Noise Reduction, International Conference on Computer Vision and Graphics ICCVG 2014 |
| 11 | Kamil Wereszczynski, Jakub Segen, Marek Kulbacki, Pawel Mielnik, Marcin Fojcik, Konrad Wojciechowski. Identifying a joint in medical ultrasound images using trained classifiers, International Conference on Computer Vision and Graphics ICCVG 2014 |
| 12 | Marek Kulbacki, Jakub Segen, Piotr Habela, Mateusz Janiak, Wojciech Knieć, Marcin Fojcik, Pawel Mielnik, Konrad Wojciechowski, Collaborative Tool for Annotation of Synovitis and Assessment in Ultrasound Images, International Conference on Computer Vision and Graphics ICCVG 2014 |
| 13 | Bogdan Smolka, On the robustified median filter for the reduction of impulsive noise in digital images, 10TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MATHEMATICAL PROBLEMS IN ENGINEERING, AEROSPACE AND SCIENCES: ICNPAA 2014 |
| 14 | Jakub Segen, Marek Kulbacki and Kamil Wereszczyński, Konrad Wojciechowski, Optimization of Joint Detector for Ultrasound Images Using Mixtures of Image Feature Descriptors, Intelligent Information and Database Systems, 2015/1/1 |
| 15 | Jakub Segen, Marek Kulbacki and Kamil Wereszczyński, Registration of Ultrasound Images for Automated Assessment of Synovitis Activity, Intelligent Information and Database Systems, 2015/1/1 |
| 16 | Nurzynska, K., and B. Smolka. "Automatic finger joint synovitis localization in ultrasound images." <i>Proceedings of SPIE</i> . Vol. 9897. 1913. |
| 17 | Hans Jakob Reite, Inntrykk frå konferanse: Diagnose piksel for piksel, at Senter for helseforskning Eit samarbeid mellom Helse Forde og Høgskulen i Sogn og Fjordane, Conference CSMH 2015, 1-2.10.2015 http://helseforskning.hisf.no/?lang=nb |
| 18 | Monography chapter: A. Popowicz & B. Smolka, Bilateral filtering based biomedical image colorization, Computational Vision and Medical Image Processing, Eds. J.M.R.S. Tavares, A.M.J. Natal, 163-169, CRC Press 2016 |
| 19 | K. Radlak, N. Radlak & B. Smolka, Automatic detection of bones based on the confidence map for Rheumatoid Arthritis analysis Computational Vision and Medical Image Processing, Eds. J.M.R.S. Tavares, A.M.J. Natal, 2015-220, CRC Press 2016. http://www.taylorandfrancis.com/books/details/9781138029262/ |
| 20 | Monography chapter: Adam Popowicz and Bogdan Smolka, Overview of Grayscale Image Colorization Techniques, Color Image and Video Enhancement, Eds. M. E. Celebi, M. Lecca, B. Smolka, 345-370, Springer 2015 http://www.springer.com/us/book/9783319093628 |
| 21 | K. Wojciechowski, B. Smolka, R. Cupek, A. Ziebinski, K. Nurzynska, M. Kulbacki, J. Segen, M. Fojcik, P. Mielnik, and S. Hein, 'A Machine-Learning Approach to the Automated Assessment of Joint Synovitis Activity', in Computational Collective Intelligence: 8th International Conference, ICCCI 2016, Halkidiki, Greece, September 28-30, 2016. Proceedings, Part II, T. N. Nguyen, L. Iliadis, Y. Manolopoulos, and B. Trawiński, Eds. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2016, pp. 440-450, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-45246-3_42. |

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| 22 | Adam Popowicz, Bogdan Smolka, Biomedical image colorization using pixel membership propagation, in print Studia Informatica 2016 |
| 23 | Adam Popowicz, Aleksander R Kurek, An algorithm for joint and bone localization in USG images of rheumatoid arthritis, in print Studia Informatica 2016 |
| 24 | Nurzynska, Karolina, and Bogdan Smolka. "Segmentation of finger joint synovitis in ultrasound images." <i>Communications and Electronics ICCE, 2016 IEEE Sixth International Conference on</i> . IEEE, 2016. |

7. Mobility and Migrations at the Time of Transformation - Methodological Challenges (PLO272)

Country: Poland

Research Area: Social Sciences

Peer reviewed publications:

The project website could not be accessed via the project platform: https://eeagrants.org/project-portal/project_04-09/PL0272

The Project Promoter's website <http://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/projects/mobility-and-migrations-at-the-time-of-transformation-methodological-challenges-mwm/> lists publications by all researchers currently working in the organisation making it impossible to isolate publications resulting directly from the project in question.

8. Development of the method for reconstruction of primary hydrological conditions in Kampinos National Park in order to restrain nature degradation and improvement of biodiversity status (PLO268)

Country: Poland

Research Area: Environment

Peer reviewed publications:

The project website could not be accessed via the project platform: https://eeagrants.org/project-portal/project_04-09/PL0268

The Project Promoter's website <http://kampinos.sggw.pl> does not list any publications.

9. Mires and climate: towards enhancing functional resilience of fen peatlands (PL12-0082)

Country: Poland

Research Area: Climate Change

Peer reviewed publications:

| | |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Lyngstad, A., Moen, A. and Pedersen, B., 2017. Flowering in the Rich Fen Species <i>Eriophorum latifolium</i> Depends on Climate and Reproduction in the Previous Year. <i>Wetlands</i> , 37 1, pp.1-13. |
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| 2 | Kotowski, W., Acreman, M., Grootjans, A., Klimkowska, A., Rössling, H. and Wheeler, B., 2016. Restoration of temperate fens: matching strategies with site potential. <i>Peatland Restoration and Ecosystem Services: Science, Policy and Practice</i> , p.170. |
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Submitted papers currently being reviewed:

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|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Long-term effects of nutrient enrichment in boreal rich fens - the role of N and P availability in controlling plant species and functional composition Øien, D.-I., Pedersen, B., Kozub, Ł., Goldstein, K. & Wilk, M.: Submitted 25.11.2016 to <i>Journal of Vegetation Science</i> |
| 2 | Water balance traits of 10 fen bryophyte species Jablonska, E., Kotowski, W., Soudzilovskaia, N.. Submitted on 13.07.2015 to <i>Journal of Vegetation Science</i> |

10. Atlantic Water Pathways to the Arctic: Variability and Effects on Climate and Ecosystems (PL12-0083)

Country: Poland

Research Area: Climate Change

Peer reviewed publications:

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | L. de Steur, E. Hansen, C. Mauritzen, A. Beszczynska-Möller, E. Fahrbach, Impact of recirculation on the East Greenland Current in Fram Strait: Results from moored current meter measurements between 1997 and 2009, <i>Deep Sea Research Part 1</i> |
| 2 | J. Skardhamar, Ø. Skagseth, J. Albretsen, Diurnal tides on the Barents Sea continental slope, <i>Deep Sea Research Part 1</i> |
| 3 | V.S. Lien, Y. Gusdal, F.B. Vikebø, Along-shelf hydrographic anomalies in the Nordic Seas 1960–2011: locally generated or advective signals?, <i>Ocean Dynamics</i> |
| 4 | P. Schlichtholz, Local wintertime tropospheric response to oceanic heat anomalies in the Nordic Seas area, <i>Journal of Climate</i> |
| 5 | Onarheim, I.H., Smedsrud, L.H., Ingvaldsen, R, Nilsen, F., Loss of sea ice during winter north of Svalbard, <i>Tellus A</i> |
| 6 | W.J. von Appen, U. Schauer, R. Somavilla, E. Bauerfeind, A. Beszczynska-Möller, Exchange of warming deep waters across Fram Strait, <i>Deep-Sea Research Part I</i> |
| 7 | L. Chafik, J. Nilsson, Ø Skagseth, P. Lundberg, On the Flow of Atlantic Water and Temperature Anomalies in the Nordic Seas Towards the Arctic Ocean, <i>Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans</i> |
| 8 | J. Skardhamar, Ø. Skagseth, J. Albretsen, Diurnal tides on the Barents Sea continental slope, <i>Deep-Sea Research Part I</i> |
| 9 | A. Samuelsen, C. Hansen, H. Wehde, Tuning and assessment of the HYCOM-NORWECOM V2.1 biogeochemical modeling system for the North Atlantic and Arctic oceans, <i>Geoscientific Model Developm.</i> |

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| 10 | I.H. Onarheim, T. Eldevik, M. Årthun, R.B. Ingvaldsen, Skillful prediction of the Barents Sea ice cover, <i>Geophys. Research Letter</i> |
| 11 | W.J. von Appen, U. Schauer, T. Hattermann, A. Beszczynska-Möller, Seasonal cycle of mesoscale instability of the West Spitsbergen Current, <i>Journal of Physical Oceanogr.</i> |
| 12 | P. Schlichtholz, Empirical relationships between summertime oceanic heat anomalies in the Nordic seas and large-scale atmospheric circulation in the following winter, <i>Climate Dynamics</i> |
| 13 | V.S. Lien, P. Schlichtholz, Ø. Skagseth, F.B. Vikebø, Wind-driven Atlantic water flow as a direct mode for reduced Barents Sea ice cover, <i>Journal of Climate</i> |
| 14 | E Trudnowska, M Gluchowska, K Blachowiak Samolyk, S Kwasniewski, Plankton patchiness in the Polar Front region of the West Spitsbergen Shelf., <i>Marine Ecology Progress Series</i> |
| 15 | M Gluchowska, E Trudnowska, I Goszczko, AM Kubiszyn, K Blachowiak-Samolyk, W Walczowski, S Kwasniewski; Variations in the structural and functional diversity of zooplankton over vertical and horizontal gradients en route to the Arctic Ocean through the Fram Strait, <i>PLoS ONE</i> |
| 16 | M Gluchowska, P Dalpadado, A Beszczynska-Möller, A Olszewska, RB Ingvaldsen, S Kwasniewski, Interannual zooplankton variability in the main pathways of the Atlantic water flow into the Arctic Ocean Fram Strait and Barents Sea branches, <i>ICES Journal of Marine Science</i> |
| 17 | Y. Lee, A. Samuelsen, and other, Net primary productivity estimates and environmental variables in the Arctic Ocean: An assessment of coupled physical-biogeochemical models, <i>Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans</i> |
| 18 | W. Walczowski A Beszczynska-Möller, P. Wieczorek, M. Merchel, A. Grynczel, Oceanographic observations in the Nordic Sea and Fram Strait in 2016 under the IO PAN long-term monitoring program ARES, <i>Oceanologia</i> |

11. Role of the FTO dioxygenase in development of obesity - multidisciplinary study on selected model systems PL12-0037

Research Area: Health

Peer reviewed publications:

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Ferenc, Karolina, et al. "Intrauterine growth retarded piglet as a model for humans—Studies on the perinatal development of the gut structure and function." <i>Reproductive biology</i> 14.1 2014 : 51-60. |
| 2 | Robertson, Adam B., et al. "Endonuclease G preferentially cleaves 5-hydroxymethylcytosine-modified DNA creating a substrate for recombination." <i>Nucleic acids research</i> 42.21 2014 : 13280-13293. |
| 3 | Klungland, Arne, and John Arne Dahl. "Dynamic RNA modifications in disease." <i>Current opinion in genetics & development</i> 26 2014 : 47-52. |
| 4 | Kukwa, Wojciech, and Ewa Migacz. "Selected Cardiologic Aspects of Sleep Apnea in Children —New Findings." <i>Exp Clin Cariol</i> 20 2014 : 2598-2605. |
| 5 | Fusser, Markus, et al. "Lysine methylation of the valosin-containing protein VCP is dispensable for development and survival of mice." <i>PLoS one</i> 10.11 2015 : e0141472. |

| | |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6 | Kukwa, Wojciech, et al. "Obstructive sleep apnea and cancer: effects of intermittent hypoxia?." <i>Future Oncology</i> 11.24 2015 : 3285-3298. |
| 7 | Radzikowska, Joanna, et al. "Nasopharyngeal chordoma in a patient with a severe form of sleep-disordered breathing: A case report." <i>Oncology letters</i> 10.3 2015 : 1805-1809. |
| 8 | Ougland, Rune, et al. "Role of ALKBH1 in the core transcriptional network of embryonic stem cells." <i>Cellular Physiology and Biochemistry</i> 38.1 2016 : 173-184. |
| 9 | Landfors, Miriam, et al. "Sequencing of FTO and ALKBH5 in men undergoing infertility work-up identifies an infertility-associated variant and two missense mutations." <i>Fertility and sterility</i> 105.5 2016 : 1170-1179. |
| 10 | Alemu, Endalkachew A., Chuan He, and Arne Klungland. "ALKBHs-facilitated RNA modifications and de-modifications." <i>DNA repair</i> 44 2016 : 87-91. |
| 11 | Liu, Fange, et al. "ALKBH1-mediated tRNA demethylation regulates translation." <i>Cell</i> 167.3 2016 : 816-828. |
| 12 | Klungland, Arne, et al. "Reversible RNA modifications in meiosis and pluripotency." <i>Nature methods</i> 14.1 2017 : 18-22. |
| 13 | Dylewska, Małgorzata, et al. "1, N6- α -hydroxypropanoadenine, the acrolein adduct to adenine, is a substrate for AlkB dioxygenase." <i>Biochemical Journal</i> 474.11 2017 : 1837-1852. |

Submitted papers currently being reviewed

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Ferenc, Karolina, et al. "Structure and Function of Enterocyte in Intrauterine Growth Retarded Pig Neonates." <i>Disease markers</i> 2017 2017 . |
| 2 | Pilzys et al, ALKBH proteins are simultaneously" overexpressed in neck and head cancer - a new field for anticancer therapy. <i>Cell Metabolism</i> 2017 2017 |

12. Influence of bio-components content in fuel on emission of diesel engines and engine oil deterioration PLO261)

Country: Poland

Research Area: Environment

Peer reviewed publications: No access to publications. The project website could not be accessed via the project platform: https://eeagrants.org/project-portal/project_04-09/PL0261

13. Multifield CO2 Storage for Environment and Energy PL12-0090)

Country: Poland

Research Area: carbon capture and storage

Peer reviewed publications:

| | |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Czarnota, Robert, et al. "Determination of minimum miscibility pressure for CO ₂ and oil system using acoustically monitored separator." <i>Journal of CO₂ Utilization</i> 17 2017 : 32-36. |
| 2 | Uliasz-Misiak, Barbara, Piotr Kosowski, and J. Lewandowska-Śmierzchalska. "Analysis of reservoir properties and parameters of oil fields suitable for the application of CO ₂ -EOR method." <i>AGH Drilling, Oil, Gas</i> 32 2015 . |
| 3 | Chruszcz-Lipska, Katarzyna, et al. "Assessment of the quality of surface water from selected area of active oil exploitation." <i>AGH Drilling, Oil, Gas</i> 32 2015 : 65-76. |
| 4 | Fąfara, Zbigniew, Igor Ilkiv, and Tadeusz Sołdecki. "The modified Dräger probe to the geochemical research of the soil gases composition." <i>AGH Drilling, Oil, Gas</i> 32 2015 . |
| 5 | Rybicki, Cz, B. Winid, and T. Solecki. "Threats to the environment in the areas of abandoned extraction of hydrocarbon deposits." <i>AGH Drilling, Oil, Gas</i> 32.1 2015 . |
| 6 | Fąfara, Zbigniew, Igor Ilkiv, and Joanna Przybyłowicz. "The analysis of the soil gases on the chosen example of oil mine." <i>AGH Drilling, Oil, Gas</i> 32.2 2015 . |
| 7 | Janiga, Damian, et al. "TECHNICAL CONDITIONS OF WELL APPLICATION FOR EOR-CCS PROJECT IN POLISH CONDITIONS." <i>International Multidisciplinary Scientific GeoConference: SGEM: Surveying Geology & mining Ecology Management</i> 1 2015 : 821. |
| 8 | Knapik, Ewa, et al. "The role of capillary trapping during geologic CO ₂ sequestration." <i>AGH Drilling, Oil, Gas</i> 32.4 2015 : s-657. |
| 9 | Blicharski, Jacek. "An evaluation of hydrocarbon deposit tightness in aspect of CO ₂ sequestration." <i>AGH Drilling, Oil, Gas</i> 32.4 2015 : s-671. |
| 10 | Rychlicki, Stanisław, et al. "Social acceptance for CO ₂ -EOR and CCS projects based on survey conducted in southeastern Poland." <i>AGH Drilling, Oil, Gas</i> 32.4 2015 . |
| 11 | Kosowski, Piotr, and Michał Kuk. "Cost analysis of geological sequestration of CO ₂ ." <i>AGH Drilling, Oil, Gas</i> 33.1 2016 . |
| 12 | Kosowski, Piotr, and Edyta Mikołajczak. "Characteristics of industrial CO ₂ emissions in Poland in 2014 in terms of its underground storage." <i>AGH Drilling, Oil, Gas</i> 33.1 2016 . |
| 13 | Czarnota, Robert, et al. "Laboratory measurement of wettability for Ciężkowice sandstone." <i>AGH Drilling, Oil, Gas</i> 33 2016 . |
| 14 | Stopa, Jerzy, et al. "Optimization of well placement and control to maximize CO ₂ trapping during geologic sequestration." <i>AGH Drilling, Oil, Gas</i> 33.1 2016 . |
| 15 | Rychlicki, Stanisław, et al. "Social assessment of the impact of oil exploitation on lives of inhabitants and the environment." <i>AGH Drilling, Oil, Gas</i> 33 2016 . |
| 16 | Rychlicki, Stanisław, et al. "Ocena społecznej akceptacji przemysłu naftowego w Polsce." <i>Polityka Energetyczna</i> 19 2016 . |

Submitted papers currently being reviewed:

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Mikołajczak et al. "Analysis and selection of CO ₂ sources for CCS-EOR projects in oil fields clusters in Poland." <i>AGH Drilling, Oil, Gas</i> 2017 2017 |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

14. Gender equality and quality of life - how gender equality can contribute to development in Europe. A study of Poland and Norway PL12-0066)

Country: Poland

Research Area: Gender equality and work-life balance

Peer reviewed publications:

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Krzaklewska, Ewa, and Anna Ratecka. "Władza w intymnych związkach heteroseksualnych refleksja nad badaniem władzy w kontekście równości płci." <i>Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Sociologica</i> Acta Universitatis Lodziensis, Folia Sociologica nr 51/2014 2014 . |
| 2 | Korsvik, Trine Rogg, and Marta Warat. "Framing Leave for Fathers in Norway and Poland: Just a Matter of Gender Equality?." <i>NORA-Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research</i> 24.2 2016 : 110-125. |
| 3 | Warat, Marta. "For the sake of family and religion: nationalist-religious discourse on the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence." <i>Studia Humanistyczne AGH</i> 15.3 2016 . |
| 4 | Krzaklewska, Ewa, Krystyna Słany, and Marta Warat. "RÓWNOSC PŁCI W PRZEBIEGU ŻYCIA. WSKAZANIA DLA POLITYKI SPOLECZNEJ 1/GENDER EQUALITY FROM THE LIFE COURSE PERSPECTIVE. IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL POLICY." <i>Przegląd Socjologiczny</i> 65.2 2016 : 11. |
| 5 | Warat, Marta, and Ewa Krzaklewska. "CZY PREKARIAT MA PŁEĆ? SYTUACJA KOBIET I MĘŻCZYŹN NA RYNKU PRACY W POLSCE." <i>Rocznik Lubuski</i> 42.1 2016 : 229-245. |
| 6 | Cianfrini, Melissa Ivy. <i>Deconstructing the interconnectedness of community: An exploratory study on skill shortages, labour migration, and mining booms in Western Australia</i> . Diss. 2015. |
| 7 | Jaracz, Krystyna, et al. "Quality of life in Polish respondents: psychometric properties of the Polish WHOQOL-Bref." <i>Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences</i> 20.3 2006 : 251-260. |

Submitted papers currently being reviewed

| | |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Piotr Brzyski, Ewa Krzaklewska, Marta Warat, Barbara Woźniak, <i>Assessment of validity and reliability of the new Polish version of WHOQOL-BREF questionnaire in a Polish randomized adult sample</i> , Journal TBA |
| 2 | Beata Kowalska, <i>Gender - empowerment - development. Polish Case</i> , Gender and Development, Men and Masculinities |
| 3 | Ewelina Ciaputa, Ewa Krzaklewska, <i>From breadwinner to caring father? Changing models of masculinities in Poland</i> , |
| 4 | Oystein Holter, Ewa Krzaklewska, Piotr Brzyski, <i>Gender equality and its impact on quality of life - building a conceptual model on the basis of research in Poland and Norway</i> , Polish Sociological Review |
| 5 | Ewa Krzaklewska, Paulina Pustułka, Lihong Huang, <i>Migrating towards gender equality? Comparing attitudes and family practices of Polish migrants in Norway with Poles in Poland</i> , Gender and Society |

| | |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6 | Krystyna Slany, Ewa Krzaklewska, Marta Warat, <i>Gender między strefą publiczną a prywatną</i> , Studia Socjologiczne |
| 7 | Krystyna Slany, Barbara Woźniak, <i>The violence in intimate relationships - outcomes of the GEQ project</i> , Gender and violence |

15. Integrated micro CCHP - Stirling Engine based on renewable energy sources for the isolated residential consumers from South-East region of Romania RO0054)

Country: Romania

Research Area: Climate Change

Peer reviewed publications: No access to publications. The project website could not be accessed via the project platform: https://eeagrants.org/project-portal/project_04-09/RO0054

16. Remote sensing model and in-situ data fusion for snowpack parameters and related hazards in a climate change perspective

Country: Romania

Research Area: Climate Change

Peer reviewed publications:

| | |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Stancalie G, Remote sensing, model and in-situ data fusion" for snowpack parameters and related hazards in a climate change perspectives Book |
| 2 | Voiculescu, Mircea, et al. "Topographical factors, meteorological variables and human factors in the control of the main snow avalanche events in the Făgăraș Massif Southern Carpathians-Romanian Carpathians : Case studies." <i>Geographia Polonica</i> 89.1 2016 : 47-64. |
| 3 | Hamar, Jarle Bauck, Arnt-Børre Salberg, and Florina Ardelean. "Automatic detection and mapping of avalanches in SAR images." <i>Geoscience and Remote Sensing Symposium IGARSS, 2016 IEEE International</i> . IEEE, 2016. |
| 4 | Storvold, Rune, et al. "SAR remote sensing of snow parameters in norwegian areas—Current status and future perspective." <i>Journal of Electromagnetic Waves and Applications</i> 20.13 2006 : 1751-1759. |
| 5 | SOLBERG, R., et al. "REMOTE SENSING OF SNOW WETNESS IN ROMANIA BY SENTINEL-1 AND TERRA MODIS DATA." |
| 6 | Solberg et al. "A multi-sensor multi-temporal approach to retrieving snow surface wetness from a combination of Sentinel-1 and Sentinel-3 data", <i>EARSeL 2017</i> 2017 |
| 7 | Rudjfort et al. "Remote sensing of snow wetness using Sentinel - a multisenzor approach" 2017 |
| 8 | Solberg, Rune, Oivind Due Trier, and Oystein Rudjord. "Monitoring of snow properties with Sentinel-3." <i>Sentinel-3 for Science Workshop</i> . Vol. 734. 2015. |
| 9 | Milian, N. "SYNOPTIC CONDITIONS FOR AVALANCHE CASES IN ROMANIA." <i>Aerul si Apa. Componente ale Mediului</i> 2015 : 299. |
| 10 | Dumitrescu, Spatial interpolation of daily snow depth over Romania, <i>Proceeding of GeoMla 2015 conference</i> 2016 |
| 11 | Greco et al. "Synoptic conditions generating important snowfalls and their relation with avalanches in 2015-2016 winter" <i>Air and Water - Components of the environment</i> 2017 |

| | |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12 | Paşol et al. "Winter extreme phenomena - Romanian Carpathians avalanches" <i>Air and Water - Components of the environment</i> 2017 |
| 13 | Bojariu et al. "Snow-related impact in the Carpathians under climate change conditions" <i>Future of the Carpathians: Smart, Sustainable, Inclusive</i> 2017 |

Submitted papers being reviewed

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Török-Oance et al, "Snow avalanche activity in the Romanian Carpathians: new findings from VHR satellite and drone based image analysis". <i>Cold Regions Science and Technology</i> |
| 2 | Găitănanu, Snowmelt Infiltration Using Hydrus-1d Based On A Snow Surface Energy Balance Model For Bucegi Mountains, Romania, International Multidisciplinary International Multidisciplinary 2017 |
| 3 | Dobre et al. "Snowmelt modeling in urban areas", <i>Procedia Engineering, Elsevier</i> 2017 |
| 4 | Dumitrescu, "A Romanian daily high-resolution gridded dataset of snow depth 2005-2015", <i>Geofizika, Spatial Statistics in Environmental Modelling</i> 2017 |
| 5 | Dumitrescu et al. "Geostatistical downscaling of temperature and precipitation under present and future climate scenarios" <i>Acta Geophysica</i> 2017 |

17. Monitoring human impact in show caves - a pilot project on monitoring protocols and remediation techniques to be implemented in Romanian show caves RO14-0011)

Country: Romania

Research Area: environment

Peer reviewed publications

| | |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Epure, L., et al. "Ecophysiological groups of bacteria from cave sediments as potential indicators of paleoclimate." <i>Quaternary International</i> 432 2017 : 20-32. |
| 2 | Moldovan, Oana Teodora, et al. "Fossil invertebrates records in cave sediments and paleoenvironmental assessments-a study of four cave sites from Romanian Carpathians." <i>Biogeosciences</i> 13.2 2016 . |
| 3 | Bican-Brişan, N., et al. "Use of CR-39 solid state nuclear track detectors in assessment of the radon exposure in two limestone caves in Romania." <i>Romanian Journal of Physics</i> 61.5-6 2016 . |
| 4 | Drăguşin, Virgil, et al. "Transfer of environmental signals from surface to the underground at Ascunsă Cave, Romania." |
| 5 | Constantin, Silviu. "Speleothems as archives of the past-a beginner's guide." <i>3er Simposio Internacional de Espeleología en el Ecuador-Boletín Científico</i> . 2015. |
| 6 | Toulkeridis, Theofilos, et al. "Candidatos ecuatorianos para la Lista Mundial del Patrimonio Natural-Las cuevas Triple Volcán y Tayos." <i>Memorias</i> 21 2015 . |

Submitted papers currently being reviewed

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Moldovan et al. "Dripping heterogeneity in the vadose zone and its ecological significance" <i>PLOS One</i> |
| 2 | Bercea et al. "Simple method for microbiological risk assessment in show caves" <i>J. of Environmental Management</i> |
| 3 | Burghel et al. "Comparative study on radon and thoron in four Romanian show caves" <i>Radiation Protection Dosimetry</i> |
| 4 | Burghel et al. "Long-term radon measurements to assess the health risk to both cave personnel and tourists" <i>Journal of Environmental Radioactivity</i> |
| 5 | Drăgușin et al. "Caves as observatoires for atmospheric thermal tides, an example from Ascunsa Cave, Romania" <i>International Journal of SPEleology</i> |
| 6 | Moldovan and Nastase-Bucur, "Cryptic diversity and habitat partitioning in subterranean beetles of the apuseni mountains" <i>European Journal of Entomology</i> |

18. Cervical Cancer Control for Roma and Other Disadvantaged Groups in the North-Western Region of Romania (RO14-0012)

Country: Romania

Research Area: Health

Peer reviewed publications

| | |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Blaga, Luminita, et al. "Building institutional capacity for increasing cancer data quality within Northwestern Regional Cancer Registry from Romania." <i>European Journal of Cancer Care</i> 24 2015 : 48. |
| 2 | Andreassen, Trude, et al. "Controversies about cervical cancer screening: A qualitative study of Roma women's non participation in cervical cancer screening in Romania." <i>Social Science & Medicine</i> 183 2017 : 48-55. |
| 3 | Suteu, Ofelia, et al. "Incidence trends and survival of skin melanoma and squamous cell carcinoma in Cluj County, Romania." <i>European Journal of Cancer Prevention</i> 26 2017 : S176-S182. |

19. Early literacy in Roma children from Romania: Predictors, literacy levels and enhancement strategies RO14-0020

Country: Romania

Research Area: Social Sciences

Peer reviewed publications:

| | |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Dolean, Dacian, Ioana Tincas, and Crina I. Damsa. "Enhancing the Pre-literacy Skills of Roma Children: The Role of Socio-economic Status and Classroom Interventions in the Development of Phonemic Awareness." <i>Stanisław Juszczak</i> : 39. |
| 2 | DOLEAN, DACIAN DORIN, IOANA TINCAS, and CRINA DAMSA. "WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING FLUENCY OF ROMA CHILDREN? THE EFFECTS OF WHOLE-CLASS REPEATED READINGS AND SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM." <i>Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai, Psychologia-Paedagogia</i> 61.2 2016 . |
| 3 | Dolean, Dacian D., Crina I. Damsa, and Raluca Pop. "The Effects of Choral Repeated Reading on Foreign Language Reading Fluency of Words in Connected and Disconnected Text." <i>International Journal of Linguistics</i> 9.2 2017 : 10-21. |

Submitted papers currently being reviewed:

| | |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Dolean et al. "Is <i>summer reading loss</i> of disadvantaged children universal? The case of Roma children reading the consistently orthographic Romanian" <i>Scientific Studies of Reading</i> |
| 2 | Dolean and Dasa "An exploration of the enhancing potential of repeated readings of rhyming text." <i>Journal of Research in Reading</i> |
| 3 | Dolean et al. "Explaining poor reading in poor children: Socio-economic background predicts not only initial status but also the growth in reading." <i>Child Development</i> |
| 4 | Dolean et al. "Cognitive factors explain inter-cultural variations of rhythm perception: The case of Roma minority" <i>European Journal of Social Psychology</i> |
| 5 | Dolean et al. "Education and literacy of the Roma in Europe - A systematic review of empirical research" <i>Educational Research Review</i> |
| 6 | Dolean et al." Challenges of vocabulary development of Roma children: A randomized control trial." <i>European Proceeding of Social and Behavioural Sciences</i> |

8 Focus groups with Project Promoters

8.1 Estonia

Two focus groups were held with Project Promoters (PPs) of the research projects supported by the EEA and Norway Grants in Estonia. This was due to the locations of the projects supported by the Grants. The first focus group took place in Tartu, the second one was held in Tallinn. The report below summarises the findings from both of the focus groups.

8.1.1 Participant profiles

Overall ten Project Promoters participated in the discussions. They represented a broad selection of research institutions focused on variety of research topics that were supported under the two financial periods of the Grants:

| # | Institutional affiliation | Research area | Financial period |
|----|--------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1 | University of Tartu | Health | 2004-2009 |
| 2 | University of Tartu | Environment | 2009-2014 |
| 3 | University of Tartu | Environment | 2009-2014 |
| 4 | Tallinn University of Technology | Health | 2009-2014 |
| 5 | University of Tartu | Social Sciences | 2009-2014 |
| 6 | Tartu Observatory | Environment | 2004-2009 |
| 7 | University of Tartu | ICT | 2009-2014 |
| 8 | Estonian University of Life Sciences | Environment | 2009-2014 |
| 9 | Tallinn University | Social Sciences | 2009-2014 |
| 10 | Tallinn University of Technology | Environment | 2009-2014 |

Only a few participants stated that it was their first international project collaboration. However, the participants admitted that other members of their teams had previous experience in working on international projects. A few of those who had previous experience in international or bilateral projects indicated that they have been actively working with partners from Germany, USA, Sweden and UK and have quite long collaboration history. Still, the majority of the participants stated that despite rich experience in working on international projects, it was the first time they have been working with Norwegian partners.

As for the projects supported by EEA and Norway Grants, participants' previous collaboration experience with their Norwegian partners varied. Half of participants had **previous contacts** with their Norwegian partners or knew their counterparts "in absentia", meaning that their partners were major scientific figures, well known in their respective fields even if only by name.

"As a scientist you need to have good contacts in every potential country you can cooperate with, especially in neighbouring geographical areas."

Only **a few participants had previously cooperated with the same Norwegian partners** with whom they engaged in the project they represented during the focus group:

- A few participants have had ongoing collaboration within other EU funded research projects, collaborating with the same Norwegian colleagues.
- One was able to obtain additional funding from his university to extend cooperation beyond the project deadline and continues collaborating with Norwegian colleagues on different project related publications.

The most frequent situation among the focus group participants was that their cooperation with Norwegian partners was **limited to the one project**. There was a common opinion that Norwegians enjoy robust national funding of projects and they do not need to apply for other grants the way the Estonian researchers need to. Thus, despite positive cooperation experience and successfully achieved targets, **possibility to work within the same project with the same partners is very low**.

"Norwegians have good funding of projects and they do not need to apply for grants as we do. So our cooperation was limited within one project."

The majority of participants shared that they would be glad to continue cooperation and work on follow-up or new projects within the same team. One participant disclosed that they even tried to apply to get another grant with the same team, but did not succeed:

"We tried to get more grants with the same team and did not succeed: although we applied for different EU grants, the possibility to work with the same team is very small."

8.1.2 Projects results

Given that their projects have now drawn to a close, the participants were able to look back and assess whether or not they were able to reach the main objectives they have set for their projects. For all of them the answers were positive. In fact, **in addition to the set goals they managed to obtain much more benefits than just reaching the targets**.

In addition to positive and valuable cooperation experience, some said that **the project has given them excellent motivation** to search for partners from other countries. It was the basis for further developments which enabled sharing useful contacts and go further.

"This project gave us a very good impulse to search for other partners from other countries. If you do a valuable, good work, it will be noticed and you will definitely attract partners from other countries."

Another positive aspect in addition to reaching the main goal, was organizing project related seminars, conferences and writing publications, which had an **overall positive impact on the university's image** as well as an **essential achievement in personal career**.

It is important to note that the project promoters emphasized that **with the help of Norway Grants the results of their research were still being implemented**. The PPs agreed that the Grants helped them to work out new research strategies and develop instruments which they considered important for both societies and countries that participated in the scientific collaboration:

"The results are being implemented and help to work out new strategies and instruments e.g. in politics and social sciences, so it is something more than just cooperation between two universities. Implementation of these results on local level brings excellent achievements and benefits."

According to the focus group participants, it was not only experience and knowledge that have been exchanged during the timeframe of the Grants: for better results some projects also included or even required staff exchange and longer traineeships of the involved parties –participants from Estonia going to Norway and vice versa.

Speaking about the **differences** they **observed between operating at national level** or within their own institution, and **as part of the project supported by the Grants**, participants indicated that they **very much enjoyed working on Norway Grants-sponsored projects due to the projects' flexibility** :

- the scope of the subject area was wide and tolerated deviations that usually occur during research and are hardly predictable on the planning stage.
- grant accepted all types of employment contracts;
- supported sub-contracting;

"It was easy to apply, limits were wide, you could state that you want to do this and that, usually in case of other grants there are specific topics and numerous restrictions."

"Here we were given more freedom in choosing the topic, in EU research funding there is far more bureaucracy involved."

"It turned out at some point that data collection in Norway that was planned was so extremely expensive that for the sake of optimizing the resources Norwegians managed to sub-contract Estonian company who did data collection in Norway."

However, similarly to some other local projects such as PUT⁵ and IUT⁶, participants emphasized also the relative **easiness to apply** for Norway Grants as well as comparatively **wide freedom of actions and relatively small share of bureaucracy**.

"Similarly to PUT and IUT, Norway Grants-sponsored projects have a certain degree of flexibility and freedom."

Comparisons were made mainly with Horizon 2020-sponsored projects which were considered to significantly differ from PUT, IUT as well as Norway Grants. In participants' opinion, Horizon 2020 supported grants are usually bigger, but more restricted in terms of various milestones and reporting on the progress. What is more, participants of H2020-sponsored projects reported that they are required to strictly stick to the agenda and no deflections from the topic are acceptable:

"Horizon has different types of grants. Technical projects supported by Horizon are usually very big, but very restricted: you need to do everything step by step in accordance with the agenda. You are not allowed to deviate even a bit. Need to deliver documents all the time, updates of the progress...That means more bureaucracy and more restrictions."

⁵ PUT *Personal and Post-doctoral Research Funding* means funding for a high level research and development project of a person or a research group working in a research and development institution. <http://www.etag.ee/>

² IUT *Institutional Research Funding* is support allocated for financing high-level research and development, and related activities research themes of an institution involved with the aforementioned activities. The aim is to ensure the consistency of the research and development of an R&D institution, and to upgrade, supplement and maintain the infrastructure necessary for this purpose. <http://www.etag.ee/>

8.1.3 Quality of partnerships

The majority of focus group participants were **very pleased with their partnerships and satisfied with quality of collaboration**.

Despite overall satisfaction with cooperation, some participants still identified **several issues resulting from the budget limitations**. As the value of the Grant was known in advance, the research was usually planned in advance and in accordance with the budget. This led to some restrictions in the research and respondents do not exclude the fact that they **would have done it in a different way, if the budget was bigger**.

"We knew from the beginning that it was a relatively small project for around 7K euro and planning was done in advance and in accordance with the budget. Now I see that everything is changing in a quick pace and there are more topics to research, so now we would do it differently. But at that time we did it in the full compliance with the budget."

Participants stated that it is a matter of common knowledge that salaries and scholarships in Norway are *"not even comparable with Estonian"* meaning being significantly higher than in Estonia. One participant claimed that their team faced a serious issue: they were informed that there is a financial ceiling for scholarships for PhD students. This meant there was **no opportunity for PhD students to focus only on the one project, but they were forced to switch between several works which was inconvenient, disturbing and had a negative impact on the result**.

"There was a surprising limit for PhD students' scholarships, around 600 euros. It was impossible to pay higher scholarship for the project and it was necessary for them to work elsewhere and to do additional work not related to the project. It was inconvenient and not clear why this threshold was set."

Another difficulty reported by some participants was that they felt there was a lack of everyday personal contact with their counterparts in Norway in the sense of live face-to-face communication. On the other hand, some participants counteracted this by applying for additional scholarships for travelling purposes.

"We took advantage of the additional scholarships for the meetings. It helped a lot to link Bergen researchers with Estonian ones, for the meetings, attending conferences etc. Such flexibility was positive."

Others organized meetings and were able to see their partners from time to time, in spite of the distance between the countries.

"We were the lucky ones, because at that time there was a two-hour flight from Tartu to Stockholm and from Stockholm directly to Oslo. I think that if the grant is small and the distance is big, then it might be a limiting factor, but not for us that time."

What is more, most participants reported being in a continuous contact via the Internet and communicating via e-mail correspondence and frequent Skype meetings.

"Skype meetings were easily managed and the whole communication process was extremely flexible while live meetings were organized one or twice a year."

In general, the atmosphere in the project teams was reported as respectful and positive, with all project team members being treated equally regardless of their role or scientific positions:

"Every member's word counted, despite education or role. Everyone was equal."

There was anecdotal evidence from some participants that the fact they were involved in a Grants-sponsored project contributed to them being able to attract excellent research partners for other projects: a few managed to access new networks and establish new relations with specialists from their areas from other European countries. This was mainly attributed to them presenting their research results at international conferences, where they met new researchers interested in similar research areas.

8.1.4 Research management support

Speaking about research management and administration, the majority of participants came to the common conclusion that **one of the most significant challenges was to carry out the research work and manage administrative aspects at the same time**. Participants felt that kind of management is difficult for scientists. It appeared to be quite time consuming and disturbing their work, because instead of working on the research a lot of time was spent on preparing financial reports.

Only one participant claimed that their team had separate assistant helping with preparing financial reports and preparing them for several projects running at once. This points toward concluding that financial reporting is one of the aspects that could be improved, and participants expect more support from Grants in this matter.

In general, all the participants agreed that project coordination and management on the project-level was of high quality: there was enough of information, communication was quick and feedback always relatively prompt depending on the subject though. Managing structures within the projects were mature and thought-out:

"the project was very well managed, there were separate levels of coordination e.g. central coordination and local coordination, adequate management, no obstacles."

Two participants shared that a few times it occurred that was a relevant professor in Norway who might have been *"a perfect match for project cooperation"*, but this person was either not interested in collaboration or did not have the capacities to work on the project. For that reason they suggested forming a lobbying group at Norwegian universities promoting Norway Grants and motivating relevant people to join Estonian teams:

"In Norway you might have chosen a professor who is an ideal partner for you, but the funding we can offer is not enough and they do not want to apply. The most important is how to motivate Norwegian partners to cooperate. There could have been an administrative lobby in Norwegian university, who supports and motivates Norwegian partners more."

8.1.5 Transfer of knowledge

Continuous trainings from Norwegian partners, sharing experience guided by Norwegian specialists, acquisition of new useful methods and high level knowledge were among the most frequently mentioned benefits gained from international cooperation.

Focus groups participants reported that in some cases their Norwegian partners appeared to have high-quality innovative laboratories that they have never seen before and which are not available in Estonia.

Still, contribution was judged as being two-way and in respondents' opinion all the parties benefited from this cooperation: they managed to develop harmonized approaches, combining knowledge and expertise of both parties and there was a valuable input from both sides.

"2/3 of budget was distributed for Estonia and 1/3 to Norway. Despite bigger part of work was made in Estonia, Norway contributed a lot with a critical view and feedback."

Among the main factors named for helping with the sharing of knowledge were: mutual openness of the parties, readiness to work together as well as common understanding of the processes and approaches. Only one participant stated that there was a significant difference in research methodologies, however, even taking this aspect into account, both teams were able to reach similar results with a slight difference though.

Because of the valuable knowledge and experience Estonian specialists were able to obtain from Norwegian colleagues as well as to share with them, all the participants reported that they would be glad to continue their cooperation and transfer of knowledge at the earliest opportunity.

8.1.6 Suggestions for future programming improvement

On closing the discussion, participants were asked to share if there were any factors in the project itself, or in the way how the programming worked, that might have limited their enhancing of the research results and suggest further programming improvements that would help them most to enhance their research capacity.

In response, participants indicated that *"such a cooperation and grants are very important, because Estonia is unique in terms of its flora and fauna, but at the same time very small. The opportunities for doing comparable applicable research in Norway are bigger"*.

Common suggestions for improvement shared by the participants of the discussions included:

- the **number of grants to increase and value to grow as well**. Some participants emphasized that it is important to understand what the minimum appropriate budget is in order to achieve required results.

"Ideally it would be more money to more projects. But it is also important to understand how little is enough, because if you give too little, it might have no result."

- **Acceptance rate to increase** and more projects to qualify for the Grants. Participants agreed that if the application success rate drops below 10%, people will lose motivation to apply.
- *"Currently less than 10% of projects are funded. You can work for 10 months on different project applications, one project per month, and only one project will be funded. Many people simply waste their time, as the acceptance rate is very low and they spend time on writing proposals instead of doing researches."*
- the Grants' support to be **more open to various research areas without underestimating the importance of some fields**. In general, some of the respondents indicated that projects related to applied sciences have more opportunities and chances to win the Norway Grants compared to theoretical areas, social sciences or humanities.

"Mechanics, mathematics related projects have smaller chances compared to medicine. There are more chances to win the grant in Germany, States, China or Russia."

- with regards to administration and project management, participants would welcome the **reporting procedure to be improved**, and more assistance with financial reporting incl. salaries to be improved. These are considered too time consuming at the moment, and if tackled, the researchers could focus on their main tasks and devote themselves completely to the sake of science.

8.2 Poland

The focus group with Project Promoters PPs of the research projects supported by the EEA and Norway Grants in Poland took place on 21 June 2017 in Warsaw in the premises of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway.

8.2.1 Participant profiles

Nine Project Promoters participated in the discussion. They represented a broad selection of research institutions focused on variety of research topics that were supported under the two financial periods of the Grants:

| # | Institutional affiliation | Research area | Financial period |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Institute of Biochemistry and Biophysics, Polish Academy of Sciences | climate change | 2009-2014 |
| 2 | Institute of Biochemistry and Biophysics, Polish Academy of Sciences | climate change | 2009-2014 |
| 3 | Institute of Biochemistry and Biophysics, Polish Academy of Sciences | environment | 2009-2014 |
| 4 | Institute of Geophysics, Polish Academy of Sciences | environment | 2009-2014 |
| 5 | Polish Geological Institute - National Research Institute | carbon capture and storage | 2009-2014 |
| 6 | University of Warsaw | health | 2004-2009 |
| 7 | University of Warsaw | social sciences | 2009-2014 |
| 8 | Warsaw University of Life Sciences | environment | 2004-2009 |
| 9 | Warsaw University of Technology | environment | 2009-2014 |

For none of the participants the project that they represented was their first international research collaboration. Several participants stated that they have been actively engaged in international projects from as early as 1990s, mostly with partners from Germany, France, Switzerland and Belgium.

With regards to **previous collaborations** with the same Norwegian partners as for the Norway Grants-sponsored project, the previous experiences varied between participants:

- more than half knew their Norwegian counterparts informally for several years from scientific conferences they participated in;

- several admitted that although they did not know the Norwegian partners personally, other people involved in their projects did know them from their previous work in Norwegian research organisations;
- two participants collaborated with their Norwegian partners in the past, with the most recent project being the third and fourth time respectively, when their research department collaborated with the same Norwegian partner organisation.

When asked whether they did, or will, **continue the collaboration** with their Norwegian research partners, of the two participants who represented the 2004-2009 period one reported that they did: his department applied and received Grant's support for the period 2009-2014 for a follow-up projects; and the other stated that they had no plans for further collaboration, as they were still processing data from their projects and "*[had] no capacity for a new project until we finish processing everything we got from the previous one... maybe in the next financial period we will look into again*".

Of the participants representing projects from the period 2009-2014, a few reported having **concrete plans** for further cooperation within the new financial period. Yet the majority agreed that although they would like to cooperate with their Norwegian partners again, they are waiting to first see the framework of the new research programme:

"We very much would like to work together again, we already had some informal talks, in fact these have been going for a while now. But we first need to see how the new [financial] period will look like, what the requirements will be and what can be funded. The cooperation will crystallise once we know how exactly what is required in the new funding application form"

8.2.2 Projects results

The participants were then asked whether they believed they managed to reach all of the objectives they have set for their projects, and to summarise the most significant project outcomes.

All of the participants reported that they have reached all of their objectives, with three stating that they have over-achieved what they planned, especially in terms of the number of publications resulting from their projects. There were also reports of long-lasting results of the Grants' support: in case of one of the projects financed by the 2004-2009 research programme, the specialised laboratory created for the purpose of the project was still functioning and producing research results.

However, at the same time it became clear that all but two projects were engaged in **primary research** and that the research teams are still processing their results, which proved a very pertinent issue for the participants:

"Our project was clean-cut primary research ... We know that we achieved all of our objectives and we will most likely get out of it far more than we planned in terms of data and publications. But we've not finished processing all the data yet"

"Our research was primary and it gave us results applicable for several reach fields. We ended up with 140% of the number of planned publications and we are not done yet, there are still new findings we dig up from our datasets"

"From what we know the research station that we created offers ways of measuring [the subject in question] that are unique world-wide. But we will be processing the data that we're still getting for the next two-three years. We are thinking of entering another international

cooperation in the future, but that we can only do once we've finished processing the primary results, so that we have some concrete results to work on when we start"

"I would say what we got is a ›curse of plenty‹. We ended up with too much data. They are great data though, we think they would be very useful, but the project finished before we had the time to analyse it all"

When asked whether their project planned for any exchanges of personnel during the timeframe of their grant, three of the projects reportedly included staff exchanges and longer traineeships for PhD students. All of the other projects included short term study visits of Polish researchers in Norway and vice versa.

The participants also commented on **differences** they observed **between operating at national level** or within their own institution **and as part of the project supported by the Grants**. There was universal agreement that operating only on a national level, they would not have been able to run research projects with such a degree of **interdisciplinarity** as the projects supported by the Grants. This was mostly attributed to the fact that national funding systems are too "rigid". One focus group participant in particular admitted that having ideas for the project from as early as 2001, but "could not fit the project into any other research funding streams, as it was too interdisciplinary".

The issue of interdisciplinarity and **complementarity** of various research fields represented by the Polish and Norwegian partners was a repeated theme:

"I have managed dozens of research projects in the course of my career. None of those was as interdisciplinary as this one. We had quantum physicists and natural scientists. And thanks to our project ›physics‹ finally started talking to ›nature‹ about issues that were of great interest to both".

"Our Norwegian partner is a high-quality crystallographer. We are molecular biologists. We gave them what they didn't do, and we got from them what we didn't have. The mutual benefits were immense. It's a shame the project was only for three years, shame that we didn't get to process all the data that came out of our research".

8.2.3 Quality of partnerships

The focus group participants were mostly **very pleased with their partnerships**. Five of the participants reported that their Norwegian partner helped them with writing the grant application. Participants also highlighted the benefits of different approaches, which they believed resulted from different financing systems of Polish and Norwegian science.

"Polish researchers are far more stressed far more determined, for us external support for research is a ›make or break‹"

"The awareness of participating in a project financed by Norway Grants is very different here and there. We are very much focused on the project's objectives. And in Norway they are calmer, more relaxed about the whole thing. They know they simply have research to be done, they don't care as much what programme finances their ongoing research. And this brings scalable effects, because they have the peace of mind to research what they know best".

At the same time, the participants identified several issues resulting from different research cultures, and research system set-up, between Poland and Norway. For example in one case, the Norwegian partner was "so much focused on doing the actual research that they completely neglected the financial settling aspect. It was only when they came to visit Poland when we told them how the Grant is set-up financially and that they need to send us the evidence of their expenditure".

According to the focus group participants it was particularly **difficult** to find a joint understanding with regards to **settling the financial accounts**. What reportedly proved problematic on the Norwegian side were the **different accounting rules** that resulted in Norwegian partners very often not sending the expenditure evidence that were required by the Polish Programme Operator for settling the project accounts. What is more, reportedly, the accounting departments at **Polish research organisations very seldom employ administrative staff that is fluent in English**, which exacerbates any financial and administrative problems between the partners.

One of the participants reported receiving a **preparatory grant** prior to the project. This facilitated agreeing on administrative issues and clarifying any potential future problems, e.g. the Norwegian private company who was one of the project partners being initially reluctant to disclose their employees' salaries, which needed to be included in the costs. The issue, however, was resolved with the help of the other Norwegian partner.

When asked if any of the Norwegian project partners helped their Polish counterparts **to access international research networks, none of the participants agreed**. However, there was anecdotal evidence of reverse happening: Polish partners recommending an introducing their Norwegian colleagues to research networks, such as COST⁷ networks.

As for whether the fact that Polish institutions were involved in Norway Grants supported project contributed to their being able to **attract excellent research partners**, the participants **disagreed** in overwhelming majority, mostly quoting the uncompetitive salaries in the Polish research system. Yet one participant pointed out that the people they employed for their project were "world-class specialists", however:

"We managed to employ Polish junior programmers with world-class skills and involve them in specific work packages. We finished the project a month ago and now those people, with really, really great skills were let go because we don't have the money to continue. So they left academia altogether and went to work in the private sector for twice as much money as we were giving them."

Several other participants agreed that private industry had 'snatched' their experts, as very often when an individual project came to a close, there was **no immediate alternative source of financing** their stay.

8.2.4 Research management support

In terms of research management, all of the participants agreed that personally they had learned a lot as a result of their involvement in the Grants, though the learning curves were very steep. All agreed that one of the most significant challenges was carrying out the research work and managing administrative aspects at the same time. All agreed that the **most important benefit of research management**

⁷ *COST European Cooperation in Science and Technology*: the oldest and widest European intergovernmental framework for Cooperation in Science and Technology, created in 1971, focusing on trans-European networking of nationally funded research activities <http://www.cost.eu>.

support is to be relieved of the administrative burden in terms of accountancy . The complex way of presenting invoice evidence for each end every expenditure within the project is a significant challenge. Another issue is the rules for public procurement in Poland i.e. price being the prevailing criterion, over quality . For participants who ran their projects under the 2004-2009 programming period, the most burning issue was the fluctuations in foreign currency exchange. They were very happy to hear that the foreign currency exchange rules have changed since.

All but two participants agreed that the research management support offered by their research institution **fell short of their needs and expectations** .

"Large research institutions deploy the push-away tactic. Yes, sure, dear researcher, prepare everything and then we will sign and approve at the very end"

What is more, all but one participant admitted that the application support from their research institutions was limited to checking the financial aspects of the proposal, and "*ignoring the subject-matter completely*".

There was anecdotal evidence offered of **institutional learning** in terms of improving research management support over time, yet participants agreed that it is **impossible to attribute** any institutional learning in terms of research administrative support to their involvement with Norway Grants only. All of the institutions deal with multiple research support financial schemes and with time the relevant units within the institutions are reported to have improved their processes. As one participant put it:

"It's our instruction's 3rd Norway Grant. On top of that we have other research grants. They are becoming more efficient, year on year the changes are very small, but it is getting better"

"Our research development support office learned the Grants together with us. With the Grants, we got the money to actually pay someone to handle the admin. The money was not a lot, but it was additional money for a specific person, so this person did all their best to help us. If we were not able to pay her, we would have been left with no support".

To reinforce this point, another participant bitterly observed that "the administrative units need to see that there is something in it for them. If they profit, they make more effort".

Participants also discussed the **role and involvement of the Polish Programme Operator** PO , the National Centre for Research and Development Narodowe Centrum Badań i Rozwoju . Though the discussion it became apparent that the project promoters had very divergent experiences of their relationship with the PO, which were very much dependent on the individual who was their "**project guardian**" and how often those people changed throughout the duration of the projects. Whilst some guardians were reported to quickly gain detailed knowledge of the projects they took care of and to suggest helpful improvements, others reportedly took several weeks to answer emails.

8.2.5 Transfer of knowledge

In terms of how knowledge transfer works between the Polish and Norwegian partners, focus group participants agreed that the knowledge shared related predominantly to **subject-matter** and technical issues, as opposed to e.g. research management practices. However at the same time all of the participants were very vocal about the fact that **knowledge was transferred both ways**, not only from the Norwegian partners to the Polish.

"They really helped us from the technological side. At the time, we had the projects, the specialised computers could only be bought with the software already integrated, and we wanted them ›raw‹ to introduce our own new software. That was an uphill battle with computer producers, and our partners helped us a lot with overcoming this"

The ways of transferring knowledge were most often in the form of sharing raw data and collaborating on scientific articles or during mutual study visits.

"I feel the knowledge transfer was actually greater from us to them. It was tricky in our project, because part of it dealt with healthcare. And if someone manages to implement and patent the solution, there's lots of money behind it. So the Norwegians didn't understand why we want to publish so much".

One participant highlighted how important it was to prepare for the study visits and not just "show up and being walked around":

"The Norwegians have a different approach to us. They don't walk you around and explain everything, it's more: we will show you how things work, but it is up to you to ask the right questions to get to know what you want. It's a different cultural system, some things like energy-efficient buildings are obvious for them, not so much for us."

8.2.6 Suggestions for future programming improvement

Participants were invited to offer comments on the factors that they believed helped them the most in enhancing their research capacity. In response, participants all agreed that **research activities in Poland are overwhelmingly under-financed** and that without external support, such as by Norway Grants, they would be unable to move their research forward in any meaningful way.

With regards to any potential changes to the set-up of the research programme in the future that would strengthen the overall research capacity in Poland, the following suggestions were made:

- to **maintain the Grants as medium-sized**. The participants complained about the relative lack of diversity in the sizes of research grants available in general: there are either opportunities for very large consortia such as in Horizon2020 or grants for individual researchers. Participants universally agreed that **not every research proposal can be immediately scaled up to the H2020 size**, and if varied sizes of research projects could be funded, more research teams would find them suited to their research ideas;
- to **maintain** the requirement of **working in research teams** as opposed to individual grants. Several participants agreed that one of the **largest problems in Polish science** is the fact that **creation of research teams is not encouraged** and supported enough, and great research teams with a history of collaboration are difficult to come by. The grants for individuals are believed to lead to "atomisation of the scientific community where it's ›every man for himself‹". As one of the participants observed, with others enthusiastically agreeing:

"The immense added value of Norway Grants is that they force research cooperation, that there have to be research teams, large research teams from different countries. That's exceptional. That, and the fact that interdisciplinarity is so much encouraged".

Several participants recognised the plight of mid-30s researchers, who are stuck between qualifying for early-career support and having enough scientific achievements to successfully lead a research team of their own. In this context the focus group participants recommended considering creating a programme area that would **support young-ish researchers in establishing their first research groups** .

- to maintain the Grant's support **open to various research areas**, and take into account the currently existing gap in funding opportunities for **projects** which are **beyond the stage of primary research, but have not yet reached the stage of commercialisation-ready** .
- to **overhaul grant application review system** . Whilst the focus grant participants recognised that it is not feasible to require the application assessors' anonymity to be lifted, they were very vocal about the need of introducing a system of very strong and decisive reactions to incompetent assessments where an assessor could be charged with lack of reliability and integrity.

Evidence was quoted of a participant's other Norway Grants application being rejected based on **an assessment that contained factual errors**; another participant who was also unsuccessful with another project complained that marking for a given section was particularly low, **without any subject-matter arguments** given. An improvement suggestion included requiring the Programme Operator to create a unit consisting of international experts, who would act as arbitrage in case of appealing against application rejections.

As the final element of the discussion, the participants were asked whether they think that participating in a Norway Grants- supported project can **help them in any way to successfully apply for EU research funding**. In response, the participants bitterly observed that unlike in other countries, most of Polish research institutions do not employ dedicated personnel whose only job it would be to prepare large funding applications.

"A Horizon2020 application is not something you can simply write on top of your day-to-day job. We can try and access projects like that by being someone's partners, but definitely not as the leader. If you're a leader and left alone to manage the whole thing, on top of doing your daily research and teaching duties, the money that you would get from the project does not even compensate the stress and the hassle"

8.3 Romania

The focus group with Project Promoters PPs of the research projects supported by the EEA and Norway Grants in Romania took place on 4th July in Bucharest, in the premises of the Ministry of Research and Innovation [MRI], the Romanian Programme Operator PO

8.3.1 Participant profiles

Thirteen Project Promoters from the Bucharest area were invited to take part in the focus group, with seven confirming their participation. However, due to unforeseen circumstances beyond our control, the final turnout was limited to only three participants: on the day of the focus group Romania was placed under Yellow Alert Code issued by Meteorological National Institute because of waves of extreme heat followed by thunderstorms, with people advised to stay indoors and many public offices closing.

Notwithstanding the low participation, the results of the FG corroborated with the information harvested during the field visits can build a clear image on how the programme unfolded in Romania.

| # | Institutional affiliation | Research area | Financial period |
|---|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1 | National Institute of Materials Physics, Bucharest | environment | 2009-2014 |
| 2 | Carol Davilla University, Bucharest | health | 2009-2014 |
| 3 | University Of Bucharest | social sciences | 2009-2014 |

8.3.2 Research collaborations

All the participants declared that they took active part in previous EU financed international projects within their research fields, mostly within the framework of the EU's Seventh Framework Programme FP7 and some bilateral collaborations. For example, the National Institute of Materials Physics proved to be very active in their field of research applied physics and in the past they took part in about a dozen international projects, including sponsored by EURATOM.

With regards to the present Norwegian and Icelandic project partners, although **none of the participants worked with them in the past**, they **all have met in person before**. This was during various scientific events, mostly conferences, or they were acquaintances and the idea of joining forces in implementing a common project came when the call for proposals was announced.

In terms of **Future collaboration with Norwegian / Icelandic research partners**, the participants were very enthusiastic about the idea of continuing their collaboration. They mentioned that the relationships were positive both at institutional and personal levels and they would be glad to move further with it. However, the existence of the factors hindering the smooth project implementation as discussed further in this report reportedly stopped them from developing concrete proposals and prepare concrete application dossiers.

8.3.3 Projects results

All of the participants reported that they achieved all of the results and outcomes they planned and expressed in the application proposal, this despite the fact that **their original budgets were re-adjusted in minus during assessment of their project applications**. Reportedly, all of the participants received less money than applied for, but were nonetheless obliged to obtain the same results as stated

in their proposals. Seemingly, all the project applications were assessed against an assessment grid and scored up to 100 points. After this, all of the projects that qualified for financing received a letter from the Programme Operator urging them to readjust the budget in minus with an indicated amount of money reportedly by up to hundreds of thousands of Euros, but to maintain the same results and indicators. Only after the acceptance of this new budget, the financing contracts were signed.

We got the budget cut but they asked for the same indicators and results. This is outrageous. But what can you do, if you want to get the project.

Despite the financial readjustments, some respondents declared they managed to exceed the planned indicators, mainly in terms of number and scientific weight of publications resulting from the project activities. Additionally, one of the participants was very proud that they managed to obtain a very significant technological result: a heavy improvement in the micro-technology of the solar power cells, result that was reportedly acclaimed in a variety of scientific fora and events⁸.

The project promoters who made equipment acquisitions from the project funds, confirmed that the equipment is still in use for particular scientific researches. They also confirmed they will continue to publish scientific articles based on the results of the research.

Two participants mentioned that one of the projects indicators proved troublesome: the number of PhD students who achieved their doctoral degrees based on the project. The main reported cause was the fact that since the duration of PhD studies in Romania is by law at least 36 months, they cannot force the students to finish their studies earlier to comply with the project calendar.

8.3.4 Quality of the Partnerships

All the participants praised their respective Norwegian or Icelandic partners. The only comments they had were of very positive nature and the quality of collaboration was named as the key reason the focus group participants would like to replicate this experience in other future bilateral projects. One aspect raised by all participants was praising the communication with the foreign partners, both in terms of substance and promptness.

They were very, very open, very positive people. They kept to their words, were very trustworthy. If they said they do something, they did. They did not hide anything from us and were very helpful.

One participant mentioned that the Norwegian partners even used their own money in order to secure the successful implementation of the project after the initial budget was reduced. Reportedly, on occasion the Norwegian partners covered some costs of activities from their own funds in order to observe the approved calendar. The delay to project payments was reportedly caused by the large delay in transferring the annual funds from the Programme Operator to the Project Promoter. One participant cited his case where the delay reached 11 eleven months. Consequently, because the funds

⁸ After the focus group has taken place, the national expert conducting the meeting corroborated this statement by identifying the awards the project's result achieved at international exhibitions held in Romania: 1 Diploma of Excellence PROINVENT for the "Hybrid Solar Cell" awarded by the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca at the PRO INVENT International Exhibition of Inventions, XIV edition, 2016, Cluj-Napoca, Romania; 2 Golden medal for "Hibrid Solar Cell" at EUROINVENT 2016, Iasi, Romania; 3 Diploma of Excellence from Corneliu Group for Printer for Successive Deposition of Ultra-Thin Layers With Different Physico-Chemical Properties", EuroInvent 2017, Iasi, Romania; 4 Silver medal for "PRINTER for successive deposition of ultra-thin films with different physical-chemical properties", EUROINVENT 2017, Iasi, Romania.

were transferred only in November, they had to cover the project activities for the whole year from their own funds and funds from their partners.

Two discussants agreed that collaborating with foreign partners was easier and more fruitful than with the domestic partners. As possible reasons they mentioned: competition for national financing among domestic institutions, rivalry at personal levels, financial troubles. The only positive element of working with domestic partners mentioned by the participants was that they believed the Romanians to be more accustomed with the bureaucracy of the state authorities and therefore being more responsive in their reporting tasks:

Our Norwegian partners were kind of disconcerted when they found out how a report should look like, what they should write in a financial report and what are all of the annexes needed!

All participants complained about the losses incurred because of the exchange rate differences between the rates at the time of signing the contract and the rates in which they had to operate and make payments with. There was mention that the budget allocated for the projects will not be enough to compensate the work:

I believe in the end we will lose money instead of gaining with this project.

Asked about what to improve in future projects in order to increase the benefits and the quality of the partnership, the participants' ideas included:

- **improving the budget to results ratio**: In order to increase the chances of success, the projects should not be unattainably ambitious in their planned outcomes, but more realistic. Potential over-promising of results was attributed to the enthusiasm of the Project Promoters, who instead should restrain from promising in the application results they may not be able to achieve latter or which they will not be able to finance in full and in due time;
- **defining a clearer role split between partners in terms of actions** who is doing what and when and allocated **budget**;
- **choosing no more than 3 partners in total**: a participant reported having 6 partners and declared that it was very difficult to manage all aspects of the project in such a large consortium.

When asked if any of the Norwegian project partners helped their Romanian counterparts to access international research networks, one participant mentioned that they were invited to present the project at an international conference because the Norwegian partner recommended them to the organisers. The same participant mentioned also that they received an invitation to publish an article in a very high ranking scientific magazine because the same Norwegian partner recommended them.

It was really surprising for all of our team members how our partner decided to open us a door to such a high level audience.

For the other participants the project did not "open new doors" but they were very pleased to discover the increase in visibility among peers and within the scientific community. They stressed the importance of this gained visibility both at individual level as scientists and also on the institutional level for their organisations.

With regards to knowledge-transfer, the participants mentioned several aspects:

- **Financial management:** some Romanian project team members were supported in more efficient management of financial aspects of the project:

The Norwegians were able to obtain better prices for equipment and other purchases. They managed to purchase some equipment at half the price of the initial offer that we received.

- **Project management**, mainly activities management and solutions identification:

I learned a lot from the Norwegians; unfortunately I cannot put this into practice in our system. in reference to the Romanian overly bureaucratic system

- **Scientific know-how:**

This was the basis of our whole collaboration, we continuously exchanged ideas and solutions for all the research activities we had to perform.

They organised a lot of training and knowledge exchange with our team members, this was one of the first activities within the project.

When asked about the reverse know-how transfer and what the foreign partners learned from the Romanians, one participant immediately replied laughing: "*How to do lots and lots of papers!*" However one participant mentioned that the Norwegian partners learned few things from the Romanians, mainly what she defined as: *optimizations and iterations of certain technological processes.*

Regarding the main factors that helped and, conversely, limited knowledge sharing between project partners, the participants mentioned what follows:

| Helping factors | Limiting factors |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete trust among partners: <i>"The trust is gained very hardly and lost very easily"</i> • prior relationship at personal level • honest communication among partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mentality barriers, referring mainly to the attitude toward the bureaucracy of the PO. Romanian project promoters were more understandable and tolerant with this, while for the Norwegians this was something new and hard to comprehend and to cope with. • different systems of thinking, with the Norwegian partners being seen as "<i>more relaxed</i>". |

8.3.5 Research management support

The participants declared they **got no support from their institutions** when preparing the application dossiers, and they had to organise and develop the whole project design and preparation by themselves. One participant, however, mentioned that his institution "*supported [him] full-heartedly, at least in spirit*" but they did not have either personnel or departments specialised in grants application preparation.

On the other hand, although no administrative or material support was given at the preparation phase, all participants agreed that after the grant was won, they received support from their institutions in various ways:

- **logistical**: they were offered space and equipment to be used for the project activities;
- **human resources** to cover all the needs of the project in terms of supplementary or auxiliary personnel or even when the need to replace certain key experts arose ;
- **financial**: when the grant money came with large delays, their institution covered the cost of certain activities and even transfer payments toward the other partners

The only way that our institutions could have helped us more was by managing to convince the Ministry of Research and Innovation to ease the programme procedures!

All the participants were well aware about the way the **Norwegian partners were supported by their institutions** in all the phases of the project preparation and implementation and declared they **learned** as well from this experience.

8.3.6 Suggestions for future programming improvement

Participants were invited to offer comments on the factors that they believed **helped them** the most in **enhancing their research capacity**. They mentioned: quality of the implementation team; their enthusiasm reportedly they worked without pay for months and sometimes in difficult conditions: one project targeted the prisoners in the Romanian jails and the researchers had to spend a large amount of time inside the prisons talking with convicts for hours at a time ; scientific excellence; empathy and emotional intelligence in order to increase the social component of the research and "*contribution to the progress of humanity as a whole*"; and a positive attitude in order to overcome all the emerging obstacles.

With regards to the factors **hindering** the research capacity they all immediately agree about a single one: Romanian bureaucracy which made the implementation of their project very, very difficult. Participants even stated that "[they] *will do anything and accept any FMO terms just to avoid to deal with the same bureaucracy one more time*".

Few examples of the bureaucracy burden they had to face while implementing these projects were given:

I can send you hundreds of emails where they ask me to do one thing from one day to another or within only few hours;

Not even the Ministry knows the answer to the questions and issue they raised toward us. We checked that.

The money due in the contract never came on time. The annual report approval was always very late and the money for the current year only arrived in April, May;

by this we had to either cover the activities from our own money or to delay activities until we will be paid.

Our annual scientific report for 2014 was approved in November 2015! We registered a delay of 11 eleven months so we had to cover the activities for the whole year from our own money.

Why do we have to send a printed copy of the report we sent by email? This way we had to scan hundreds of documents for each report.

One of the participants reported that when they had to replace a team member with another person, they were asked by the ANCSI National Authority for Scientific Research and Innovation – a previous name of the MRI before 2016 when it was a body in the subordination of the Ministry of Education to prove the reason of this replacement by presenting the medical records of the person to be replaced. This is, however, illegal and infringes the law requiring confidentiality of the medical records. In the end the replacement was approved without this dossier, but reportedly only after a lengthy negotiation.

With regards to any **potential changes to the set-up of the research programme in the future** that would strengthen the overall research capacity in Romania, the following suggestions were made:

- to **introduce changes to the priorities of the programme**. The respondents believed the programme should encourage and finance projects who can produce outcomes immediately transferable as practical results, such as the project dealing with solar power cells or the one resulting in the development of some new medical investigation devices. As a negative example in this respect a project was mentioned that investigated the oral culture of the Roma population where reportedly no tangible results were acknowledged even by the project participants themselves;
- to **convince or require the Programme Operator to apply the EU legislation** in the management of the programme and by this, to avoid the bureaucracy required by the Romanian implementation bodies. Reportedly, there were projects implemented in Romania where the EU legislation was enforced and projects were executed with far less bureaucratic burden than when relying on domestic Romanian rules. This refers mainly at the accountancy rules and reporting duties required:

Even the DG Regio Commissioner, Corina Cretu, pressed the Romanian authorities to make the projects implementation easier but to no avail so far!

- to **tackle the problem of foreign currency exchange rates**, so that money is not lost during project implementation.

Why can't we receive the allocated funds transferred to us directly in Euro and not in Romanian currency so that we had to converse them again at least once?

- to **make the programme documentation accessible**, and all the **rules to be made clear from the beginning of the Call For Proposals launch**, as opposed to changing them during the implementation period. It was suggested that the FMO should develop an internal mechanism to verify that the national PO will not change the initially announced rules, procedures and reporting rules.

All the information should be made clear from the beginning; compared with what was written in the Participants Guide what we have now is totally different. Not to mention that the Romanian translation sometimes contradicts the English version and everybody was confused about it.

- **to increase the funding available**: the participants considered the first phase of the project as a feasibility test, and given the very limited domestic funding would welcome more financial support:

When you finance only four domains and from each domain you finance only three projects, this is most probably a test to see how the things are going. If they are happy, they should multiply the funds available.

The scientific research is extremely poorly financed in Romania so any kind of financing we can get is a plus, is a positive factor. If only the FMO can afford it, they should increase the funds made available for the next programming period.

When they asked whether they think that **participating in a Norway Grants-supported project can help them in any way to successfully apply for EU research funding**, all participant agreed that this is a **positive factor** for winning further applications. One of the respondents believed that their chances of winning a research grant is hindered by the fact that their institution is based in Romania and this is seen as a negative point in the project application assessment process for EU research funding:

We do not have the wing span and the history of the Western counterpart research institutions; our only chance in an EU programme is to enter as partners, not as lead applicant. These [Norway Grants-supported] projects were for us like a starting point in this race for research financing from various grants and we will focus on applying for EU grants now.

The discussion ended with the participants expressing gratitude towards the FMO and the financing countries and stating that their only hope is that the programme will continue with even more funds available and more projects will get financed.



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