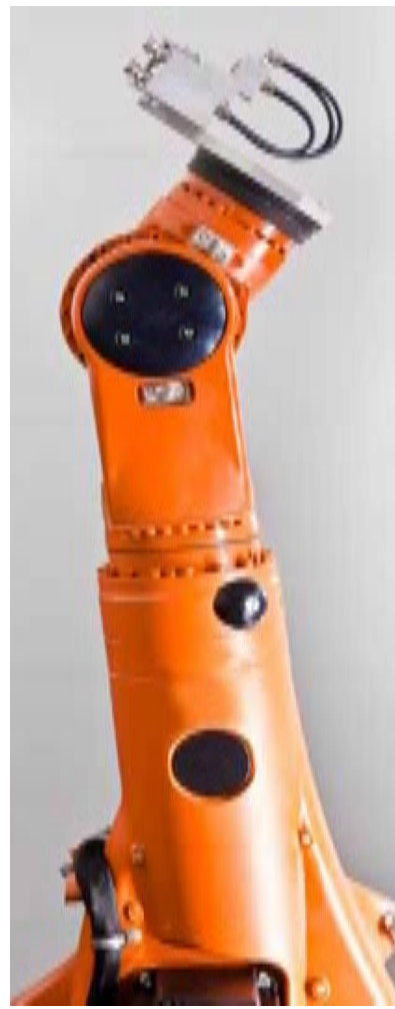


Evaluation of the sector academic research under the EEA/Norway Grants



EEA/Norway Grants

Final Report

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COWI

Evaluation team:

Peter G. Madsen (team leader), Jakob D. Christensen, Lis Puggaard, Tine Gundersen, Helle Engelund, Dr Jan Kozłowski, Dr Annamária Inzelt, Dr Adolf Filacek

Responsibility for the contents and presentation of findings and recommendations rest with the evaluation team. The views and opinions expressed in the report do not necessarily correspond with those of the EFTA Financial Mechanism Office.

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Abbreviations

| | |
|-------------|---|
| CEE | Central and Eastern Europe |
| CP | Collaborative Project |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee |
| DG | Directorate-General |
| DG Research | General Directorate for Research & Innovation |
| DG Regio | General Directorate for Regional Development |
| EC | European Commission |
| EEA | European Economic Area |
| EFTA | European Free Trade Association |
| ERA | European Research Area |
| ERDF | European Regional Development Fund |
| FMO | Financial Mechanism Office |
| FP | Focal Point |
| FP6 | The sixth Framework Programme |
| FP7 | The seventh Framework Programme |
| IP | Integrated Project |
| IPC | Information Processing Centre |
| NoE | Network of Excellence |
| PNRF | Polish-Norwegian Research Fund |
| SME | Small and Medium Enterprises |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |

Executive Summary

The EEA/Norway Grants constitute the contribution of Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway to reducing economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area (EEA).

The purpose of this evaluation is to conduct a formative evaluation contributing to a learning process through assessments of **sustainability** of the research partnerships and funding, **relevance** of the EEA/Norway supported academic research projects with respect to national and regional priorities, including European research policy, **impact** of the grants, **effectiveness** in terms of perceived results and **efficiency** of the financial mechanisms. Furthermore the evaluation identifies **key lessons** that are relevant for current operations and future programming of the financial mechanisms. Finally, the evaluation assesses the **visibility** of the funds in the three countries identified.

The evaluation is based on assessments of the achievements of selected funds/programmes, individual partnership projects and subprojects under the funds and a comparison of the set-ups of the funds in the three largest Beneficiary States; Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. Between them these three countries received the majority of the EEA/Norway co-funding in this sector amounting to almost 80% of all supported academic research activities (funds and individual projects) within the Grant in the programming period 2004-2009.

The mandate for the evaluation has underlined the five evaluation criteria: **Relevance, Effectiveness, Impact, Efficiency, and Sustainability**, defined in accordance with OECD and the EU evaluation guidelines. Moreover, the visibility of the project Grants has also been evaluated.

Relevance

The EEA/Norway Grants are both a relevant and important source of funding as it complements the funding of EU (mainly FP6, FP7¹ and ERDF innovative actions²) and project wise is larger in size and often more flexible than other national funding opportunities. The project holders especially highlight the fact that the EEA/Norway Grants do not have rigid result targets. This is important because science is a process of looking for something new the project holders emphasize.

Compared to the funding of EU, the EEA/Norway Grants also have a stronger focus on strengthening bilateral relations. The Grants thus have a more flexible approach towards collaborations and partnerships compared with EU requirements to be multilateral and include SME and this makes it easier

¹ FP6 and FP7 are the former and current framework programmes DG Research and Innovation of the EU Commission.

² ERDF Innovative Actions are DG Regio of the EU Commissions main instrument addressing matters of regional development and innovation.

to apply the Grant in specific national settings. However, it is important to recognize that bilateral relationships are not relevant in every case and that it is important that the bilateral relationships – when relevant - result in valuable and internationally competitive research and not just in joint visits and common research. The relevance and the sustainability of the relationship seem to depend on the extent to which the research topic is relevant in both the beneficiary countries and the EFTA Country and the extent to which there is an evident synergy potential.

Supporting research structures and increasing the level of research stand out as strategic objectives when compared to other comparable (FP6, FP7, ERDF Innovative actions and Research Council of Norway) financial instruments. The Grants seem to provide an important alternative to other international sources of research financing and at the same time support the general objectives of comparable financial instruments. The EEA/Norway Grants attract much less attention internationally, mainly due to their size (the EEA/Norway Grants sector Academic Research compares to 0,1% of the total budget for FP7 of 53 billion EUR). Nevertheless, the grants fill a gap by being adaptable to country specific challenges and can be said to "bridge" the instruments of DG Research and the instruments of DG REGIO. The EEA/Norway Grants has like FP6 and FP7 a strong focus on supporting excellent research compared to the ERDF focus on increasing the technological level in less-developed regions. On the other hand is the geographic focus of the EEA/Norway Grant more similar to that of DG region, but in a less administratively rigid way. Hence the EEA/Norway Grants, unlike the FPs, allow for an excellence driven research approach specific problems related to socio economic challenges regions. In addition does the EEA/Norway Grants pose fewer formal requirements for regional development compared to the instruments of DG Region (ERDF Innovative Actions)?

In general, the thematic priorities of the EEA/Norway Grants also seem to fit the research agendas of the Beneficiaries while leaving sufficient room for national adaptations. Moreover, the funding to some extent fills gaps in the often vaguely defined national research policies in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic by for example providing support for "down stream" research project of a more innovative nature in periods where a national focus has been mainly on more basic research. By strengthening bilateral relations the Grant also enhances the international aspects of research, which is becoming increasingly important in a world of global competition also in the field of research.

However, the relevance of the Grants' objectives towards reductions in social and economical disparities seems to be vaguer when it comes to academic research. On the one hand there is a causal relation recognised by organisations such as national ministries of finance between support for research and a socioeconomic impact. On the hand does the relatively small size of funding not make it possible to prove causalities on a social level and the actual research projects generally find it difficult to relate their activities directly to the social and economical perspectives.

There are no significant differences between individual projects and the subprojects when it comes to relevance. However, the balance of evidence suggests that the individual projects are often slightly more aligned with national political agendas than the subprojects as a result of the selection process and in this connection the involvement of the relevant sector Ministry. The subprojects, on the other hand, are typically slightly more aligned with agendas of the national research establishment due to the involvement of relevant research stakeholders in the steering committee.

Impacts

Based on the data available and the scope of this evaluation, it can be concluded that a satisfactory number of deliverables (project outputs) have been achieved. This is in the form of research papers being produced, results be harvested and being picked up in other forums for example as input for national and regional policy making. As was the case in the mid term evaluation³, it is still too early to measure the impacts of the grants, and it is at the same time very difficult to measure the impacts of research activities.

In terms of project output, the general impression gained is, that the vast majority of the selected projects (individual projects as well as subprojects) meet their objectives and conduct their planned activities effectively. This view is commonly accepted by Focal Points, Intermediate Bodies, Fund Managers and the project promoters.

In connection with dissemination of the project results this has come quite natural to the project promoter, as all researchers have a high inclination to publicize their work. In addition the evaluation finds that the EEA/Norway Grants are relatively well known within research communities as a popular alternative to national and EU funding.

Significant future potential is expected regarding the expected number of patents, publications and PhD's for instance, although differences in the national priorities within the core indicators are obvious. The project promoters assess the research conducted to be of a high quality; however, project partners from the donor countries sometimes find it difficult in the end to see the relevance of the research from their perspective. Taking into account that support for bilateral relations is one of the main objectives of the grant - supporting well established partnerships is by the evaluation seen as the main challenge for the successful implementation of a future EEA/Norway Grant.

Efficiency

The extent of the Grants' efficiency can be questioned. At the one hand, the EEA/Norway Grants constitute a much appreciated funding possibility, and the activities of the FMO are seen to be of high administrative quality, thus ensuring good governance and the application of relevant sector knowledge in decision making. The size of funding granted allows substantive research to be conducted.

On the other hand, most stakeholders perceive administrative procedures (project selections, changes etc.) as lengthy and as negatively affecting project implementation. Moreover, a lack of compatibility with traditional accounting procedures for international financial instruments (like FP7) and occasional dual language requirements (due to national legislation) are reported to increase the administrative burden. Administrative procedures are said to cause delays and activities have sometimes had to be postponed in what is already considered a short implementation period. This is seemingly amplified by a relatively long procedure including several administrative bodies. In this connection representatives of the funds/programmes point out that it took too long time to settle details when every decision had to go through Focal Point. The specific funds/programmes would like to have a more direct contact with FMO.

³ Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), 2008, *Mid-term evaluation of the EEA Grants. Evaluation Report*

On the other hand, the flexibility of the block grants is positively rated by representatives of the funds as it allows them to make minor changes to the projects independently of the FMO.

In general, the subprojects seem to be less critical than the individual projects with respect to the administrative procedures. This is probably due to the fact that the subprojects are financially and professionally audited by the Funds, who are typically closer to the projects, and who have the permission to make decisions on minor changes of the subprojects and at the same time in some cases are known by the projects beforehand, because they administrate other national programmes. This is for example the case with the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA), who has been the major funding agency of basic science and scholarship in Hungary since 1986 and therefore is well-known by the researchers in Hungary.

In this context it should be mentioned that the assessed five funds in this evaluation differ in nature. Four of the five funds are national (one regional), three administrate other national programmes and three have relatively many years of experience of funding researchers and research projects. The funds that have many years of experience in the field and at the same time administrate other national programmes and have their own evaluation system (with scientific review) seem to be particularly professional and have less problems with the administrative set-up of EEA/Norway Grants.

Donor Country partners have specific challenges related to the existing administrative set-up. Accounting has to be conducted in what is, for them, an unfamiliar way, their stake in the project is often relatively small and the scope of the research project is sometimes ill-suited to the strategic objectives of the donor organization itself.

Sustainability

To the extent possible within the scope of this evaluation, it is concluded that sustainability of the EEA/Norway Grant supported activities are satisfactorily addressed through the institutionalization of results (ensuring that the project results in some way are rooted in the parent organisation), dissemination through publications and to some extent, as impact on/input to national policies on health, environment, spatial planning etc.

The sustainability of the research partnerships constitutes another important challenge. Where partnerships are based on existing, complementary, combined research which involves mutual contribution to research activities, the chance of future cooperation is high. In addition, particularly for the donor partner, the research activities have to be within their strategic scope and preferably of excellent quality in order to compensate for the administrative burdens which follow an agreement.

Visibility

The Grants are also well-known within the research communities, but it must be concluded that the knowledge of the general public about the activities of the EEA/Norway Grant funded research is limited. This seems natural, as research as such seldom gets widely publicized in the general public. The sector academic research can thus not be compared to other parts of the EEA/Norway grants such as the support for Cultural Heritage, which is met with significant public interest.

Recommendations

Based on this formative evaluation of the implementation of the EEA/Norway Grants for the academic research sector during the period 2004-2009, the following eight recommendations are proposed in order to improve future implementation of the EEA/Norway Grants:

1. A Grant with a relevant focus and perspective. The Grants fill a gap both nationally and internationally, by providing unique and prestigious funding possibilities which both add to and bridge existing financial instruments for research activities. Of specific relevance is the flexibility provided for in the scope of the Grants and the bilateral cooperation with institutions and researchers in other European countries. The scientific and political impact of the Grant also points to a sound rationale for the continued focus on the Academic Research sector in future EEA/Norway Grants.

2. Prioritise longer implementation periods. Ensuring adequate time (e.g. 2-3 years) for the actual implementation of the supported projects is likely to facilitate better designed and better executed research activities. In addition to increasing the overall programme periods, longer active implementation periods could be achieved with a focus on streamlining the initial start-up phase of the programming, shorter selection periods and an increase in the speed of administrative procedures related to applications for project changes.

3. Increase focused support for EEA/Norwegian partners. Project partners from the donor countries face specific challenges when operating in the unfamiliar administrative context of a Beneficiary Country. Focused support and guidance targeted at potential Donor Country partners would reduce the problems and help clarify expectations.

4. Reduction of conflict between research excellence and support for bilateral relations through better conceived partnerships: Stricter requirements regarding partnerships should be implemented in order to avoid partnerships being established merely to increase scores in the selection process. Partnerships should be justified either by earlier cooperation, overlap in strategic scope or through the mutual research excellence which will result from cooperation.

Moreover, it should be open to consideration that a larger percentage of the project budgets are dedicated to the donor countries. More substantial funding might increase the level of commitment of the Donor Country partner and also enhance their role when carrying out the project. Finally funding for project preparation ought to be considered, as it is expected to increase the possibilities for development of better project partnerships.

5. Increase knowledge of Norwegian research priorities and Norwegian fields of excellence among research stakeholders in Beneficiary Countries. Easy access to this kind of information would help target the right partners in the application process as well as direct the projects towards mutual objectives.

Even though priority areas are provided through the Operational Programmes and other agreements between donor and beneficiary, these are often quite broad and do not provide a specific overview of the specific Norwegian positions of research excellence. More knowledge is asked for by many project promoters. This kind of support could ideally be provided by the Norwegian Research Council (and probably already to some extent has been in the programming for coming period).

6. Reduction of the administrative strains on the FMO by increased delegation: Administrative matters should be delegated to the National Focal Points and/or Fund Managers as far as is reasonably possible. In doing so, the FMO should ensure that guidelines are as clear as possible and precisely indicate which decisions can be made at the discretion of the delegate.

7. Increase the use of a fund-based/programmatic approach. More delegation to programmes in the Beneficiary States will reduce the number of individual projects and is likely to increase ownership in the Beneficiary States and to reduce the administrative strains on the FMO through the establishment of different ways of working. Taking into account how national research policies in reality are created it ought to be considered how national sector ministries could be included in a more radical implementation of a fund or programme based approach.

8. Move towards international accounting and reporting standards. By introducing international accounting and reporting standards (i.e. similar to FP7) the administrative burden could be reduced. A further step would be to require all Grant activities to be conducted in English, including the activities which today are governed by the national legislation. This would enhance the international/bilateral aspect of the Grants and also ease cross-border cooperation. To a large extent, academia already uses English as a *lingua franca*, and it is likely that a total shift could take place fairly easy. The limits would be within national legislation.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of evaluation

The EEA/Norway Grants support to the Academic Research sector was given to 15 Beneficiary States in Central and Southern Europe during the period 2004-2009. The overall aim was to integrate its bilateral support into the research policy-making agendas in the Beneficiary States - i.e. to create ownership at the political level, to establish a successful mechanism of exploiting the benefits of international bilateral research activities, and thus to make the supported activities contribute to the mainstream academic research goals in the Beneficiary States. The support was partly provided through funds/programmes established in the Beneficiary States that selected sub-projects for funding, and partly through individual projects selected at EEA/Norway Grants level. Some of these projects – both sub-projects and individual projects - were carried out in partnership with researchers from the EFTA States, mainly in Norway.

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the achievements of the fund/programme managers in selecting, guiding and monitoring the right sub-projects. This requires an assessment of the achievements of the sub-projects regarding delivering outcomes and impacts as agreed with the funds/programmes, and an assessment of the achievements of individual partnership projects, with a focus on the success of strengthening bilateral relations between academic researchers in the Beneficiary States and in the EFTA States. This purpose should be seen in the light of the fact that the 2009-2014 support will be solely implemented through a programme approach. Hence, the purpose is not just to assess the achievements made during 2004-2009, but equally, to learn from the funds/programmes and projects in order to be able to implement improved programmes in the future. In this context, it is acknowledged that the implementation of the programmes will be enhanced by introducing measurable indicators of achievements, so the evaluation addresses the feasibility of identifying such indicators.

The evaluation is based on assessments of the achievements made by selected funds/programmes, individual partnership projects and subprojects in the three Beneficiary States that have received most co-funding to improve academic research, namely Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic

1.2 Academic research support under the EEA/Norway Grants

The EEA/Norway Grants represent the contribution of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway to reducing economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area (EEA) and to strengthening bilateral

relations with the 15 beneficiary states in Central and Southern Europe. A wide range of public authorities and institutions, organisations and businesses across Central and Southern Europe can apply for EEA/Norway Grants to initiate projects for the benefit of the public. Organisations from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway can participate as project partners. The EEA/Norway grants are described in more detail in Box 1-1.

Box 1-1 Background on EEA/Norway Grants

Building on previous grant schemes, the EEA and Norway Grants were established in connection with the historic enlargements of the EU and the EEA in 2004 and 2007, which required a substantial increase in contributions towards European cohesion. Most of the new Member States were considerably below the EU average level of social and economic development.

The EEA Grants are jointly funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, while the Norway Grants are funded solely by Norway, which provides 97% of the total funding. The 10 new Member States from 2004, and Bulgaria and Romania who joined the EU in 2007, are eligible for assistance from both grant schemes, while the EEA Grants also provide assistance to Spain, Portugal and Greece.

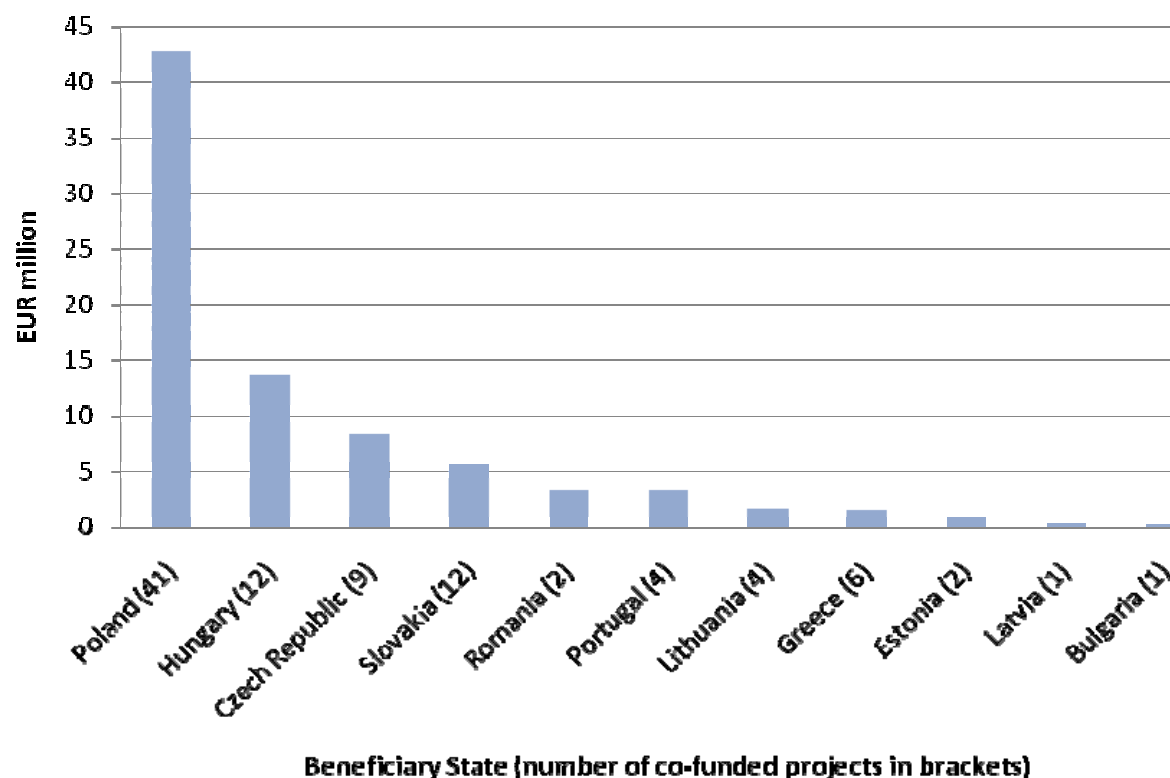
In the period 2004-2009, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway made available EUR 1.307 billion in support of the 15 Central and Southern European countries. These projects, programmes and funds will be implemented until 2011. For the funding period 2009-14, an additional EUR 1.789 billion will be made available.

Source: <http://www.eeagrants.org>

EEA Grants 2004-2009 were available for a number of priority sectors, namely protection of the environment; promotion of sustainable development; conservation of European cultural heritage; human resource development and health and childcare. Academic research was eligible for funding as far as it targeted one or more of these priority sectors (EEA, 2007). Norway Grants 2004-2009 were available for projects in the same sectors as under the EEA Financial Mechanism, but with priority for projects in the areas of: implementation of the Schengen acquis; the environment; regional policy and cross-border activities; and technical assistance relating to the implementation of *acquis communautaire* (Kingdom of Norway, 2004a).

Academic research projects have supported eleven Beneficiary States. Over EUR 82 million have been awarded to 94 projects (including individual projects, programmes and funds) in the area of academic research during the period 2004-2009. Figure 1-1 illustrates that Poland was the main recipient of research funding, receiving more than 50 percent of the total funding for academic research (EUR 42.8 million), followed by Hungary (EUR 13.7 million) and the Czech Republic (EUR 8.5 million).

Figure 1-1 EEA/Norway Grants 2004-2009 for academic research according to Beneficiary State

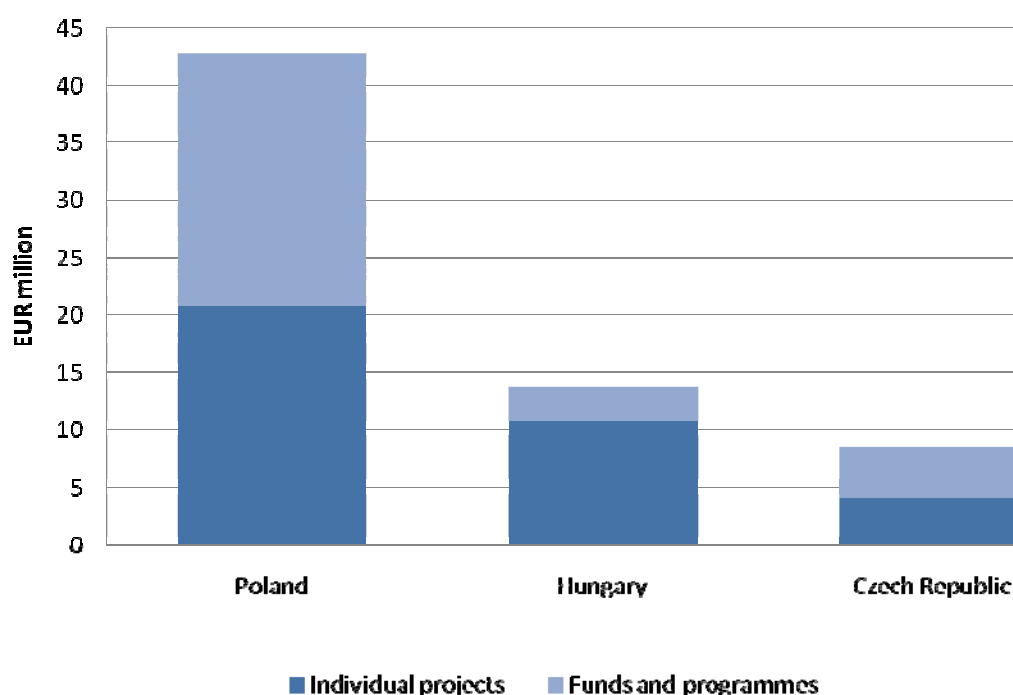


Source: <http://www.eeagrants.org/id/13>, November 2010.

The types of assistance cover individual projects, programmes and funds (block grants). The Kingdom of Norway (2004b) defines an *individual project* to be "... an economically indivisible series of work fulfilling a precise technical function which has clearly identifiable aims. An application for an individual project may include one or more sub-projects ..." A *programme* is a coordinated portfolio of separate projects aimed at achieving common spatially/sectorally/thematically defined objectives, while a *block grant* is a fund set up for a clearly defined purpose and may provide assistance to individuals, organisations or institutions.

The Grants awarded to individual projects on the one hand and programmes and funds on the other are illustrated in Figure 1-2 for Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

Figure 1-2 EEA/Norway Grants 2004-2009 for academic research in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, according to type of assistance



Source: <http://www.eeagrants.org/id/13>, November 2010

The five funds/programmes in the area of academic research in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic which have been awarded funding from the EEA/Norway Grants 2004-2009 are:

- The Polish - Norwegian Research Fund (EUR 21.4 million)
- Homing programme – research projects in all the priority fields, carried out by doctoral students returning to Poland in collaboration with the respective foreign research centre (EUR 0.7 million)
- Support for R&D co-operation for agricultural innovation and renewable energy sources in the Észak-Alföld Region, Hungary (EUR 1 million)
- The Furtherance of Internationally Acknowledged Young Researchers' Career, Hungary (EUR 2 million)
- Research Support Fund Czech Republic (EUR 4.4 million)

Close to 60 percent of all supported academic research projects are based on partnerships between entities in the Donor States and the Beneficiary States. Partnership projects include both individual projects and sub-projects selected by the funds/programmes. The large majority of projects concern the fields of environmental protection and sustainable development. Norwegian institutions are involved in all 55 partnership projects in the field of academic research, half of which take place in Poland. A project on migration research also involves an Icelandic partner in addition to the Norwegian partner institution.

Regarding the EEA/Norway Grants sector Academic Research it is a joined instrument by the EEA Grants jointly financed by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway and the Norway Grant financed by Norway. The EEA/Norway Grants are administered by the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) in Brus-

sels. The Focal Point in each of the Beneficiary States has the overall responsibility for the management of the EEA/Norwegian Financial Mechanism's activities in the Beneficiary States and serves as a contact point. Furthermore, it is responsible and accountable for the identification, planning, implementation and monitoring of projects as well as the use of funds under the EEA/Norwegian Financial Mechanism. The Focal Point may submit proposals for individual projects, programmes and specific forms of grant assistance.

During the [2009-2014](#) EEA/Norway Grants period, the co-funded activities will be implemented through a programme approach. The stated aim of which is to achieve a more efficient implementation and more focused support in order to ensure measurable results and higher impact for the funding.

As for the previous period, the overall objective was to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the EEA as well as to strengthen the relationship between the Beneficiary and Donor Countries (EEA 2010c Article 1 and EEA 2010d Article. 1). For a brief introduction to the new programme, see the box below:

Box 1-2 Programming periods 2009-2014

A new feature of the EEA Grants and Norway Grants 2009-14 is the introduction of a “programme approach”. Representing a move away from funding on a project-by-project basis to funding through multi-annual programmes, the aim is to ensure greater and more sustainable impact through more targeted support.

This new approach means that more responsibility will be delegated to the beneficiaries. The national Focal Points will continue to have overall responsibility for the implementation of the grant schemes, with the programme operators responsible for making the funding available to applicants through calls for proposals, appraising applications, selecting and monitoring projects. Bodies from the donor states will take on the role of partner in some of the programmes, contributing to the preparation and implementation of the programme, and facilitating partnerships at project level.

Source: <http://www.eeagrants.org/id/2403>, February 2011

Academic research “*may be eligible for funding in so far as it is targeted at one or more of the priority sectors*” (EC, 2010c, art 3.2), as was the case during the funding period 2004-2009 (EEA, 2007). Research is also included as a priority sector for Norway grants, e.g. under the priority sector Research and Scholarship.

Individual Memoranda of Understanding is in the process of being signed by each of the 15 Beneficiary States regarding implementation of the funding in each specific country as well as on the focus areas to be prioritized in that country.

The total amount of funding provided under the two grants are EUR 988.5 million and EUR 800 million from the EEA and Norway grants respectively, divided into five annual tranches (EEA, 2010 c and EEA 2010d).

As of 24 June 2011, agreements have been made with Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. From the total EUR 1.788 billion of the grants for the period

2009-2014, the use of EUR 1.15 billion – equalling 64 percent – had been agreed upon (EEA, 2011) as follows:

- EUR 400 million to programs on environmental protection and climate change
- EUR 201 million to programs on human and social development
- EUR 145.6 million to programs aimed at protecting cultural heritage
- EUR 114 million to programs in the field of justice and home affairs
- EUR 85.5 million is set aside for NGO funds
- EUR 80 million to research and scholarship programmes.

2 Evaluation methodology

2.1 Evaluation focus and criteria

According to the terms of reference, the primary aim of this evaluation is to contribute to a learning process and a peer review (see Annex 1). Thus, it is not a summative evaluation which is mainly undertaken for the purpose of accountability (control). Instead, the evaluation is a formative evaluation that pays attention to the delivery and the intervention system⁴.

The evaluation has applied the following five evaluation criteria, which are defined in accordance with the generally acknowledged OECD definition, which is also largely similar to the definition used in the EU evaluation guidelines (In line with the DAC Quality Standard for Development Evaluation (OECD (2010); EC (2004)):

Relevance: The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with Beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and Donors' policies.

The relevance of the research projects concerns how proficiently they address the specified priorities. Priorities are, in this context, specified vis-à-vis the objectives of the EEA/Norway Grants, national or European research strategies and needs of the stakeholders.

Effectiveness: The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.

Impact: Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

The impact and effectiveness criteria have been assessed under a common heading. It has been understood as the extent to which projects have been successful in achieving their stated objectives, and in achieving planned as well as unplanned impacts. Focus is on measuring the impacts and on how targets can be set for such impact indicators in a programme approach context.

Efficiency: A measure of how economic resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.

The efficiency of the research projects concerns how efficient the financial mechanism is in supporting the activities and outcomes and in ensuring that they are delivered in time and according to specifications; how efficient the different set-ups in the different countries are; and how efficient the cooperation between the different stakeholders is.

⁴ FMO, Evaluation Manual 2008-2012, EEA Grants and Norway Grants.

Sustainability: Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn.

The sustainability of the research projects concerns how the ownership of the outcomes and the impacts will be preserved over time. This is measured via the extent to which project results are or can be institutionalized or via the existence of dissemination of project achievements beyond the co-funding period, for example. Such measurements of sustainability are also central to the monitoring and evaluation of achievements made within a programme approach.

The interview guide applied in the evaluation can be found in Annex 3.

2.2 Evaluation methods

The evaluation has applied a number of different evaluation methods. Using different evaluation methods enables us to triangulate the different data sources and thereby increase the credibility of the conclusions. Triangulation means bringing together different types of data, or sometimes different ways of looking at data, to answer the research questions.

In this evaluation we have used **desk research, case studies, interviews and focus group interviews**. The case studies and most of the interviews have been conducted in connection with country visits.

In the beginning of the evaluation process a list of relevant stakeholder to be interviewed was made based on the selection criteria presented in Annex 4, and individual interviews and focus group interviews were scheduled. Due to a great amount of stakeholders, it has been a challenge to coordinate the interviews in accordance with the time schedule of the evaluation. Especially regarding the focus group interviews the coordination has been difficult due to the availability of the stakeholders. As a consequence it has only been possible to interview 16 sub-projects.

On the other hand we have interviewed more individual partnership projects than planned at the outset.

The table below shows the number of people who have participated in the two types of interviews. More of the institutions and projects have been represented by more than one person. Especially Focal Point and the funds/programmes, and the sub-projects in Poland.

Table 2.0 **Number of persons who have participated in the interviews**

| | Individual interview | | | Focus group interview | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------------|-----------|----------|
| | Chez Republic | Poland | Hungary | Chez Republic | Poland | Hungary |
| Focal Point | 7 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Relevant ministry | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Funds/Programmes | 1 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Individual Partnerships Projects | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Sub projects | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 10 | 5 |
| Projects partners | 1 | 4 | 1 ¹ | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 10 | 19 | 8 | 7 | 15 | 8 |

1: The interview has been made as a telephone interview

Desk research

Prior to the country visits and the telephone interviews the evaluation team assessed programme documents and key project documentations. The key project documentations include among other things the following documents concerning the funds/programmes: Application Form (HU0016, HU0069, PL0071, PL0072, CZ0046), Detailed Appraisal Report (HU0016, HU0069, PL0071, PL0072, CZ0046), Operational Programme (PL0071), Grant Recommendation Document (HU0069), Project Plan (HU0016), Annual Report (PL0071, CZ0046), Logical Matrix (PL0072), Detailed Monitoring Reports (HU0045, PL0071, PL0072, CZ0086)⁵ and various fact sheets concerning Key Facts and Core Indicators, Priority Sector and Sub sector name, Country Summaries plus reports with detailed information about the sub-projects. Furthermore we have consulted project web-sides.

Case studies

The evaluation of the sector Academic Research builds on in-depth assessments of 5 funds/programmes, 7 individual partnership projects and 16 subprojects. The distribution of the projects among the three countries is shown in the table below.

Table 2.1 The distribution of the selected projects and funds/programmes among Czech Republic, Poland and Hungarian.

| | Funds/programmes | Sub-projects | Individual partnership projects |
|----------------|------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| Czech Republic | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| Poland | 2 | 7 | 3 |
| Hungary | 2 | 5 | 2 |
| Total | 5 | 16 | 7 |

Case studies provide the opportunity for examining more thoroughly a specific theme, question or dilemma. Thereby, the case studies provide valuable insights and information that contribute substantially to the evaluation. However, at the same time we acknowledge that it is not straightforward to assess how a single case study fulfils the evaluation criteria. In particular, it is difficult to compare such fulfilment in between case studies.

It is our assessment that the 23 projects provide sufficient information for being able to learn from the project approach for the future programme approach, chosen by the EEA/Norway Grants for the next round of support to the Academic Research sector.

⁵ **Dr Szigeti A. and DR Teszler I.** (INBAS/CEU Consulting), (2011), *Detailed Monitoring Report, Part "A"* (HU0045). February.

Baszio, Sven, Paweł Kaczmarczyk, Kari Kveseth, Alexis-Michel Mugabushaka, and Gerlind Wallon (2009), *Evaluation of the Homing Programme of the Foundation for Polish Science (FNP)*, Expert Panel Report, January.
Bryl, Agnieszka (2009), *Detailed Monitoring Report*, The Polish-Norwegian Research Fund, August.
Uhrig, B. (2009), *Detailed Monitoring Report, Part "A"* (CZ0046). June.

Selection criteria

The aim was to select a sample of 5 individual partnership projects and 20 subprojects within the 5 funds/programmes – 4 from each funds/programmes. The following selection criteria have been applied for the selection of the individual partnership projects and the sub-projects:

Coverage of countries: Projects from each of the three countries.

Size of project: Preferably large projects (in terms of funding).

Priority sector: Each of the 5 individual partnership projects belongs to one of the five priority sectors. For the 20 subprojects a balanced coverage of the five priority areas was pursued.

Partnership projects: For the 5 individual partnership projects this criterion was given.

Project status: Projects that were completed or close to completion were given priority.

For each country a country study report has been prepared and validated by the national expert, the NFPs, intermediate bodies, the Norwegian embassies and the FMO. Table 2.2 summarizes which stakeholders who have participated in the validation of the case study reports.

Table 2.2 Stakeholders who have validated the country study reports

| | Czech Republic | Poland | Hungary |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------|---------|
| Focal Point | X | X | X |
| National expert | X | X | X |
| Intermediate body | X | | |
| Norwegian embassy | | X | |
| FMO | X | X | X |

Individual interviews

The individual interviews were conducted as structured interviews, with the aim to gain in-depth information on the evaluation questions. For this purpose, an interview guide was elaborated (see Annex 3).

The individual interviews have been undertaken at different levels in the three countries:

Focal Points in the three countries: Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary.

Ministries of Science and Higher Education in Poland and *Ministry of Natural Resources* in Hungary.

Project holders of the 6 of the 7 selected individual partnership projects (in the three countries).

Programme holders the selected 5 supported funds/programmes.

6 donor partners (from Norway) were interviewed regarding achievements made in partnership projects.

For participants in the individual interviews, see Annex 2.

Focus group interviews

One focus group discussion was organised in each of the three countries. The focus group interviews have included representatives of Focal Point, the selected funds/programmes and sub-projects, and in one case also an individual partnership project (CZ0092).

The list of institutions and persons consulted can be found in Annex 2. The process regarding the selection of the academic research projects is described in Annex 4.

2.3 Limitations of the methodology

The following methodological issues have influenced the evaluation process:

Positive bias: There is probably a positive bias in the data collected from the country-based stakeholders given their interest in continuing the collaboration with Norway.

Research is long-term: The very nature of research takes time which means that many of the results and impacts of the interventions will not have materialised at the time of the evaluation - but may do so in the medium to longer term.

Intervention logic: There is a lack of explicit intervention logic which could facilitate setting clear and logically linked objectives and corresponding performance indicators. A consequence of intended results and impacts not being clearly set out is that it is difficult to assess whether or not they have been achieved.

Causality: Changes to, for example, the level of knowledge-based economy in the Beneficiary Countries is typically the result of complex interactions. Hence, it is difficult to establish a precise causal link between a project intervention and its effect on a given measured outcome. In other words, the evaluation merely assesses whether or not the intervention has **contributed** to a change within research. This said the evaluation methodology looks beyond the funding period, for example, by asking programme and project participants to speculate about potential future results and impacts.

Effects without the interventions (counterfactual): What would have happened to the relevant research output, result, or impact indicators without the intervention is impossible to observe, and furthermore, in this context it is considered to be difficult to estimate. Hence, even with good measurements of outputs, results, or impacts - there are no clear-cut measurements as regards the effects of the intervention.

3 Relevance

3.1 Relevance in an international context

Two main aspects constitute the international context of the implementation of the EEA/Norway Grants within the Academic Research sector in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic: namely, the EU and Norway. The EU provides a framework for comparable funding possibilities for research activities in the Beneficiary Countries and Norway is the largest EFTA partner, constituting the main international partner on projects supported in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

When assessing the relevance of the EEA/Norway Grants, the main international benchmarks are thus constituted by the initiatives supported by the General Directorate for Research & Innovation (DG Research), the innovative actions of the General Directorate for Regional Development (DG Region) and, finally, the Research Council of Norway. In addition, the assessment can be set within the themes of collaboration, strategic objectives and thematic priorities.

Regarding collaboration, it is evident that different approaches exist between the different financial instruments. While the EEA/Norway Grants have bilateral partnerships as an important but not crucial element, the multilateral aspect, together with the inclusion of SME partners, is essential to the Framework Programmes (FP) of DG Research. In addition, the requirements regarding the actual form of partnerships defined by both DG Research and the Research Council of Norway are stricter than those of the EEA/Norway Grants. Comparing the EEA/Norway Grants with the ERDF innovative actions of DG Region, the approach of ERDF is more exclusively regional, tying eligibility of the partners to a geographical context rather than a research sector or excellence in research.

Regarding the aim of the collaboration, different views on the objectives of a partnership prevail. Whereas the main focus of the EEA/Norway Grants is to strengthen bilateral relations and knowledge development, FP6, FP7 and the Research Council of Norway aims at creating critical mass and counter fragmentation. A similar aim but with a regional flavour is presented by the ERDF - Innovative actions. The EEA/Norway Grants for Academic Research thus provide a slightly different approach to collaboration. This represents an approach which is more flexible than comparable financial instruments, but generally seems to be supportive of the aims set by other international stakeholders.

Regarding strategic objectives, differences in perspective have also been identified. The main schism is between the focus of EEA/Norway Grants and the Research Council of Norway on strengthening research systems and raising the level of research and focus of the FP6 and FP7, which addresses the

knowledge transfer process to a greater extent. Consequently, it is relatively easier to measure the output and effects of activities funded by the EEA/Norway Grants and the Research Council of Norway. This is also the case when measuring the societal impacts where FP6 and FP7 have wider objectives linked to the Lisbon Agenda, compared to the aim of the EEA/Norway Grant contributing to social cohesion. The wider objectives of the ERDF - Innovative actions are deemed to lie somewhere in between.

Regarding thematic priorities, it is found that the different financial instruments prioritise their initiatives with differing levels of detail. Some, like the ERDF Innovative actions, have much broader scope than the EEA/Norway Grants. Within four of the five priorities of the EEA/Norway Grants for 2004-2009, alignment with the priorities of FP6, FP7 and/or the Research Council of Norway exists. However, the EEA/Norway Grants are less specific in their focus than FP6, FP7 and the Research Council of Norway when it comes to the promotion of sustainable development.

Based on the data available for this study, it is concluded that the EEA/Norway Grants are relevant in an international context. Even though the EEA/Norway Grants are many times smaller in size than FP6, FP7, ERDF- innovative actions and the mechanisms of the Norwegian Research Council and the more flexible approach of the EEA/Norway Grants fits the overall international objectives well. The EEA/Norway Grants attract much less attention internationally but fill a gap by being adaptable to country specific challenges through support to research and innovation. They therefore bridge the instruments of DG Research & Innovation and the instruments of DG REGIO.

3.2 Relevance in a national context

Addressing the relevance of the EEA/Norway Grants in a national context is based on studies of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic as the three largest Beneficiaries. The assessments regarding relevance are founded on the views of stakeholders on different levels in the three countries.

Many differences exist between Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic in terms of the layout of their research communities. This also implies differences in their approach to research policies. However, all countries have undergone significant changes since the early 1990s, and have generally moved from a structure based on Academies of Sciences towards more plural research communities reflecting a mix of different research institutions. This has also resulted in a number of organisations (sector ministries, agencies, research councils etc.) able to create and pursue a research policy of their own. Therefore, only very broadly defined national research policies exist in the three countries. In all three countries the EEA/Norway Grants have therefore adapted well to the existing set-up. If the EEA/Norway Grants cannot be said to be integrated in the national research policies in theory, they are in practice, through the representation of experts in the selection process and/or through well implemented research projects which are highly relevant to individual research institutions. Said with other words the alignment with the national research strategy is typically ensured indirectly. The fact that national research policy is often also the matter of specific sector ministries is also addressed in for example the Czech Republic where relevant Ministries are provided a role in both project calls and selection. In the end it is clear, that the legal agreements between donor and beneficiary (operational programmes etc.) are seen as authoritative in the implementation of the

Grant. By complying with the agreements for example both the Polish and the Czech Focal Points states that they see their operation in full alignment with the objectives.

Regarding the main two objectives of the EEA/Norway Grants, namely strengthening bilateral partnerships and reducing economic and social disparities, relevance of the first is evident. An international perspective is very common in research, and it is easy to apply the idea of an international partnership - especially if the partnership is based on existing relations and/or contributes a degree of excellence within a given field of research. Furthermore it seems that in those cases where the research topics are relevant both to Poland/Hungary/Czech Republic on the one side and Norway on the other side and where there is also an evident synergy potential, it will often be relevant and often also profitable to establish bilateral relationships. Conversely, in those cases where the research topic primarily is relevant to the Poland/Hungarian/Czech Republic setting, it is not always relevant to establish bilateral relationships with partners in Norway.

Regarding the relevance of the reduction of the social and economic disparities, this is vaguer, according to the different stakeholders. It seems evident to the different interviewees that the EEA/Norway Grants will strengthen the research community in time and provide an input towards creating knowledge-based economies. For example was it commonly agreed at the Czech focus group interview, that a causal relation exists between support for research and subsequent socio economic development. However, the relatively small size of the EEA/Norway Grants compared to both national and EU research budgets underlines the fact that the Grant can only be seen to make a small contribution in this respect. The reduction of economic and social disparities can be seen more clearly in specific initiatives such as the Polish Homing Program, which supports the process of the return of Polish researchers to Poland. Even so the social scope of the EEA/Norway grants is a bit unclear, not least for the individual project. Hence the Polish Norwegian Research Fund mentions during their interview that *"...it was difficult for many researchers to understand the concept of social cohesion - as a selection criteria"*. It is our opinion that this might remain so - and that a social perspective of research funding can only be applied on an overall societal level.

In relation to the five priorities of the Grants, these have enabled an adequate level of flexibility in the implementation of the Grants. The priorities have been weighed differently by the three countries but during the interviews no direct requests have been made for changes (besides the specifications already made for the period 2009-2014). Representatives of the project holders emphasize the importance of supporting basic research and maintaining focus on broader fields and not least the flexibility of the programme. The argument is that science is a process of looking for something new, and therefore it is not useful to have too rigid result targets from the start.

Based on the interviews conducted, it seems to be broadly accepted that the EEA/Norway Grants constitute a small but important contribution to the research communities in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. The Grants fill a gap by providing funding possibilities for research projects of a size which is often larger than the national funds and with international perspectives but without the tight restrictions of the EU financing (mainly FP 6& FP7). Unlike EU funds, the EEA/Norway grants also accept relatively small projects, block grants and non-commercial projects. To the question of how chosen areas – the priority sectors - have created added value– e.g. by filling gaps and/or addressing the most important problems, a representative of one of the subprojects in Hungarian answered

“The EEA/Norway Grants were considered as a golden opportunity to receive research funding. It was larger in size than feasible from Hungarian funds and it was more flexible and allowed creativity”.

The partnership aspects are seen as the most relevant overall objective of the Grants, but also as an aspect which often provide challenges. Partnerships are not always established based on the incentive for joint research, but rather as an element forced into the project to ensure points in the initial selection process or because it is obligatory (the matter is described more thoroughly below). This eventually results in a conflict between the drive towards creating excellent research and supporting the bilateral relation. The problem seems to be further exacerbated by the fact that the project promoters are often not sufficiently acquainted with the overall research priorities of Norway - and therefore not able to take into account relevant strategic research priorities of potential project partners. It is therefore very important to ensure that the bilateral relationships – when relevant - result in valuable and internationally competitive research and not just in joint visits and common research.

There are no significant differences between individual projects and the subprojects when it comes to relevance. However, the balance of evidence suggests that the individual projects are often slightly more aligned with national political (research) agendas than the subprojects as a result of the selection process and in this connection the involvement of the relevant sector Ministry. The subprojects, on the other hand, are typically slightly more aligned with agendas of the national research establishment due to the involvement of relevant research stakeholders in the steering committee.

4 Effectiveness

By addressing the matter of impact and effectiveness, the evaluation has studied the actual outcome and results of EEA/Norway Grant funded activities. The findings here are, as in the rest of the evaluation, based on a number of interviews with selected stakeholders. Therefore, these comprise the foundation for the assessment below by the evaluator regarding the impacts and effectiveness of the Grants.

In addition, it must be noted that impacts in the current study are broadly defined as the immediate outcome, short term results and, where identified, impacts at societal level.

4.1 Project deliverables

According to the fund managers interviewed, focal points and intermediate bodies, all funded projects meet their immediate objectives and conduct their activities as planned. A few examples exist of projects having to alter or halt their activities, but eventual challenges seem connected to the partnership aspect of the projects.

During the project and sub-project interviews, it seems that the projects do indeed meet their objectives. According to the researchers, important research of a high quality is conducted. When looking at the core indicators for the Academic Research sector reported to the FMO in connection with the application (ex ante), significant potential in terms of patents submitted, PhDs supported and research published seems evident. Differences are clear between Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic as to whether the deliverables are focused within patents, PhD's or publications and whether the deliverables have been provided by individual projects or sub-projects. This is probably due to the flexible approach by the EEA/Norway Grants making room for national priorities and specific foci.

The significance of the results of the projects in a national context is further supported by the interviews conducted with the Norwegian project partners. However, these interviews also underline the challenges which follow the task of making the partnerships relevant and mutual. In several cases the project deliverables are thus seen as being of less relevance to the donor partner.

4.2 Dissemination/visibility

Ensuring that research results are made public is in itself a key driver of the research community. Dissemination in relation to research projects are therefore often conducted in this way. Moreover, seminars, workshops and conferences are often part of the academic research process.

Dissemination activities are mainly directed towards the research community itself. Outreach to gain broader publicity has been sought, in some cases, through an active approach to the media. Other means of mass communication are used, such as publication through websites, but according to some projects, this strategy has had minimal success, as the sites have only been visited to a limited degree.

This creates the impression that dissemination is conducted adequately, as the drive to get new knowledge accredited in the research community is substantial. The Grants are therefore also well-known within the research communities. Even so, it must be concluded that the knowledge of the general public regarding the activities of the EEA/Norway Grant funded research is limited. This stands in contrast to the EEA/Norway Grants support for Cultural Heritage, for example - which is met with significant public interest.

We have the impression that the regulation regarding the visibility of the EEA/Norway Grants is followed by the recipients of the Grants.

5 Impact

As mentioned above, it can be difficult to measure the actual impact of research activities within a short time period. Some focal points have tried to measure impact in relation to the reduction of social and economic disparities through the number of PhDs supported, but causality and actual socio-economic effects require further investigation in order to be validated.

The strengthening of bilateral relations is easier to prove, even though partnerships are one of the more challenging aspects of the EEA/Norway Grants. A number of the interviewed projects had fruitful collaborations with Norwegian partners. Other projects had substantial problems steering the partnerships onto a relevant and meaningful direction, a perspective which is supported by the interviews with the Norwegian projects' partners.

What must be considered as significant impacts of the EEA/Norway Grants are statements by a number of the interviewed projects describing how their work now influences policy making on regional -, national -, and international level. Examples of how the results of the research have influenced both health and environmental policies were presented during the interviews. Hence results of a research project in Poland on mental health is likely to be used in policy development of the Ministry of Health, a study on acidification of soil in the Czech Republic is likely to be used as an important point of reference in the work of the Czech Ministry of the Environment and maybe even by The Directorate-General for the Environment of the European Union, a study on marine spatial planning is probably going to feed into the planning of regional authorities etc.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding the long term impact of the research and the comparable size of national and EU research funding to the EEA/Norway Grants, the evaluators are left with the impression that a number of durable impacts are created. These are for example PhD's supported and patents applied for as indicated by the projects at project start up, as well as the fact that results and findings sometimes are picked up by policymakers.

6 Efficiency

The ability to implement the EEA/Norway Grants efficiently is the subject of this chapter. Efficiency has, in the current study, been addressed from both a Donor and Beneficiary perspective respectively. Donor efficiency is mainly understood as the performance of the FMO. Beneficiary efficiency is mainly addressed by analysing the set-up within Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

6.1 Donor efficiency

The FMO has an administrative role towards the stakeholders in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Norway. A close relation exists between the FMO and the Focal Points, particularly in the programming period. This continues throughout the programming period, as reporting progresses and requests for project changes surface together with a need for clarifications.

During the interviews a clear and unambiguous picture of the FMO is drawn. There is no doubt that the FMO provides a very thorough service of a high standard. Decisions are made based on very sound administrative procedures ensuring both good governance and adequate sector knowledge.

However, a similarly unambiguous opinion is clear regarding the long response time from the FMO. This is not only due to the FMO, but also to the often several layers of national authorities which exist between the FMO and the Beneficiary. The administrative turnaround time is identified by some interviewees as similar to that of the EU Commission, and by others as significantly longer. The level of frustration regarding the waiting time seems to be proportional to the "administrative distance" between the FMO and the interviewee. All the interviewed national Focal Points, which have the direct contact with the FMO, thus deem the administrative turnaround as a lesser challenges than fund managers and projects, which all have to communicate through the Focal Points.

In some cases, overly elaborate administrative procedures are mentioned as the presumed cause of delay. This is, for example, in relation to the use of up to four individual referees in project selection procedures. Others find that the administrative burden of the FMO is simply too large and solutions must be found which allow the Focal Points more room for interpretation of the regulatory framework where required, for example. Another approach would be to reduce the number of organisations which need direct contact with the FMO by implementing them through a national fund or programme.

Specific challenges are also tied up with the common administrative procedures of the Grants. These challenges also refer to efficiency of the Beneficiary, as these are usually part of the overall reporting to the FMO. Concerns were raised mainly regarding the frequency of reporting (four versus fewer

times a year); the need for reporting in both English and their own language; issues regarding exchange rates; and the level of pre-financing.

In general, the subprojects seem to be less critical than the individual projects with the administrative procedures. This is probably due to the fact that the subprojects are financially and professionally audited by the Funds, who are typically closer to the projects, and who have the permission to make decisions on minor changes of the subprojects and at the same time in some cases are known by the projects beforehand, because they administrate other national programmes. This is for example the case with the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA), who has been the major funding agency of basic science and scholarship in Hungary since 1986 and therefore is well-known by the researchers in Hungary.

In this context it should be mentioned that the assessed five funds in this evaluation differ in nature. Four of the five funds are national (one regional), three administrate other national programmes and three have relatively many years of experience of funding researchers and research projects. The funds that have many years of experience in the field and at the same time administrate other national programmes and have their own evaluation system (with scientific review) seem to be particularly professional and have less problems with the administrative set-up of EEA/Norway Grants.

Specific issues regarding the partners' administrative procedures were also raised several times. This was explicitly underlined during the interviews with the Donor partners. Issues regarding efficiency in relation to the Donor partners are described below, under Beneficiary efficiency.

6.2 Beneficiary efficiency

There is no doubt among the Polish, Hungarian and Czech stakeholders that the EEA/Norway Grants provide a unique and much appreciated research funding possibility. As regards the scope of the EEA/Norway Grants, they fit well into the research context of the three countries, as mentioned earlier. This is underlined by the satisfaction regarding the size of the individual funding portions allocated to the projects. The Grants thus allow for relevant research to be conducted. However, even though the size of the funding portions is adequate, longer implementation time for both programmes and projects are requested. Longer, effective programme periods would allow for more stability in the implementation as both the organisational set-up would be in place and the requirements of the financial instruments would be well known among the recipients. In addition, some research activities simply require a certain time span to be able to conduct valid research (medical trials etc.).

The actual set-up in relation to the application process is described as being clear and with possibilities for adequate guidance. However, the duration of the selection process often seems too lengthy. Differences exist between the fund set-up and the individual project set-up. The increased level of delegation, which is a consequence of establishing the national funds or programmes, is generally seen as supporting a faster administrative turnaround. The need to slim down the administrative procedures in the national fund/programme set-ups has also been identified.

The administrative mechanisms in the implementation of the EEA/Norway Grants are a burden, as in all similar funding set-ups. More specifically, for the EEA/Norway Grants, the problematic issue is

quarterly reporting, which programme promoters in all three countries deem to be cumbersome. That a number of projects have to report in both their native language and in English presents a further challenge.

The financial aspects of the reporting procedure also provide particular challenges. The provision of original receipts and eligibility of costs based on the actual expenses is unlike the traditional reporting format of research projects. Usually, funding for research projects is provided based on fixed rates and overheads. Reporting based on original formulas is mentioned as being exceedingly troublesome to both project promoters and intermediate bodies. Alternative reporting procedures are currently being considered by the Czech Ministry of Finance. One benefit of quarterly reporting is the possibility for the projects to request payments four times a year. This increases the project's cash flow. This is clearly a benefit, as cash flow is in itself mentioned as a troubling issue. The EEA/Norway Grants, in some cases, constitute a significant size of the total funding of a smaller research organization and adequate cash flow must sometimes be ensured through bank credit. This results in additional non-reimbursable cost for payment of bank interest. The maximum level of pre-financing for the individual projects is thus a clear benefit, reducing cash flow problems and uncertainty in relation to the administrative element of the projects. A further aspect which generates uncertainty is exchange rates. The grants are being paid in Euro and the project expenses are usually in their national currency. Fluctuations in exchange rates create uncertainty in relation to actual size of the project budgets. The uncertainty surrounding exchange rates has been resolved in Hungary by the State covering any eventual project losses on that account.

In relation to project partnerships, these provide a specific number of challenges from the point of view of efficiency. The challenges of Polish, Hungarian and Czech project promoters are met in a familiar administrative set-up. The language and, not least, the administrative traditions are thus well known. To a Norwegian partner, the reporting format of a central European country constitutes a completely new way of doing project administration. In addition, the partners' share of the budgets is relatively small. This asymmetry is further increased by the comparatively higher salary costs and overheads of Norwegian research institutions. Furthermore, the partner selection process often reduces the possibility of an efficient application of the input from an EFTA partner. This is because, aside from other factors, the time available to find the right partner is very limited and often driven by the mere request for an EFTA partner, instead of a match based on compatibility, research excellence and a wish to deepen existing relations. The problem is double sided: on the one hand, the project promoter sees fewer benefits in using project resources on the interaction with the partner, on the other the partner is less inclined to seek interaction.

7 Sustainability

In this chapter the sustainability of the effects and impacts of the supported research projects are assessed. The assessments regarding the sustainability of impacts and effects are based on the statements of the interviewed stakeholders, and are described with a main focus on durability of the results of the projects and of the partnerships. Views on these matters have mainly been given at the project level.

7.1 Sustainability of project outcome and results

A main concern regarding sustainability of knowledge produced is how such knowledge is sustained. Based in the interviews it seems that it this is achieved in a number of ways. Firstly, it seems to be a common procedure that the research conducted is institutionalised in some way or another by the organisations which have conducted it. The results are thus made part of the existing body of work of the organisation, or in some cases, provide a partial foundation for the development of a new branch, organisation or research centre. What makes this possible is a second important aspect, namely the strong inclination of researchers to publicise their work. Publications are, together with other means of dissemination, a central aspect in the sustainability of the supported research. Where possible, publications are generated based on the results of the projects.

Whether the sustainability of the outcome and results of the EEA/Norway Grant supported initiatives is possible in the long term is outside the scope of the current formative evaluation. Nevertheless, actual and possible impacts on a regional, national and even international policy level have become obvious during the evaluation. This is seen as an indication of long term impacts and thus as sustainability.

7.2 Sustainability of partnerships

Partnerships have been identified as a main aspect in relation to the overall objectives of the EEA/Norway Grants' funded activities within academic research. The partnerships also provide a significant stepping stone for future joint international engagements. Hence, the sustainability of the partnerships was also addressed during the interview with project promoters and Norwegian partners.

From the perspectives of the project promoters, sustainability of the partnerships is based on the level of relevance in the matching of competences and co-involvement in the process. The chance of continuance in the partnerships is high when competences are complementary and might even build

on existing joint research activities. Moreover, in partnerships where the bilateral partner provides an actual contribution to the research activities, sustainability is also envisaged.

This latter case is underlined by feedback from the Norwegian partners. Here, the relevance of the actual output to the Norwegian organizations plays a significant role. Research produced during a partnership must thus be within their strategic scope and preferably be of significant quality. Participation in EEA/Norway Grants' funded activities are usually seen as providing a significant level of administrative headaches when compared to the academic gains, and also add a serious commitment in terms of additional financing of their own. The financial aspects are also addressed during the interview with the Norwegian Research Council. The Council states that larger budget shares (e.g. 50-50) would increase the quality and relevance of the Norwegian project partners significantly.

8 Conclusions

8.1 Relevance

The EEA/Norway Grants have a slightly different approach towards collaboration, strategic objectives and thematic priorities when compared to similar funding possibilities. Generally, the EEA/Norway Grants have a more flexible approach towards collaboration and partnerships, which make it **easier to apply the Grant in a specific national context**. Hence, strengthening bilateral relations have a more significant role. Supporting the research structure and increasing the level of research stand out as strategic objectives, compared to other comparable financial instruments. Some differences can also be identified in relation to the level of detail on which the different financial instruments prioritises research themes. Some are more detailed and some less so, but they generally share the same strategic and thematic scopes to some extent. The EEA/Norway Grants thus **seem to provide an important alternative to other international sources of research financing and at the same time support the general objectives of comparable financial instruments**. Largely due their size, the EEA/Norway Grants attract much less attention internationally but they fill a gap by being adaptable to country-specific challenges through support to research and innovation. They can also be said to bridge the instruments of DG Research & Innovation and the instruments of DG REGIO.

From a national perspective, the EEA/Grants are **integrated through the fund/programmes or the individual project rather than through national research policies**. This is mainly due to the lack of detailed specific national research policies in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. In addition, the strengthening of bilateral relations from an overall perspective is also relevant to the research communities.

The relevance of the Grants' objectives towards reductions in social and economical disparities is, however, vaguer. In general, the thematic priorities of the EEA/Norway Grants also seem to fit into the research agenda of the Beneficiaries and leave sufficient room for national adaptations. The EEA/Norway Grants are **a small but important contribution to the research communities in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic and fill a gap by providing funding possibilities for research projects which are often larger than permitted for the national funds and with international perspectives, without the tight restrictions of the EU financing** (mainly FP 6&7).

8.2 Impact/effectiveness

Based on a limited selection of projects from Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic following is concluded regarding an assessment of the impact of the EEA/Norway Grants.

In terms of project output, **the vast majority of the selected projects meet their objectives and conduct their planned activities**. This view is commonly accepted by Focal Points, Intermediate Bodies, Fund Managers and the project promoters. According to the monitoring activities of the FMO regarding the core indicators of the academic research sector provided during the application phase, significant potential is expected regarding both the number of applied patents, supported PhD's and publications. Nevertheless, differences in the national priorities within the core indicators are obvious. Hence, research stakeholders in one country seem to prioritise strongly for example publications and focus less on turning out PhDs as a result of the EEA/Norway funding. Others tend to prioritise patent applications and so on. The research is deemed to be of a high quality by the project promoters themselves, but project partners from the donor countries do occasionally find it difficult to see the research relevance from their perspective.

Dissemination has been conducted adequately. This is not least due to that fact that researchers in general have a natural incentive to publicise their work. This also means that **the EEA/Norway Grants are well known within the research communities**, although this seems not to be the case for the general public.

Despite the lack of information regarding the long-term impact of the research and taking into account the relative size of the EEA/Norway Grants for academic research, we conclude that **a satisfactorily number of durable impacts are created**.

8.3 Efficiency

The EEA/Norway Grants are a much appreciated funding option, and the activities of the FMO are seen as being of high administrative quality, insuring good governance and applying relevant sector knowledge in decision making. The funding allocations are of a size which enables actual research to be conducted.

The **administrative procedures (project selections, changes etc.) are, however, seen by most stakeholders as being painstakingly long**. Ultimately, this has negative consequences for the project implementation, as activities often have to be postponed amidst an already short implementation period.

Uncertainty also exists in terms of the project budgets, particularly due to **fluctuations in exchange rates**. In addition are the **administrative burdens which are deemed to be cumbersome**, mainly due to their high frequency, lack of compatibility with traditional accounting procedures of international financial instruments and the occasional dual language requirements.

Donor country partners have specific challenges related to the existing administrative setup. Accounting has to be conducted in, for them, an unfamiliar manner, their stake in the project is often relatively small and the scope of the research project is sometimes ill-suited to strategic objectives of the Donor organization itself.

8.4 Sustainability

As far as it is possible within the scope of this evaluation, it is deemed that the **sustainability of the EEA/Norway Grant supported activities are satisfactorily addressed** through institutionalization of results, dissemination through publications and to some extent, as impact on policy.

The sustainability of the research partnerships constitutes another important challenge. Where partnerships are based on complementary, existing joint research activities and mutual contribution to the research activities, the chance of further future cooperation is high. In addition, for the donor partner in particular, the research activities have to be within their strategic scope and preferably be of a significant quality to compensate for the administrative burdens which follow an engagement.

8.5 Visibility

The Grants are also well-known within the research communities, but it must be concluded that **the knowledge of the general public regarding the activities of EEA/Norway Grant funded research is limited**. This stands in contrast to the EEA/Norway Grants support to Cultural Heritage – which is met with significant public interest.

9 Recommendations

Based on the formative evaluation of the implementation of the EEA/Norway Grants for the Academic Research sector during the period 2004-2009, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. A Grant with a relevant focus and perspective. The Grant fills a gap both nationally and internationally, by providing unique and prestigious funding possibilities which both add to and bridge existing financial instruments for research activities. Specific relevance is found in the combination of the flexibility regarding the scope of the Grant and the bilateral interaction. Both the scientific and political impact of the Grant also point to a sound rationale for the continuance of the current focus on the Academic Research sector in future EEA/Norway Grants.

Most of the projects that were interviewed either individually or during the focus groups indicated that a fair number of publications had resulted from their projects. In addition a number of projects claimed that their work had made significant contribution to certain field of research (covering among other studies in new medicines, spatial planning, environmental impacts etc.). Therefore there overall seems to be a good rationale in continuing the support for academic research in the beneficiary countries. Though the implementation can be optimized as the following recommendations indicate.

2. Prioritize longer implementation periods. Research projects often require implementation periods of three or more years in order to gather, validate and use data. Ensuring adequate time for the actual implementation of the supported projects will result in better designed and executed research activities. Aside from increasing the overall programme periods, longer active implementation periods could be achieved by focusing on streamlining the initial start-up phase of the programming, shortening selection periods and increasing the speed in administrative procedures in connection with application for project changes.

Depending on the actual activity it is deemed, that an implementation period for a research project would ideally be around 2-3 years. Exchange activities etc. could of course be conducted during a much shorter period.

3. Increase focused support for EEA/Norwegian partners. Project partners from the donor countries face specific challenges when operating in the unfamiliar administrative context of a Beneficiary Country. Focused support and guidance targeted at potential Donor Country partners would reduce the problems and help clarify expectations.

During the prior implementation period Norwegian Embassies have played some role in spreading knowledge of the Grants, in addition the Research Council of Norway and Innovation Norway have

participated on different aspects in relation to the programming and implementation of the EEA/Norway Grants sector Academic Research. The input provided and its relevance by these parties have not been addressed during this evaluation, but it seems obvious that one or more of these organisations are given the task of supporting providing support for donor country partners.

4. Reduction of conflict between research excellence and support for bilateral relations through better contemplated partnerships. Partnerships with organizations in the Donor Countries should not be initiated based on the mere fact that this gives points in a selection process. "Forced partnerships" result in low priorities, lack of ownership, significant asymmetry and ultimately, inefficient use of funds. While partnerships should still constitute a qualifying aspect in an application they should be justified either by previous cooperation, overlap in strategic scope or through the mutual research excellence generated by cooperation. The introduction of international peer review would support this focus immensely - further it could be included as a specific requirement in the application procedures, that partnerships are well argued for by providing evidence for strategic overlap, prior cooperation etc.

In addition, it could be considered whether a larger fixed percentage of the project budgets should be dedicated to the donor countries. More substantial funding might increase the level of seriousness of the Norwegian partner and encourage the project promoters to give the partner a more crucial role in the execution of the project. Norwegian stakeholders have argued for a 50-50 solution, this would though in our perspective drain the Grants original purpose. More specific guidelines would have to be based on more profound discussions with the beneficiary.

Finally funding provided for project preparation, ought to be considered. This would presumably increase the possibilities for development of better project partnerships and provide some kind of test case for a more elaborate partnership.

5. Increase knowledge of Norwegian research priorities and Norwegian fields of excellence among research stakeholders in Beneficiary Countries. Easy access to this kind of information would help target the right partners in the application process as well as move the projects towards mutual objectives.

Even though priority areas are provided through the Operational Programmes and other agreements between donor and beneficiary, these are often quite broad and do not provide a specific overview of the specific Norwegian positions of research excellence. More knowledge is asked for by many project promoters. This kind of support could ideally be provided by the Norwegian Research Council (and probably already some extend has been in the programming for coming period).

6. Reduction of the administrative strains on the FMO by increased delegation. Administrative requests take up much of the FMO resources, making it difficult to reply within a relatively short time span. Where possible, the FMO should strive to delegate as much competence in administrative matters as possible to the National Focal Points and/or Fund Managers. In doing so, the FMO should ensure that guidelines are as clear as possible and precisely indicate where decisions can be made at the discretion of the delegate.

7. Increase the use of a fund-based/programmatic approach. An increased use of a fund or program-based approach would reduce the number of individual projects. This is perceived to reduce

the administrative strain on the FMO. In establishing a fund or program-based approach, relevant national sector ministries ought to be included in the Board and take part in both the setting of priorities and the selection process.

Overall national research policy are in the countries studied not just a matter of one central policy maker. Besides Research Councils, agencies and the research performing organisations themselves do also sector ministries have a large role in providing a policy framework for research within their own sector (health, transport, environment etc.). During the last period sector ministries have played a significant role in relation to the individual projects - and to some extent in relation to steering committees etc. for funds. Including them in the future fund structure thus makes sense - even though the extend would have to vary from country to country - also taking into account that the landscape of research policy makers have been changing for a number of years, and probably will continue so.

8. Move towards international accounting and reporting standards. Today, individual national accounting regulations apply. By adopting international standards for research funding similar to FP 7, the administrative burdens could arguably be reduced by using fixed man-hour rates and overheads, for example. Internationalization of processes would also ease the strains on Donor Country partners, who would be more familiar with rules and regulations. A further step would be to require all grant activities to be conducted in English. The Grants are already overall operated in English, but national legislation provides possibilities or requirements to conduct some of the administrative activities in their native language.

By doing so, the international/bilateral aspect of the Grant would be underscored and ease cooperation across borders. Academia already uses English as a *lingua franca* to a great extent, and it is assumed that a total shift could be conducted fairly easy.

Annexes

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE

EVALUATION OF THE SECTOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH UNDER THE EEA/NORWAY GRANTS

1. Background

The EEA/Norway Grants⁶ represent the contribution of the three EEA/EFTA⁷ states towards reducing the social and economic disparities in the European Economic Area. Over a five year period (2004-2009) grant assistance is given to 15 beneficiary states in Central and Southern Europe. The grants also aim to strengthen the political, social and economic ties between the donor and the beneficiary states. Some funding will last until April 2011. In the current mechanism 7 per cent of the total grants have been committed to academic research.

This evaluation will focus on the sector Academic Research (AR) and provide a partial evaluation of three of the supported countries, namely Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic where the support to AR has been the most substantial.

There are a total of 94 Academic Research individual projects and funds, amounting to EUR 82 million in grants. Poland is the main recipient of research funding, receiving more than 50 percent of the total funding for research, followed by Hungary and the Czech Republic. The largest fund is the EUR 21.4 million Polish-Norwegian Research Fund. Three out of five supported research projects are based on bilateral partnerships with entities in the donor states. 38 per cent of all funding to academic research went to eight research funds, the largest being in the three selected countries for this evaluation, Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic.

2. Purpose of the Evaluation

This is primarily a formative evaluation, and it shall contribute to a learning process and a peer review. The primary users of the evaluation will be the three donors, relevant stakeholders in the beneficiary states and FMO.

The evaluation should be structured following **five evaluation criteria**:

- Assess the **sustainability** of the research partnerships and funding; in other words the extent to which the grants are likely to create impacts that will be preserved over time.

⁶ The EEA Financial Mechanism (2004-2009) and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism (2004-2009).

⁷ Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway

- Assess the **relevance** of the EEA/Norway supported academic research projects with respect to national and regional priorities, including European research policy.
- Via a limited selection of projects in the funds in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, assess the **impact** of the grants. What has been the planned and unplanned impact, including on the institutional capacity of the public research sector, and on the targeted areas/groups at sub-project level?
- An assessment of the **effectiveness** in terms of perceived results with respect to the objective of strengthening of partnerships in the beneficiary and donor states.
- Assess to what extent the financial mechanisms are **efficient**. What are the problems and constraints during the implementation of the projects, what are the problems focal points and fund operators face, is the set up of the funds efficient in relation to the results achieved?

Furthermore the evaluation shall identify **key lessons** that are relevant for current operations and future programming of the financial mechanisms. Finally, the evaluation should assess the **visibility** of the funds in the three countries identified.

3. Scope of Work

Three countries have been selected for in-depth studies of the implementation of the grant funds for academic research, namely Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. In these three countries, five funds are selected which cover a broad range of academic research activities.

Through this evaluation we want to:

- Learn from the experiences of establishing the research funds of relevance for future bilateral research programmes in particular those financed through EEA/Norway grants.
- Get improved understanding of national processes and strategies of research and research policy structures in the 3 countries (Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic)
- Improve the knowledge of how the research funds were implemented and managed at Beneficiary State (national) and fund level. The evaluation should cover how priorities were set at the fund and national level; management structures of the funds, and procedures for selection of research projects.
- Consultants should also consider how and to which extent these funds have been integrated (embedded) in national strategies for strengthening the research sectors in the Beneficiary State;
- The evaluation should point to synergies and complementarities with national and EU funding and strategies, including national targets and strategies of research to follow up the Lisbon declaration in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.
- Collect experiences from selected national policy and research institutions in the Beneficiary States and Donor States;
- Identify areas of improvement and recommendations for the establishment of future funds.

Finally, there are a number of partnership projects in this sector with organisations from the Donor States. We would like to know what the experiences and lessons learned have been. Has the partnership had an impact on the results achieved and the sustainability of the projects? Is there scope for

further cooperation? The Scope of work must include interviews also with a number of project partners, some of the researchers involved and the Norwegian Research Council.

This should be done through:

- Semi-structured interviews with relevant policy making institutions in the 3 countries
- An in-depth and on-the-ground review of 4 sub-projects which are significant in size and near or at completion, as selected by the Evaluators from each of the 5 funds in the 3 countries, or 20 projects;
- “Peer reviews” or Focus Groups in each of the 3 countries with the aim of stimulating learning experience. The meetings should be held in each of the countries, preferably also with cross-country participations, for instance representatives from: 3-5 projects which will be reviewed in each fund; the fund managers; representatives from the relevant national public bodies in each country (such as the Ministry of Education or a national science foundation); the Norwegian Research Council, eventually a representative from the European Commission.
- Semi-structured interviews with EU policy makers (European Commission) in research policy;
- Semi-structured interviews, either in person or by phone with a representative from each of the Donor States;
- FMO would participate as an observer
- The evaluators should consider a meeting in one of the 3 countries to present the results of the evaluation to the participants in the Focal Groups, National and Donor Stakeholders and the FMO.

4. Evaluation Team

The evaluation team will consist of 2-3 core members and other experts or support staff as needed. All members of the evaluation team are expected to have relevant academic qualifications and evaluation experience.

Consultants should have a working knowledge of national (at least in one of the three countries involved) and European research policy and trends, and previous knowledge of evaluation of national and international research programmes and policies.

The recent review of the Polish-Norwegian Research Fund should be among the background documents.

5. Budget and Deliverables

The maximum budget for this bid should be 80,000 Euros, which includes all travel, meetings and labour related to the evaluation in the three countries.

The **deliverables** in the consultancy consist of the following outputs:

- Travel to Brussels for a Kick-off meeting at the FMO/ Donor representative, within 1-2 weeks of contract notification;
- Draft work-plan and signing of contract – 1 week after kick-off meeting;
- Final work-plan – 1 week after receiving comments on draft work plan
- **Draft Final Report** – by **mid March 2011** for feedback from donors, relevant stakeholders in the three countries and FMO team. The feedback will include comments on structure, facts, content, and conclusions.
- **Final Evaluation Report** – 2 weeks after receiving comments from FMO.

All presentations and reports are to be submitted in electronic form in accordance with the deadlines set in the time-schedule to be specified. FMO retains the sole rights with respect to **distribution, dissemination and publication** of the deliverables.

Contact persons at the FMO:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Coordinator: | Ms Trine Eriksen |
| Responsible Sector Officer: | Ms Kristin Hauge |
| Support: | Ms Emily Harwit-Whewell |
| Head of Team: | Ms Inger Stoll |

Annex 2: List of institutions and persons consulted

| Czech Republic | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|----------------------------|-------------|
| Name of organisation | Name of project | Name of interviewee | Address | E-mail | Type and date of interview | |
| | | | | | Individual interview | Focus group |
| Focal point | | | | | | |
| Ministry of Finance, Centre for Foreign Assistance, International Relations Department | Not relevant | Eva Anderová | Letenská 15, 118 10 Prague 1, Czech Republic | eva.anderova@mfcz.cz | No | no |
| | | Dominika Caputová (Head of Monitoring Unit) | | Dominika.Caputova@mfcz.cz | 13-04-2011 | 15-04-2011 |
| | | Veronika Dudková (Project manager of CZ 0154) | | veronika.dudkova@mfcz.cz | 13-04-2011 | no |
| | | Šárka Kovačková (Head of Programming Unit) | | sarka.kovackova@mfcz.cz | 13-04-2011 | no |
| | | Ludmila Lefnerová (Programming Unit) | | ludmila.lefnerova@mfcz.cz | 13-04-2011 | no |
| | | Radana Dvořáková (Programming Unit) | | radana.dvorakova@mfcz.cz | 13-04-2011 | no |
| | | Martina Bečvářová (Monitoring Unit) | | martina.becvarova@mfcz.cz | 13-04-2011 | no |
| | | Renata Mánková, Monitoring Unit | | renata.mankova@mfcz.cz | 13-04-2011 | no |
| Funds | | | | | | |
| Národní vzdělávací fond, o.p.s. (National Training Fund, public beneficiary institution) | Research Support Fund Czech Republic (CZ0046) | Roman Vyhnánek (Fund Manager) | National Training Fund Opletalova 25, Praha 1, Czech Republic | vyhnanek@nvf.cz | 14-04-2011 | 15-04-2011 |

| Sub-projects within the funds | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------|--|--|------------|------------|
| Research Support Fund Czech Republic (CZ0046) | The survey of the implementation efficiency of sustainable development strategies and objectives in the land-use planning | Jiří Jedlička | Lisenska 33a 63600 Brno Czech Republic | jiri.jedlicka@cdv.cz | No | 15-04-2011 |
| | Assessment of historical immovables | Miroslav Sýkora | Solinova 7, 166 08 Prague 6, Czech Republic | miroslav.sykora@klok.cvut.cz | No | 15-04-2011 |
| | The Patterns and Values of Volunteering in the Czech and Norwegian Society | Hana Kušková | Štefánikova 21 150 00 Praha 5, Czech Republic | hana.kuskova@hest.cz | No | 15-04-2011 |
| | Research of new compounds as potential drugs against childhood cancers | Jan Hlaváč | tř. 17. listopadu 1192/12, 771 46 Olomouc, Czech Republic | hlavac@orgchem.upol.cz | No | 15-04-2011 |
| Individual partnership projects | | | | | | |
| Czech Geological Survey, CGS (Česká geologická služba, CGS) | The Assessment of Impact of the Gothenburg Protocol on Acidified and Eutrophied Soils and Waters (CZ0051) | Jakub Hruška | Czech Geological Survey Klarov 3 118 21 Prague Czech republic | secretar@geology.cz | 14-04-2011 | no |
| Department of Mycorrhizal Symbioses Institute of Botany, AS CR | Energy plantations technology on contaminated land (CZ0092) | Libor Mrnka | Lesní 322, Pruhonice 25243, Czech Republic | liborm@gmail.com and Libor.Mrnka@ibot.cas.cz | No | 15-04-2011 |
| Project partners | | | | | | |
| Norwegian Institute for Water Research (NIVA), Norway | The Assessment of Impact of the Gothenburg Protocol on Acidified and Eutrophied Soils and Waters (CZ0051) | Merete Ulstein | Gaustadalléen 21, NO-0349 Oslo, Norway | merete.ulstein@niva.no | 26-05-2011 | no |

| Poland | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|----------------------------|-------------|
| Name of organisation | Name of project | Name of interviewee | Address | E-mail | Type and date of interview | |
| | | | | | Individual interview | Focus group |
| Focal point | | | | | | |
| Ministry of Regional Development, Department for Aid Programmes and TA | Not relevant | Ewa Karólewska | Wspolna Street 2/4, 00-926 Warsaw, Poland | ewa.karolewska@mrr.gov.pl | 24-03-2011 | 24-03-2011 |
| | | Aleksandra Guzowska (representative from the implementation unit) | | aleksandra.guzowska@mrr.gov.pl | 24-03-2011 | 24-03-2011 |
| | | Marcin Bogusz (responsible for programming and task manager for the Polish - Norwegian Research Fund) | | marcin.bogusz@mrr.gov.pl | 24-03-2011 | 24-03-2011 |
| Relevant ministries | | | | | | |
| Ministry of Science and Higher Education | Not relevant | Juliusz Weinknecht | 20 Hoża Street 1/3 Wspólna Street 00-529 Warsaw 53 | | 23-03-2011 | No |
| | | Maria Jolanta Stypulkowska-Weremijewicz | | maria.stypulkowska-weremijewicz@mnisw.gov.pl | 23-03-2011 | No |
| Funds | | | | | | |
| The Information Processing Centre in Warsaw | The Polish - Norwegian Research Fund (PL0071) | Krystyna Maciejko | Niepodległości 188b 00-608 Warsaw Poland | krystyna.maciejko@opi.org.pl | 22-03-2011 | no |
| | | Monika Kotynia | | monika.kotynia@opi.org.pl | 22-03-2011 | no |
| | | Marcin Langa | | | 22-03-2011 | 24-03-2011 |
| Foundation for Polish science | Homing programme – research projects in all the priority fields, carried out by young PhD's returning to Poland in collaboration | jakub wojnarowski | Grażyny 11 02-548 Warsaw | jakub.wojnarowski@fnp.org.pl | 22-03-2011 | no |
| | | Marta Lazarowicz-Kowalik | | marta.lazarowicz@fnp.org.pl | 22-03-2011 | 24-03-2011 |
| | | Michal Pietras | | michal.pietras@fnp.org.pl | 22-03-2011 | no |

Evaluation of the sector academic research under the EEA/Norway Grants

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------|----|------------|
| | with the respective foreign research centre (PL0072) | | | | | |
| Sub-projects within the funds | | | | | | |
| The Polish - Norwegian Research Fund (PL0071) | Development of High-Efficiency, Small-Scale Heat Pumping Units Using an Environmentally Benign Working Fluid R744 and Expansion Work Recovery with Ejec-tors | Krzysztof Bana-siak | * | krzysztof.banasiak@polsl.pl | no | 24-03-2011 |
| | | Andrzej J. Nowak | | andrzej.j.nowak@polsl.pl | no | 24-03-2011 |
| | International Workshop on Social Informatics | Helszkie Suszek | * | * | no | 24-03-2011 |
| | | Sylwice Stefania-niek | | * | no | 24-03-2011 |
| | The AlkB protein and its eukaryotic homologues – the role in DNA repair and the possible role in cancer etiology and target in cancer therapy | Piotr Trzon-kowski | * | ptrzon@gumed.edu.pl | no | 24-03-2011 |
| | Gender & Care in Health Sector Reform. Perspective of Nurses & Midwives | Elzbiata Langa | | elag@ibb.waw.pl | no | 24-03-2011 |
| | | Joanna Krwawicz | | jo-anna.krwawicz@gmail.com | no | 24-03-2011 |
| | | | | | | |
| Homing programme – research projects in all the priority fields, carried out by young PhD's re-turning to Poland in collaboration with the | Investigation of application of titanium dioxide in the photocatalytic membrane reactors | Sylwia Mozia | * | sylwia.mozia@zut.edu.pl | no | 24-03-2011 |
| | Public good, social inequality, voting behaviour, political science | Natalia Letki | | natalia.letki@is.uw.edu.pl | no | 24-03-2011 |

Evaluation of the sector academic research under the EEA/Norway Grants

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--|------------|------------|
| respective foreign research centre (PL0072) | Synthesis of nanomaterials for advanced energy storage systems application | Marek Marcinek | Politechniki 1, 00-661 Warszawa, Poland | marekm_prv@yahoo.com | no | 24-03-2011 |
| Individual partnership projects | | | | | | |
| Institute of Oceanology, Polish Academy of Sciences | Ecosystem approach to marine spatial planning - Polish marine areas and the Natura 2000 network (PL0078) | Jan Marcin Weslawski (professor in charge) | Institute of Oceanology PAS Powstancow Warszawy 55 81-712 Sopot, Poland | office@iopan.gda.pl | 21-03-2011 | no |
| | | Joanna Piwowarczyk (secretary) | Institute of Oceanology PAS Powstancow Warszawy 55 81-712 Sopot, Poland | piwowarczyk@iopan.gda.pl | 21-03-2011 | no |
| Warsaw University of Technology | Advanced methods of materials engineering in diagnostics of art works after renovation by means of shaped, high-energy laser radiation pulses (MATLAS) (PL0259) | Lukasz Ciupinski | Wolaska 141, 02-507 Warszawa, Poland | T.Kulik@rekt.pw.edu.pl | 23-03-2011 | no |
| Instytut Psychiatrii i Neurologii | PL0256: Epidemiology of Mental Disorders and Access to Care – EZOP Poland | Jacek Moskalewicz | Warszawa, ul. Sobieskiego 9, Poland | wiatrow@ipin.edu.pl | 23-03-2011 | no |
| Project partners | | | | | | |
| Research Council of Norway | The Polish - Norwegian Research Fund (PL0071) | Jesper Simonsen | P.O Box 2700 St. Hanshaugen N-0131 Oslo, Norway | post@forskningsradet.no and jws@rcn.no | 25-05-2011 | no |
| | | Birgitte Skilbrei | | | | |

Evaluation of the sector academic research under the EEA/Norway Grants

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------------|---|-------------------------------|------------|----|
| | Homing programme – research projects in all the priority fields, carried out by young PhD's returning to Poland in collaboration with the respective foreign research centre (PL0072) | | | | | |
| Norwegian Institute for Water Research (NIVA), Norway | Ecosystem approach to marine spatial planning - Polish marine areas and the Natura 2000 network (PL0078) | Merete Ulstein | Gaustadalléen 21, NO-0349 Oslo | merete.ulstein@niva.no | 26-05-2011 | no |
| Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research (NIKU), Norway | Advanced methods of materials engineering in diagnostics of art works after renovation by means of shaped, high-energy laser radiation pulses (MATLAS) (PL0259) | Inga Fløisand | Norsk institutt for kulturminneforskning Postboks 736, Sentrum N-0105 OSLO | inga@niku.no | 26-05-2011 | no |
| University of Oslo - Psykiatrisk Institutt Vinde- ren, Norway | Epidemiology of Mental Disorders and Access to Care – EZOP Poland (PL0256) | Einar Kringlen | University of Oslo P.O 1072 Blindern 0316 Oslo | einar.kringlen@medisin.uio.no | 26-05-2011 | no |

* Information not available

| Hungary | | | | | | |
|---|--|------------------------|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| Name of organisation | Name of project | Name of interviewee | Address | E-mail | Type and date of interview | |
| | | | | | Individual interview | Focus group |
| Focal point | | | | | | |
| National Development Agency, Department for International Co-operation Programmes | Not relevant | Csiréné Szabó Kata-lin | H-1077 Budapest, Wesselényi utca 20-22, Hungary | katalin.szabo.csirene@nfu.gov.hu | 30-03-2011 | 01-04-2011 |
| | | Szilvia Szedő | | szilvia.szedo@nfu.gov.hu | 30-03-2011 | No |
| Relevant ministry | | | | | | |
| Ministry of Natural Resources - State Secretariat for Health, Department for Development Policy | Not relevant | Noémi Danajka | H-1051 Budapest, Arany J. utca 6-8, Hungary | noemi.danajka@nefmi.gov.hu | 01-04-2011 | No |
| Funds | | | | | | |
| Észak-Alföld Regional Development Agency (ÉARFÜ) | Support the R&D co-operations for agricultural innovation and renewable energy sources in the Észak-Alföld Region (HU0016) | Eszter Balazsy | H-4028 Debrecen Simonyi utca 14, Hungary | eszter.balazsy@eszakalfold.hu | 14-04-2011 | 14-04-2011 |
| The Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA) | The Furtherance of Internationally Acknowledged Young Researchers' Career (HU0069) | Elod Nemerkenyi | H-1093 Budapest, Czuczor utca 10, Hungary | nemerkenyi.elod@otka.hu | 01-04-2011 | 01-04-2011 |
| Sub-projects within the funds | | | | | | |

Evaluation of the sector academic research under the EEA/Norway Grants

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|------------------|--|-----------------------------|------------|------------|
| Support the R&D co-operations for agricultural innovation and renewable energy sources in the Észak-Alföld Region (HU0016) | Development of professional system for supporting redundant-heatutilization arising from thermal water (Geo_Test) | Ország István | H-4032 Debrecen, Egyetem tér 1, Hungary | orszagh.istvan@ontologic.hu | no | 14-04-2011 |
| | Lactosel | Prokisch József | H-4032 Debrecen, Egyetem ter. 1, Hungary | jprokisch@agr.unideb.hu | no | 14-04-2011 |
| The Furtherance of Internationally Acknowledged Young Researchers' Career (HU0069) | Integrated botanical and zoological research in conservation ecology to restore, conserve and increase grassland biodiversity | Szabolcs Lengyel | H-4032 Debrecen, Egyetem tér 1, Hungary | szabolcslen-gyel@yahoo.com | no | 01-04-2011 |
| | Argonauts Programme | Attila J. Tóth | H-1014 Budapest, Táncsics M. utca 1, Hungary | Attila.toth@koh.hu | no | 01-04-2011 |
| | Heat-shock and metabolic stress responses in ageing | Csaba Sóti | H-1444 Budapest, P.O.Box 260, Hungary | csaba.soti@egk.sote.hu | no | 01-04-2011 |
| Individual partnership projects | | | | | | |
| Demokrácia Kutatások Magyar Központja Közhasznú Alapítvány (DKMKA) Hungarian Centre for Democracy Studies Foundation | The role of political participation and representation in increasing democratic capacity (HU0089) | Zsolt Enyedi | H-1051 Budapest, Nador 15, Hungary | Enyedizs@ceu.hu | 01-04-2011 | No |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---------------|--|-------------------------|------------|----|
| Computer and Automation Research Institute, Hungarian Academy of Science | Hungarian - Norwegian research based innovation for the development of new, environmental friendly, competitive robot technology for selected target groups (HUNOROB), (HU0045) | Peter Baranyi | H-1111 Budapest, Kende utca 13-17, Hungary | baranyi@sztaki.hu | 13-04-2011 | No |
| Project partners | | | | | | |
| Norwegian Social Science Data Services, Norway | The role of political participation and representation in increasing democratic capacity (HU0089) | Atle Alvheim | NSD, Harald Hårfagres gate 29, N-5007 Bergen, Norway | atle.alvheim@nsd.uib.no | 15-06-2011 | No |

Annex 3: Interview guide

Gross interview guide: Instructions to interviewers

The aim of this interview guide is to present to the interviewer the need for information to bring into the evaluation from interviews and focus groups with different stakeholders. In this context it is important to emphasise, that the evaluation looks at four types of achievements pursued.

- Firstly, there is the overall aim of the EEA/Norway Grants to integrate its bilateral support into the research policy-making agendas in the Beneficiary States - i.e. to create ownership at the political level, to establish a successful mechanism of exploiting the benefits of international bilateral research activities, and thus to make the supported activities contribute to the mainstream academic research goals in the Beneficiary States.
- Secondly, the evaluation looks at the achievements of the fund/programme managers in selecting, guiding and monitoring the right - i.e. relevant - sub-projects.
- Thirdly, it addresses the achievements of sub-projects regarding delivering outcomes and impacts as agreed with the funds/programmes.
- Fourthly, it looks at the achievements of individual partnership projects with a focus on the success of strengthening the bilateral relations between academic researchers in the Beneficiary States and in the EFTA States, particularly Norway.

Due to these different angles in the evaluation, all evaluation questions might not be appropriate to pose to all types of stakeholders. This is pointed out in this interview guide, although it is also up to the judgement of the interviewer. Hence, if the interviewer decides to inform a stakeholder beforehand regarding the types of interview questions to be posed - it is likely to consist of a part of this guide, e.g. only the overall evaluation questions. Note also that many of the evaluation questions will also be addressed via a desk study.

The types of stakeholders to interview either in person - individually or in focus groups - or by telephone are:

- *Focal Points* in the three countries: Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.
- *Fund/programme managers* for the five funds/programmes.
- *Ministries responsible for research and national research organisations.*
- *Project holders* of selected sub-projects funded within the five funds/programmes and of the five individual partnership projects.
- *EFTA partners* (mainly from Norway) regarding the strengthening of the bilateral relations, hereunder via the individual partnership projects.

- *European Commission* - DG RTD and/or DG REGIO regarding consistency/complementarity between the EU support to academic research and the support from the EEA/Norway Grants.
- *The Research Council of Norway* regarding the benefits of collaborations - hereunder in the context of individual partnership projects.

The aim of the evaluation is as already described to assess the achievements of the five funds/programmes in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic - partly via looking into 20 sub-projects selected by these funds/programmes. Furthermore, the achievements of 5 individual partnership projects are assessed.

The selection criteria applied to select the 20 sub-projects and the 5 individual partnership projects are:

- *Coverage of countries* - i.e. 4 sub-projects from each of the five funds/programmes; while 3 Polish individual partnership projects (out of 26 candidates) were selected, and 1 each from Hungary (out of 9) and the Czech Republic (out of 5).
- *Size of project* - i.e. priority to relatively large projects is given, as this everything else equal gives rise to more information about project achievements.
- *Priority sector* - i.e. a balanced coverage of the five priority sectors of the EEA/Norway Grants are pursued; which for the 5 individual partnership projects means 1 project per priority sector.

The evaluation addresses fund/programme and project achievements with respect to relevance, impact/effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

However, it should be emphasised that it is not a summative evaluation which is mainly undertaken for the purpose of accountability (control). Instead, the evaluation is a formative evaluation that pays attention to the delivery and intervention system. A central aim of the evaluation is therefore to learn from the funds/programmes and the projects in order to be able to do it even better in the future. A number of the evaluation questions concern in this context how to derive measurable indicators of achievements, as such indicators are central for elaborating more explicit intervention logics in the future.

The interviewer must produce Minutes of Meeting (MoM) from each interview/focus group organised according to the below interview questions and with interviewer assessments regarding the evaluation questions that are subject to the scoring system.

A: Information about the interviewee (more if focus groups)

Name of interviewee:

Name of organisation:

Role in project/programme:

Type of organisation:

Address:

E-mail:

Phone no:

Date of interview:

B: Relevance

The relevance of the supported activities within the sector academic research concerns how proficiently the activities address the specified needs. Needs are in this context specified in different places:

- Firstly, there are the objectives of the EEA/Norway Grants - i.e. to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area, and to strengthen the bilateral relations between the EEA EFTA States and the Beneficiary States. Hence, focus is on assessing the success of bringing the academic research level in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic closer to that of the EU/EFTA level (where this is higher than in the Beneficiary States), and on assessing the achievements of synergies from bringing together expertises. This focus can be said to concern most evaluation questions.
- Secondly, there is the issue of how the supported activities contribute to the national and EU academic research agendas. As mentioned above, focus is on how the international bilateral support is integrated into the research policy-making agendas in the Beneficiary States.
- Thirdly, there are the contributions to the five priority sectors of the EEA/Norway Grants: protection of the environment; promotion of sustainable development; conservation of European cultural heritage; human resource development; and health and childcare. Focus is on how national objectives within these priority sectors are proficiently addressed in the Beneficiary States.
- Fourthly, there might be other (specific) needs envisaged by the stakeholders being interviewed.

Relevance with respect to national research agendas in the Beneficiary States

B1: To what extent did the national research agenda guide the activities supported by the EEA/Norway Grants?

- B1.1: Which sources describing the national research agenda were consulted when planning and deciding upon supported activities?
- B1.2: Who made the choice regarding which parts of the national research agenda to focus on in the supported activities?
- B1.3: Were the chosen focus areas formulated appropriately to be addressed by projects - i.e. neither too general nor too specific formulations?
- B1.4: Have EFTA country research agendas been taken into account when choosing areas to address by academic research support? - If so: how? and (for projects) does the answer depend on whether or not there is an EFTA partner?
- B1.5: Which measurable indicators of national research agenda relevance can be derived from the above answers?

B2: To what extent were the activities supported by the EEA/Norway Grants and their achievements integrated into the research policy-making agenda in the Beneficiary State?

- B2.1: Is there any evidence of the national research agenda directly referring to the benefit of the international bilateral research activities supported by the EEA/Norway Grants?
- B2.2: Which research policy-makers in the Beneficiary State have taken ownership of the supported bilateral research findings?
- B2.3: To what extent have fund/programme managers and/or project holders actively targeted research policy-makers with information about their achievements?
- B2.4: To what extent has the EFTA stakeholders - hereunder the FMO - pursued integration of EEA/Norway Grants activities into the national research agenda and actively targeted research policy-makers?
- B2.5: Which measurable indicators of national research agenda relevance can be derived from the above answers?

Interviewer assessment: How relevant were the activities supported by the EEA/Norway Grants for the national research agenda?

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The activities supported by the EEA/Norway Grants were both in line with the national research agenda and the achievements have been integrated into this agenda. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The activities supported were in line with the national research agenda. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The activities supported were partially in line with the national research agenda. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The activities supported were not or only minimally in line with the national research agenda. |

Relevance with respect to the priority sectors of the EEA/Norway Grants

B3: To what extent were national objectives within the priority sectors covered?

B3.1: Which national sources guided the choice of areas that should be addressed by academic research support - within each of the five priority sectors?

B3.2: Who made the choice of areas to address by academic research support - within each of the five priority sectors?

B3.3: Were the chosen areas formulated appropriately to be addressed by projects - i.e. neither too general nor too specific formulations?

B3.4: How did the chosen areas create added value in the Beneficiary States - e.g. by filling in gaps (areas only addressed little before) and/or by addressing the most important problems (where there still is a research need)?

B3.5: Have EFTA country objectives within the five priority sectors been taken into account when choosing areas to address by academic research support?

B3.6: Which measurable indicators of EEA/Norway Grants relevance can be derived from the process of covering national objectives within the priority sectors?

B4: (for funds/programmes and sub-projects only) How successful were fund/programme managers in selecting sub-projects that addressed the chosen areas within the priority sectors?

B4.1: (for funds/programmes only) Which selection criteria/procedures were applied to ensure both a balanced coverage of the priority sectors and a focus on the chosen areas?

B4.2: (for sub-projects only) To what extent did the sub-project applications address the chosen areas within the given priority sector?

B4.3: How was it subsequently monitored that sub-project activities maintained focus on the chosen areas within the given priority sector?

B4.4: (for funds/programmes only) Which priority sectors were most and least successful addressed by sub-projects?

B4.5: Which measurable indicators of EEA/Norway Grants relevance can be derived from the sub-project selection process?

B5: (for individual partnership projects only) How successful were the FMO/Focal Points in selecting individual partnership projects that addressed the chosen areas within the priority sectors?

B5.1: (FMO/Focal Points only) Which selection criteria/procedures were applied to ensure both a balanced coverage of the priority sectors and a focus on the chosen areas?

B5.2: To what extent did the sub-project applications address the chosen areas within the given priority sector? and how relevant was it for the partnership country (Norway)?

B5.3: How was it subsequently monitored that project activities maintained focus on the chosen areas within the given priority sector?

B5.4: Which measurable indicators of EEA/Norway Grants relevance can be derived from the individual partnership project selection process?

Interviewer assessment: How relevant were the activities supported by the EEA/Norway Grants with respect to the five priority sectors?

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The activities supported by the EEA/Norway Grants address fully the chosen areas within the priority sectors. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The activities supported address the chosen areas within the priority sectors to a satisfactory extent. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The activities supported address the chosen areas within the priority sectors to a limited extent. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The activities supported do not address the chosen areas within the priority sectors or do so to a very limited extent. |

Relevance with respect to EU academic research agendas

B6 (not for project level): To what extent were the activities supported by the EEA/Norway Grants in line with EU academic research agendas?

B6.1: Which EU or other European academic research agendas have been taken into account when designing the EEA/Norway Grants support?

B6.2: To what extent has EU or other European academic research stakeholders been consulted in the design process?

B6.3: Have feedback been given from the EEA/Norway Grants achievements in order to influence the EU academic research agendas?

Interviewer assessment: How relevant were the activities supported by the EEA/Norway Grants with respect to EU academic research agendas?

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The activities supported by the EEA/Norway Grants are fully in line with the EU academic research agendas. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The activities supported are to a satisfactory extent in line with the EU academic research agendas. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The activities supported are to a limited extent in line with the EU academic research agendas. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The activities supported are not or only to a very limited extent in line with the EU academic research agendas. |

C: Impact/effectiveness

The impact/effectiveness of the academic research support is assessed from three angles:

- Firstly, we look into how successful the funds/programmes or projects have been in achieving their planned research deliverables.
- Secondly, we look into how successful they have been in disseminating or making the deliverables visible to policy-makers, other users, the general public etc.

- Thirdly, the achievements of impacts of the research developments/findings on the targeted areas/users are assessed. In this context, it is important to acknowledge that only a few impacts of research activities occur in the short term - but may do so in the medium to longer term, and so they will not have materialised at the time of this evaluation. When asking stakeholders to speculate about future impacts, in particular the project holders are likely to be too optimistic. Furthermore, improvements happening within the targeted areas are often the result of complex interactions, and so it is often difficult to attribute the impact to the outcomes of the supported research projects. In other words, it will often be more of an assessment of contribution rather than attribution.

Deliverables

C1: (for funds/programmes only) Have the fund/programme activities resulted in the planned deliverables?

- C1.1: What are the main tangible fund/programme deliverables (e.g. calls for proposals, other funds/programme information, sub-project grant information etc.)?
- C1.2: Have fund/programme deliverables been produced according to plan, i.e. as stated in the statutes? - What are the main deviations from the plan and the reasons for these?
- C1.3: Are the deliverables of higher quality compared with similar deliverables - i.e. from similar funds/programmes that are not co-funded by the EEA/Norway Grants? - How do you measure quality?
- C1.4: To what extent have the deliverables benefitted from contributions from the EFTA/Norwegian stakeholders?
- C1.5: To what extent has the capacity of the fund/programme managers been increased during the EEA/Norway Grants period - i.e. how much has the capability for implementing future support increased?
- C1.6: Which measurable indicators of fund/programme deliverables can be derived from the above?

C2: (for sub-projects and fund/programme managers only) Have the sub-project activities resulted in the planned project deliverables?

- C2.1: What are the main project deliverables (e.g. publications - hereunder joint publications, patents or other property rights, PhD degrees in connection with the financed projects, applications for future projects to FP6 and FP7, formalised research networks/collaborations etc.)?
- C2.2: Have project deliverables been produced according to plan, i.e. as stated in the grant agreements? - What are the main deviations from the plan and the reasons for these?
- C2.3: Are the project deliverables of higher quality compared with similar deliverables - i.e. developments made at national level without EEA/Norway Grants? - How do you measure quality?
- C2.4: If EFTA/Norwegian partner - Which and how was EFTA/Norwegian expertise brought in to enhance the quality of the project deliverables? Have project activities involved mobility of experts between the project partners?
- C2.5: Are additional project deliverables created after the termination of the EEA/Norway Grants

co-funding period?

C2.6: Which measurable indicators of outcomes can be derived from the project deliverables?

C3: (for individual partnership projects only) Have the project activities resulted in the planned project deliverables?

C3.1: What are the main project deliverables (e.g. joint publications, joint patents or other property rights, joint applications for future projects to FP6 and FP7, formalised research networks/collaborations etc.)?

C3.2: Have project deliverables been produced according to plan, i.e. as stated in the grant agreements? - What are the main deviations from the plan and the reasons for these?

C3.3: Are the project deliverables of higher quality compared with similar deliverables - i.e. developments made at national level without EEA/Norway Grants? - How do you measure quality?

C3.4: How was EFTA/Norwegian expertise brought in to enhance the quality of the project deliverables? Have project activities involved mobility of experts between the project partners?

C3.5: Are additional project deliverables created after the termination of the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period?

C3.6: What evidence is there of the project deliverables being used by the project holder/partners themselves - e.g. for further/future developments?

C3.7: What evidence is there of the project deliverables being applied by other users? - Who are they?

C3.8: Which measurable indicators of outcomes can be derived from the project deliverables?

Interviewer assessment: Have the fund/programme and project activities resulted in the planned deliverables?

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | Fund/programme and project activities have resulted in the planned deliverables - which are of high quality due to the support from EEA/Norway Grants. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | Fund/programme and project activities have resulted in most of the planned deliverables - which are of high quality due to the support from EEA/Norway Grants. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | Fund/programme and project activities have only resulted in some of the planned deliverables. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | Fund/programme and project activities have only resulted in a few of the planned deliverables. |

Dissemination/visibility

C4: Have the dissemination efforts been effective?

C4.1: Has the fund/programme manager or project holder had a strong focus on the dissemination of project deliverables/findings to the direct users/beneficiaries?

C4.2: Has the fund/programme manager or project holder had a strong focus on the dissemination of project deliverables/findings to others, e.g. policy-makers, general public etc.?

- C4.3: (for funds/programmes only) Have the fund/programme managers assisted the sub-project holders in disseminating their project deliverables?
- C4.4: (for funds/programmes only) Has the dissemination of the fund/programme managers targeted stakeholders in other countries?
- C4.5: (for projects only) Has the dissemination of project findings included other countries than those of the project holder and possible EFTA partner?
- C4.6: Which were the communication instruments used (e.g. journals, newsletters, bulletins, newspapers, website etc.)?
- C4.7: Have there been any obstacles to an optimal dissemination? - If so, which?
- C4.8: Which measurable indicators of dissemination can be derived from the above?

C5: Have the achievements of the EEA/Norway Grants become visible?

- C5.1: To what extent have the funds/programmes or project findings been quoted, cited, or referred to in science publications, popular publications, magazines, newspapers, TV etc.?
- C5.2: To what extent have the funds/programme or project findings been referred to or presented by others, such as policy-makers in public, e.g. during official negotiations, conferences etc.?
- C5.3: To what extent have the visible achievements highlighted that they have been made via support from the EEA/Norway Grants?
- C5.4: Which measurable indicators can be derived from the identified visibility of project achievements?

Interviewer assessment: How effective was the fund/programme manager or project holder in disseminating achievements and thus in making the support from the EEA/Norway Grants visible?

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The fund/programme manager or project holder had a strong focus on dissemination of findings to both direct users/beneficiaries, and the achievements of the EEA/Norway Grants have become highly visible. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The fund/programme manager or project holder carried out some dissemination of findings to both direct users/beneficiaries, and some of the achievements of the EEA/Norway Grants have become visible. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The fund/programme manager or project holder undertook limited dissemination of findings, and the achievements are only slightly visible. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | Dissemination of fund/programme or project findings was not a central focus. |

Impact

C6: Have the funds/programmes or projects achieved the planned impacts?

- C6.1: What are the main planned impacts (e.g. for funds/programmes: improved institutional and human capacities in the research sectors of the Beneficiary States; political acknowledgement and use of the EEA Norway Grants facility; synergies and common research goals from bringing together expertises for EFTA, mainly Norway, and the Beneficiary States etc. - and for projects: improved conditions within the targeted areas of the five priority sectors; improved provision of services

within these areas etc.)?

C6.2: Are there any measurable improvements to the standard of the academic research level of the involved stakeholders, through better infrastructure/equipments and/or expertise/knowledge - as a consequence of the EEA Norway Grants co-funding?

C6.3: (for projects with EFTA/Norwegian partner) Did the partner experience improvements to its academic research capabilities?

C6.4: Are there any measurable improvements to the conditions for the targeted areas - as a consequence of the EEA Norway Grants co-funding?

C6.5: Has the fund/programme or project addressed the impact on gender equality? - What was the impact?

C6.6: Have fund/programme or project findings been used as input to academic research policies?

C6.7: Have any of the planned impacts not been achieved? - Are they likely to be so in the future, i.e. beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period?

C7: Have the funds/programmes or projects achieved any unplanned impacts?

C7.1: What are the main unplanned impacts - positive and/or negative?

C7.2: Could the unplanned negative impacts have been avoided - e.g. via a better fund/programme or project design?

C7.3: Could the unplanned positive impacts have been envisaged and so have been promoted further by the fund/programme or project design?

C7.4: Which measurable indicators of impacts can be derived from the identified unplanned impacts?

Interviewer assessment: Have the funds/programmes or projects successfully led to impacts?

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The funds/programmes or projects have successfully led to the planned impacts, and any unplanned impacts have not changed this view. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The funds/programmes or projects have led to many of the planned impacts, and any unplanned impacts have not changed this view significantly. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The funds/programmes or projects have led to some of the planned impacts only, and unplanned impacts have not improved this view. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The funds/programmes or projects have not been successful in leading to impacts. |

D: Efficiency

The efficiency of the support to academic research concerns how efficient the financial mechanism is in supporting that achievements are made in time and according to specifications, and so whether or not Focal Points, fund/programme managers or project holders face problems or constraints from this angle in pursuing their goals.

Donor efficiency

D1: How efficient was the EEA/Norway Grants financial mechanism in supporting the academic research achievements?

- D1.1: Were the structure and organisation of the FMO (size, organisation, staff etc.) adequate to provide support to the Focal Points and the fund/programme managers and to select and support the individual partnership projects?
- D1.2: Was it easy/difficult for the Focal Points, the fund/programme managers, and the individual partnership project holders to comply with the reporting - e.g. financial - requirements of the FMO?
- D1.3: How and to what extent did the FMO contribute to the academic research achievements being made in time and according to specifications?
- D1.4: How responsive/flexible was the FMO to requested changes to fund/programme or project implementation?
- D1.5: (for individual partnership projects only) Was the size of the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding sufficient to carry out the project?
- D1.5: (for individual partnership projects only) Was it easy/difficult for the project holder to obtain the remaining funding?
- D1.7: (for individual partnership projects only) To what extent did the FMO contribute to a successful international collaboration?
- D1.8: Which measurable indicators of donor efficiency can be derived from the above?

Interviewer assessment: Was the EEA/Norway Grants financial mechanism efficient in supporting the academic research achievements?

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The EEA/Norway Grants financial mechanism was very efficient in supporting the achievements in academic research. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The EEA/Norway Grants financial mechanism was fairly efficient in supporting achievements in academic research. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The EEA/Norway Grants financial mechanism was only partially efficient in supporting the achievements in academic research. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The EEA/Norway Grants financial mechanism was not efficient in supporting the achievements in academic research. |

Beneficiary efficiency

D2: How efficient were the fund/programme and project implementation set-ups in the Beneficiary State?

- D2.1: (for funds/programmes only) Were the structure and organisation of the funds/programmes (size, organisation, staff etc.) adequate to select sub-projects and to provide support to the sub-project?
- D2.2: (for individual partnership projects only) Were the structure and organisation of the Focal Point and the Intermediate Body [and possibly Auxiliary Institution] (size, organisation, staff etc.) adequate to select projects and to provide support to the project?
- D2.3: (for funds/programmes only) What were the main problems and constraints the fund/programme managers faced during implementation of activities?
- D2.4: What were the main problems and constraints the Focal Point/Intermediate Body faced during implementation of activities?
- D2.5: How did the fund/programme managers and Focal Point/Intermediate Body pursue good governance during project implementation?
- D2.6: Is present set-up in the Beneficiary State suitable for future academic research support?
- D2.7: Which measurable indicators of efficiency can be derived from the above answers?

D3: How efficient was the collaboration between stakeholders?

- D3.1: Who were the main stakeholders that the fund/programme managers and project holders collaborated with at national/regional level?
- D3.2: What were the main problems and constraints faced during this collaboration?
- D3.3: Was the collaboration efficient - i.e. did it represent good value for money in relation to the results achieved?
- D3.4: (for individual partnership projects only) To what extent did the international collaboration represent good value for money in relation to the results achieved, for both the Beneficiary and the partner?
- D3.5: Which measurable indicators of the efficiency of the collaboration between stakeholders can be derived?

Interviewer assessment: Was the Beneficiary efficient in implementing the project?

| | |
|-----|---|
| ○ 4 | The Beneficiary was very efficient in implementing the project. |
| ○ 3 | The Beneficiary was fairly efficient in implementing the project. |
| ○ 2 | The Beneficiary was only partially efficient in implementing the project. |
| ○ 1 | The Beneficiary was not efficient in implementing the project. |

E: Sustainability

The sustainability of the academic research support concerns the durability of the partnerships and funding, and how the ownership of the outcomes and how the impacts will be preserved over time. This will e.g. be measured via the extent to which project outcomes are or can be institutionalised or via the existence of dissemination of project achievements beyond the co-funding period.

Sustainability of partnerships

E1: Does the partnership sustain beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period?

E1.1: (for funds/programmes only) Does the fund/programme set-up remain after the end of the first period of EEA/Norway Grants co-funding?

E1.2: (for individual partnership projects only) Has the project collaboration between the project holder, the possible EFTA/Norwegian partner, and other national/regional stakeholders been formalised - e.g. via a collaboration agreement?

E1.3: (for individual partnership projects only) Has funding been identified for continued project collaboration - i.e. after the end of the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period?

E1.4: (for individual partnership projects only) Have any project collaboration activities been carried out beyond the co-funding period?

E1.5: (for individual partnership projects only) Has confidence between participants been established via the project collaboration that might lead to other future common academic research achievements?

E1.6: Which measurable indicators of the sustainability of partnerships can be derived?

Interviewer assessment: Do the partnerships sustain beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period?

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The partnerships are fully sustainable beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The partnerships are partly sustainable beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The partnerships are sustainable only to a limited degree beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The partnerships are not sustainable beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |

Sustainability of impacts

E2: (for projects only) Do the project outcomes sustain beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period?

E2.1: Have project outcomes been institutionalised - i.e. an owner responsible for maintaining the project deliverables has been identified?

- E2.2: Has sufficient funding been obtained to maintain the project deliverables?
- E2.3: Have project deliverables been further developed beyond the co-funding period?
- E2.4: Have project deliverables been further disseminated beyond the co-funding period?
- E2.5: Which measurable indicators of the sustainability of the project outcomes can be derived?

E3: (for projects only) Do the project impacts sustain beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period?

- E3.1: Are there any indications of that the project's target group are or will continue to make good use of the project deliverables?
- E3.2: Are there any indications of policy-makers or others will use the project findings for wider impacts - e.g. improved academic research policies?
- E3.3: Have any procedures been set-up to monitor impacts in the future?
- E3.4: Which measurable indicators of the sustainability of the project impacts can be derived?

Interviewer assessment: Do the project outcomes and impacts sustain beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period?

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The project outcomes and impacts are fully sustainable beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The project outcomes and impacts are partly sustainable beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The project outcomes and impacts are sustainable only to a limited degree beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The project outcomes and impacts are not sustainable beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |

Annex 4: Selection of 5 individual partnership projects and 20 sub-projects within the 5 funds/programmes

1. Introduction

A central part of the evaluation of the support by the EEA/Norway Grants within the sector academic research during the period 2004-2009 - in Poland, Czech Republic, and Hungary - was to review 5 individual partnership projects and 20 sub-projects supported within the 5 funds/programmes.

The selection criteria applied when selecting the projects are presented below, followed by a presentation of the selection of the projects.

Due to a great amount of stakeholders, it has been a challenge to coordinate the interviews in accordance with the time schedule of the evaluation. Most of the interviews were carried out in person, but since not all relevant stakeholders were able to participate in the period of time we spent in the specific country, some of the interviews were carried out by telephone. Especially regarding the focus group interviews the coordination has been difficult due to the availability of the stakeholders. As a consequence not all the selected sub-projects have been able to participate in the evaluation. See Annex 2 for a complete list of the projects and institutions consulted.

2. Selection criteria

The following selection criteria have been applied to get to the selection of the 5 individual partnership projects and the 20 sub-projects:

Coverage of countries

Since the evaluation addresses the support given to three countries, projects from each of these were selected.

For the *5 individual partnership projects* it was from the outset suggested that 3 out of the 26 Polish candidates were selected, and so 1 out of the 9 Hungarian candidates and 1 out of the 5 Czech candidates.

For the *20 sub-projects* country coverage was ensured because 4 sub-projects each were selected from the 5 funds/programmes:

- The Polish - Norwegian Research Fund (EUR 21.4 million)
- Homing programme – research projects in all the priority fields, carried out by young PhD's returning to Poland in collaboration with the respective foreign research centre (EUR 0.7 million)
- Support the R&D co-operations for agricultural innovation and renewable energy sources in the Észak-Alföld Region, Hungary (EUR 1 million)
- The Furtherance of Internationally Acknowledged Young Researchers' Career, Hungary (EUR 2 million)

- Research Support Fund Czech Republic (EUR 4.4 million)

Size of project

It was considered to be preferable that the selected projects were relatively large (in terms of funding). This would everything else equal give rise to more information about project achievements.

In practice, priority to *5 individual partnership projects* above the average size in terms of funding in the respective countries was given.

And, priority to *20 sub-projects* above the average size in terms of funding in the respective funds/programme was given.

Priority sector

Each of the *5 individual partnership projects* belongs to one of the five priority sectors:

- (a) Protection of the environment, including the human environment, through, inter alia, reduction of pollution and promotion of renewable energy
- (b) Promotion of sustainable development through improved resource use and management
- (c) Conservation of European cultural heritage, including public transport, and urban renewal
- (d) Human resource development through, inter alia, promotion of education and training, strengthening of administrative or public service capacities of local government or its institutions as well as the democratic processes, which support it
- (e) Health and childcare

For the *20 sub-projects* a balanced coverage of the five priority areas was pursued.

Partnership projects

For the *5 individual partnership projects* this criterion was given.

The selection of the *20 sub-projects* includes partnership projects, i.e. projects with an EFTA (Norwegian) partner. However, not all selected projects were partnership projects, since it was considered to be valuable to learn about differences between the two types.

Project status

Finally, projects that are completed or close to completion were given priority.

3. Selection of 5 individual partnership projects

A mapping of the 40 individual partnership projects in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic is summarised in Table A4-1. It shows that 19 out of the 40 projects had grants above their national averages

There were fewest projects to select between for the two priority areas: *human resource development* (2) and *conservation of European cultural heritage* (4).

For *promotion of sustainable development*, 7 out of the 9 projects are Polish.

The Czech Republic is relatively well represented within *protection of the environment*, while this is the case for Hungary within *health and childcare*. There are, however, for both priority sectors most Polish projects.

Table A4-1 Academic research individual partnership projects

| | Poland | Hungary | Czech Republic | TOTAL |
|---|--------|---------|----------------|---------------|
| Number of projects | 26 | 9 | 5 | 40 |
| Average grant (Euro) | 567559 | 1145317 | 464623 | 684688 |
| Number of projects above average grant in the country | 13 | 4 | 2 | 19 |
| <u>Priority sector</u> | | | | |
| Protection of the environment | 8 | 1 | 4 | 13 |
| Promotion of sustainable development | 7 | 1 | 1 | 9 |
| Conservation of European cultural heritage | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Human resource development | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Health and childcare | 7 | 5 | 0 | 12 |

Based on the above mapping and selection criteria, the 5 individual partnership projects selected for review (and 5 alternative candidates) are presented in Table A4-2 - by priority sector:

Protection of the environment

Since the Czech Republic almost only is represented within this priority area, a Czech project was selected - and the alternative candidate was also from the Czech Republic. The selected project is the larger of the two in terms of grant awarded.

Promotion of sustainable development

The Polish project selected was considered to be a good candidate of research into sustainable development of a region/local area. The alternative was of similar nature, but slightly more biased towards an environmental project.

Conservation of European cultural heritage

The two good candidates were both Polish. The selected project was the larger of the two in terms of grant awarded.

Human resource development

As mentioned above there were only two candidates within this priority sector. The Hungarian project was selected since it was considered to fit the objectives of the priority sector better than the Polish project.

Health and childcare

Although slightly below the average grant, the Polish project was selected because it addresses mental disorders - a disease that is only covered little in the contemporaneous evaluation of the sector health and childcare. However, the alternative Hungarian project was also a good candidate.

Table A4-2 Selection of individual partnership projects for review within the sector academic research

| 5 selected projects (and 5 alternatives) | |
|---|---|
| Priority sector | Protection of the environment |
| Case number/country | CZ0051 |
| Project title | The Assessment of Impact of the Gothenburg Protocol on Acidified and Eutrophied Soils and Waters |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 777525 |
| Status | Ongoing |
| Partner | Norwegian Institute for Water Research (NIVA), Norway |
| Case number/country | CZ0092 |
| Project title | <i>Energy plantations technology on contaminated land</i> |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 579666 |
| Status | Ongoing |
| Partner | <i>Bioforsk (Norwegian Institute for Agricultural and Environmental Research) - Soil and Environment Division, Norway</i> |
| Priority sector | Promotion of sustainable development |
| Case number/country | PL0078 |
| Project title | Ecosystem approach to marine spatial planning - Polish marine areas and the Natura 2000 network |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 576547 |
| Status | Ongoing |
| Partner | Norwegian Institute for Water Research (NIVA), Norway |
| Case number/country | PL0268 |
| Project title | <i>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</i> |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 716771 |
| Status | Ongoing |
| Partner | <i>University of Oslo - Department of Geosciences, Norway</i> |
| Priority sector | Conservation of European cultural heritage |
| Case number/country | PL0259 |
| Project title | Advanced methods of materials engineering in diagnostics of art works after renovation by means of shaped, high-energy laser radiation pulses (MATLAS) |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 705500 |
| Status | Ongoing |
| Partner | Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research (NIKU), Norway |
| Case number/country | PL0267 |
| Project title | <i>Direct monitoring of strain for protection of historic textiles and paintings on canvas</i> |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 410189 |
| Status | Ongoing |
| Partner | <i>Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Norway</i> |
| Priority sector | Human resource development |
| Case number/country | HU0089 |
| Project title | The role of political participation and representation in increasing democratic capacity |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 640029 |
| Status | Ongoing |
| Partner | Norwegian Social Science Data Services, Norway |
| Case number/country | PL0272 |
| Project title | <i>Mobility and Migrations at the Time of Transformation - Methodological Challenges</i> |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 536257 |
| Status | Ongoing |
| Partner | <i>Centre of Immigration Research (CIRRA), Iceland, Institute of Social Sciences and Labour Market (FAFO), Norway</i> |
| Priority sector | Health and childcare |
| Case number/country | PL0256 |
| Project title | Epidemiology of Mental Disorders and Access to Care – EZOP Poland |

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 553429 |
| Status | Ongoing |
| Partner | University of Oslo - Psykiatrisk Institutt Vinderen, Norway |
| Case number/country | HU0115 |
| Project title | Developing common innovative strategies for cancer care by genomic approaches in Hungary and in Norway |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 1615000 |
| Status | Ongoing |
| Partner | Norwegian Radium Hospital, Norway |

4. Selection of 20 sub-projects

The information about sub-projects within the 5 funds/programmes - received from the FMO - specifies **the priority sector** for each of the sub-projects. Furthermore, there are specifications of the **academic field** of the project holder (research institution) - e.g. agriculture, architecture, engineering, environmental studies, health sciences etc., and of the **type of research** - i.e. basic research, applied research, and experimental. Coverage of these three categories of research was pursued in the selection of the 20 sub-projects.

Note that the 20 sub-projects have not been due to in-depth assessments. Focus was instead on how the sub-projects were selected and how their achievements were monitored by the fund/programme managers.

PL0071: The Polish - Norwegian Research Fund

Table A4-3 shows that the 4 selected sub-projects are spread among 4 different priority sectors. There are no sub-projects belonging to *conservation of European cultural heritage*. Furthermore, the *human resource development* sub-project (one of two) could also have been categorised as a *health and childcare* sub-project.

There are only four sub-projects within *promotion of sustainable development*. They seem fairly similar and so the one with the description closest to the concept of *sustainable development* was selected.

The sub-project within *protection of the environment* was chosen partly because it covers experimental research, while the *health and childcare* sub-project concerns basic research, and at the same time cancer - a prioritised disease.

The two alternatives came from the two largest priority sectors: *protection of the environment*, and *health and childcare*.

PL0072: Homing programme – research projects in all the priority fields, carried out by young PhD's returning to Poland in collaboration with the respective foreign research centre

There were neither sub-projects belonging to *conservation of European cultural heritage* nor to *promotion of sustainable development*. Instead, 2 of the many *human resource development* sub-projects were chosen - 1 experimental and 1 basic research (Note that PL0072 did not contain any sub-projects in the category: applied research).

There were only three *protections of the environment* sub-projects, all of which were of experimental character. The one addressing the central environmental problem of water pollution was selected.

The two alternatives came from the two largest priority sectors: *human resource development*, and *health and childcare*.

HU0016: Support the R&D co-operations for agricultural innovation and renewable energy sources in the Észak-Alföld Region

Ten sub-projects were supported within HU0016, eight of which concerned *protection of the environment* and two *health and childcare*. Hence, 3 from the former and 1 from the latter priority sector were selected. The only experimental research sub-projects was included, while the others were selected because they were the larger in terms of grants.

The two alternatives comprised 1 from each of these priority sectors.

HU0069: The Furtherance of Internationally Acknowledged Young Researchers' Career

Unlike the above three funds/programmes, HU0069 contained sub-projects (i.e. 3) within the priority sector: *conservation of European cultural heritage*. Hence, 1 of these was selected, while another was included as an alternative. In turn, there were no *human resource development* sub-projects.

Of the few *promotion of sustainable development* sub-projects, the 1 with the theme closest to the traditional concept of sustainable development was selected.

Of the *protection of the environment* sub-projects, 1 that also had aspects of *sustainable development* was selected, while the *health and childcare* sub-projects addressed the target group of the elderly. The alternative *health and childcare* sub-project addressed in turn cancer being a priorities disease to combat.

All the supported sub-projects within HU0069 were categorised as basic research, and so there was no choice to be made in this respect.

CZ0046: Research Support Fund Czech Republic

Since the priority sector, *protection of the environment* was the most covered priority sector of the five by the above four funds/programmes, the 4 Czech sub-projects were selected so that they covered the four other priority sectors.

Each of these 4 sub-projects were the ones within their given priority sectors that had received the largest grants. However, in any case they were considered to be good representatives for the objectives within their respective sectors.

All the supported sub-projects within CZ0046 were categorised as basic research, and so there was no choice to be made in this respect.

The two alternatives came from the two largest priority sectors: *protection of the environment*, and *health and childcare*.

Table A4-3 Selection of 20 sub projects for review within the sector academic research

| PL0071: The Polish - Norwegian Research Fund; 4 selected projects (and 2 <i>alternatives</i>) [36 sub-projects in total] | |
|---|---|
| Sub-project title | Development of High-Efficiency, Small-Scale Heat Pumping Units Using an Environmentally Benign Working Fluid R744 and Expansion Work Recovery with Ejectors |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | ? |
| Priority sector | Protection of the environment |
| Type of research | Experimental |
| Partner | Yes |
| Sub-project title | International Workshop on Social Informatics |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | ? |
| Priority sector | Promotion of sustainable development |
| Type of research | Applied research |
| Partner | Yes |
| Sub-project title | Gender & Care in Health Sector Reform. Perspective of Nurses & Midwives |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | ? |
| Priority sector | Human resource development |
| Type of research | Applied research |
| Partner | Yes |
| Sub-project title | The AlkB protein and its eukaryotic homologues – the role in DNA repair and the possible role in cancer etiology and target in cancer therapy |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | ? |
| Priority sector | Health and childcare |
| Type of research | Basic research |
| Partner | Yes |
| Sub-project title | <i>New trends in ophthalmic diagnostics and treatment. Perspectives in international cooperation</i> |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | ? |
| Priority sector | <i>Protection of the environment</i> |
| Type of research | <i>Experimental</i> |
| Partner | <i>No</i> |
| Sub-project title | <i>Creating an academia-based platform to discover substances acting on serotonergic or glutamatergic systems as potential new antidepressant or anxiolytic drugs</i> |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | ? |
| Priority sector | <i>Health and childcare</i> |
| Type of research | <i>Basic research</i> |
| Partner | <i>Yes</i> |
| PL0072: Homing programme – research projects in all the priority fields, carried out by young PhD's returning to Poland in collaboration with the respective foreign research centre; 4 selected projects (and 2 <i>alternatives</i>) [47 sub-projects in total] | |
| Sub-project title | Investigation of application of titanium dioxide in the photocatalytic membrane reactors |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | ? |
| Priority sector | Protection of the environment |
| Type of research | Experimental |
| Partner | No |
| Sub-project title | Synthesis of nanomaterials for advanced energy storage systems application |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | ? |
| Priority sector | Human resource development |
| Type of research | Experimental |
| Partner | No |
| Sub-project title | Public good, social inequality, voting behaviour, political science |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | ? |
| Priority sector | Human resource development |
| Type of research | Basic research |
| Partner | No |
| Sub-project title | Laboratory of cellular therapy and experimental transplantology |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | ? |
| Priority sector | Health and childcare |
| Type of research | Experimental |

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| | |
|---|---|
| Partner | No |
| Sub-project title | <i>Polymer composites biomaterials</i> |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | ? |
| Priority sector | <i>Human resource development</i> |
| Type of research | <i>Experimental</i> |
| Partner | No |
| Sub-project title | <i>Neuropathics pain- croostalk between endovanilloids and metabotropics glutamate receptors as a new therapeutic target</i> |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | ? |
| Priority sector | <i>Health and childcare</i> |
| Type of research | <i>Experimental</i> |
| Partner | No |
| HU0016: Support the R&D co-operations for agricultural innovation and renewable energy sources in the Észak-Alföld Region; 4 selected projects (and 2 alternatives) [10 sub-projects in total] | |
| Sub-project title | Development of professional system for supporting redundant-heatutilization arising from thermal water (Geo_Test) |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 86125 |
| Priority sector | Protection of the environment |
| Type of research | Experimental |
| Partner | No |
| Sub-project title | Complex agronomical and bioanalytical investigations of organic farming in point of well-representing cultivar in North-Plain region (BIOBEL09) |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 142872 |
| Priority sector | Protection of the environment |
| Type of research | Applied research |
| Partner | No |
| Sub-project title | Exploration of renewable and alternative energy sources in productive plants based on energetical auditing (NYFENAUD) |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 119470 |
| Priority sector | Protection of the environment |
| Type of research | Applied research |
| Partner | No |
| Sub-project title | Improvement of pork products balanced for omega 6:3 fatty acid composition for maintain good health status (GOODMEAT) |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 115881 |
| Priority sector | Health and childcare |
| Type of research | Applied research |
| Partner | No |
| Sub-project title | <i>Development of biomass-based biofuel technology based on metagenomics (METAGEN9)</i> |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 108812 |
| Priority sector | <i>Protection of the environment</i> |
| Type of research | <i>Applied research</i> |
| Partner | No |
| Sub-project title | <i>Improvement of innovative, high Selenium content chicken products by new, probiotic feed additives (LactoSel)</i> |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 63465 |
| Priority sector | <i>Health and childcare</i> |
| Type of research | <i>Applied research</i> |
| Partner | No |
| HU0069: The Furtherance of Internationally Acknowledged Young Researchers' Career; 4 selected projects (and 2 alternatives) [33 sub-projects in total] | |
| Sub-project title | Integrated botanical and zoological research in conservation ecology to restore, conserve and increase grassland biodiversity |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | ? |
| Priority sector | Protection of the environment |
| Type of research | Basic research |
| Partner | No |
| Sub-project title | Local development policies in a European project state - a systemic analysis of institutional |

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| | |
|--|--|
| | bricolage |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | ? |
| Priority sector | Promotion of sustainable development |
| Type of research | Basic research |
| Partner | No |
| Sub-project title | Argonauts Programme |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | ? |
| Priority sector | Conservation of European cultural heritage |
| Type of research | Basic research |
| Partner | No |
| Sub-project title | Heat-shock and metabolic stress responses in aging |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | ? |
| Priority sector | Health and childcare |
| Type of research | Basic research |
| Partner | No |
| Sub-project title | <i>Virtual 3D reconstruction of the pediments of the temple at Zeus at Olympia</i> |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | ? |
| Priority sector | <i>Conservation of European cultural heritage</i> |
| Type of research | <i>Basic research</i> |
| Partner | <i>No</i> |
| Sub-project title | <i>Determination of substrate binding centre of human nucleoside transporter hCNT1 implicated in the transport of antiviral/anticancer drugs through novel experimental approaches</i> |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | ? |
| Priority sector | <i>Health and childcare</i> |
| Type of research | <i>Basic research</i> |
| Partner | <i>No</i> |
| C20046: Research Support Fund Czech Republic; 4 selected projects (and 2 alternatives) [79 sub-projects in total] | |
| Sub-project title | The survey of the implementation efficiency of sustainable development strategies and objectives in the land-use planning |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 124993 |
| Priority sector | Promotion of sustainable development |
| Type of research | Basic research |
| Partner | No |
| Sub-project title | Assessment of historical immovables |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 180000 |
| Priority sector | Conservation of European cultural heritage |
| Type of research | Basic research |
| Partner | No |
| Sub-project title | The Patterns and Values of Volunteering in the Czech and Norwegian Society |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 150000 |
| Priority sector | Human resource development |
| Type of research | Basic research |
| Partner | No |
| Sub-project title | Research of new compounds as potential drugs against childhood cancers |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 225000 |
| Priority sector | Health and childcare |
| Type of research | Basic research |
| Partner | Yes |
| Sub-project title | <i>Towards geological storage of CO₂ in the Czech Republic</i> |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 200000 |
| Priority sector | <i>Protection of the environment</i> |
| Type of research | <i>Basic research</i> |
| Partner | <i>Yes</i> |
| Sub-project title | <i>Follow-up of children with perinatal burden</i> |
| Grant awarded (Euro) | 219952 |
| Priority sector | <i>Health and childcare</i> |
| Type of research | <i>Basic research</i> |
| Partner | <i>Yes</i> |

Annex 5: Evaluation results - international context

1. Introduction

The evaluation results presented in Annex 5 concern findings that are not specific to any of the three Beneficiary States. Such specific evaluation results are presented in the following three Annexes. Hence, the findings presented here are mainly of a general or international character - i.e. how the achievements of the Academic Research sector under the EEA/Norway Grants are consistent with or complement developments in other international forums in general, with a focus on the EU and Norway (being the largest EFTA partner).

Furthermore, regarding the EU, the focus is on how the EEA/Norway Grants support compares with that of the framework programmes implemented by DG Research & Innovation - i.e. FP6 (2002-2006) and FP7 (2007-2013), and with that of DG REGIO through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) as specified in Article 4 in EC (2006a).

2. Relevance

In an overall international context, the assessment of consistency and complementarity between the financial mechanisms for promoting academic research belongs primarily to the evaluation criterion: relevance. The EEA/Norway Grants are, in the following, compared with the EU support by DG Research & Innovation (FP6 and FP7) and DG REGIO (ERDF), and the Norwegian support (see e.g. Research Council of Norway, 2009) with respect to collaboration, strategic objectives, and thematic priorities.

A large part of the ERDF funds for research and technological development concern infrastructure improvement. Although this is also an element of the EEA/Norway Grants support, the comparison concentrates on the ERDF support for innovative action (see e.g. EC 2001 and 2007b) which follow from the relevant operational programmes in the different EU Member States; operational programmes that also have influenced the respective national priorities regarding the utilisation of the EEA/Norway Grants.

Collaboration

Table A5-1 illustrates that there are some differences between the financial instruments with respect to the requirements for partnerships. FP6 and FP7 are the strictest in this respect in that almost all partnerships must be transnational; that the activities cannot be carried out proficiently without such transnational cooperation; and an objective requires that 15% of the co-funding go to SME partners.⁸ Furthermore, the partnerships must take place through pre-defined formats such as Networks of Excellence (NoE), Integrated Projects (IP), Collaborative Projects (CP) etc. The Research Council of Norway seems to have similar but less strict requirements to partnerships.

The EEA/Norway Grants has a focus on establishing research partnerships, due to its overall aim of directly strengthening the bilateral relations between the Beneficiary States and the EFTA States. However, this shall only be done where appropriate. In the period 2004-09, there was a focus on

⁸ A target which, according to Dimitri Corpakis, Head of Unit C5 Regional Dimension of Innovation at DG Research & Innovation, is close to being achieved.

selecting support activities which were intended to benefit from such partnerships, yet other criteria may have weighed more in some cases.

In the 2009-2014 support period there is, in this context, a difference between the EEA Grants and the Norwegian Grants. Through Programme areas no. 23 and 24: Bilateral Research Cooperation and Bilateral Scholarship Cooperation, respectively, the Norwegian Grants directly seek to establish partnerships between researchers, students, institutions, and SMEs in the Beneficiary States and Norway. In contrast, the EEA Grants have, through Programme areas no. 18 and 19: Research within Priority Sectors and Scholarships, respectively, more of a Beneficiary State focus regarding the enhancement of research-based and human capital-based knowledge development. This said, expected outcomes include increased research cooperation and increased student and staff mobility between the EEA EFTA and Beneficiary States.

The innovative actions of the DG REGIO ERDF are carried out at regional/national level in the different EU Member States. Hence, the requirements for partnerships largely concern this geographical level. Cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation are instead supported via the EGTC – the European grouping of territorial cooperation – a legal instrument.

FP6 and FP7 have more specific aims for the partnerships as they are seen as instruments for creating a critical mass of expertise at European level within selected academic research topics and thus to contribute to the European Research Area (ERA). In other words, the aim is to establish research structures which can deal with major transnational challenges. The Research Council of Norway appears to aim to be in line with this.

The regional/local nature of DG REGIO ERDF's innovative actions imply that the aim is to involve the different types of stakeholders in the actions required to develop and implement the results in the given geographical area.

Finally and as already mentioned, the EEA/Norway Grants aim to strengthen bilateral relations and while doing so, to enhance research-based and human capital-based knowledge development.

Table A5-1 Collaboration characteristics

| | EEA/Norway Grants | EU DG Research & Innovation: FP6/FP7 | EU DG REGIO: ERDF - Innovative actions | Research Council of Norway |
|------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Requirements to partnerships | <p>Partnerships shall, where appropriate, be applied ... Partners may include, inter alia, local, regional and national levels, as well as the private sector, civil society and social partners in the Beneficiary States and the EFTA States (Protocol 38B, Article 8.4).</p> <p>Programme areas no. 23 and 24 (Norway Grants 2009-14) require bilateral cooperation.</p> | <p>Transnational cooperation⁽¹⁾ - i.e. there must be partners from different member or associated countries.</p> <p>Activities that can be better carried out at national or regional level, i.e. without cooperation across borders, are not eligible.</p> <p>Objective that 15% of co-funding goes to SMEs.</p> | <p>In line with the principle of partnership in the Objective 1 and 2 programmes part-financed by the ERDF, it is the wish of the Commission that the competent authorities in the regions - i.e. at regional and local level - participate as fully as possible in the innovative actions.</p> <p>A European legal instrument - EGTC: European grouping of territorial cooperation - is designed to facilitate and promote cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation.</p> | <p>The Research Council will work to: "further develop the framework for increased international research collaboration and strengthen international research policy cooperation".</p> |
| Aim of partnerships | <p>Strengthen the bilateral relations between the EFTA States - Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway - and the Beneficiary States.</p> <p>Enhance research-based and human capital-based knowledge development.</p> | <p>Create critical mass and move from fragmented research to structured research, hereunder the European Research Area (ERA).</p> | <p>Partnerships will pave the way for the emergence of high-quality regional programmes of innovative actions and stimulate the exchange of experience and networking between regions.</p> | <p>Generate a critical mass, counteract fragmentation, and lay the foundation for constructive cooperation nationally and internationally.</p> |

Source: EEA (2007), EEA (2010a), EEA (2010a), EC (2002), EC (2006b), EC (2007a), EC (2007b), Research Council of Norway (2009).

Notes: ⁽¹⁾ FP7 has a new 'ideas' instrument for individual teams with no obligation for transnational cooperation.

Strategic objectives

The strategic research objectives differ between the financial instruments, cf. Table A5-2. While the research objectives of the EEA/Norway Grants and the Research Council of Norway mainly concern the strengthening of the research systems and raising the research levels, FP6 and FP7 look further up the knowledge transfer process. Hence, the research objectives of FP6 and FP7 are only achieved if the research results have found their way into better technologies used by industry or better EU policies. There is thus relatively more emphasis on applied research - although it appears that DG Research & Innovation has decided to abolish the distinction between basic and applied research – and, as mentioned above, the involvement of SMEs in research activities. One implication of this is that it is relatively less feasible to assess the achievements of the research objectives for FP6 and FP7, as many of the targeted impacts will only appear in the medium to long term.

Achievements of the research objectives of the EEA/Norway Grants are thus easier to measure, as the exploitation of synergies gained from bringing together expertise via the number of joint publications, for example. Similarly, the sheer number of innovative actions in the lagging regions is an indicator which can be used to measure the achievements of research objectives.

The feasibility of measuring the achievement of objectives is lower when it comes to the wider objectives. The wider objectives of the Research Council of Norway are in this context most tangible - i.e. "new initiatives" or "new forms of interaction" - and are therefore the easiest to measure. The EEA/Norway Grants aim to contribute to social cohesion, while FP6 and FP7 go even further in stating that they make a contribution to the Lisbon Agenda - which is still considered to be relevant beyond 2010, and Europe 2020. Somewhere in between are the wider objectives of the innovative actions, since achievement can somehow be measured via benchmarking the developments in the supported regions with those of similar regions.

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Table A5-2 Strategic objectives

| EEA/Norway Grants | | EU DG Research & Innovation: FP6/FP7 | EU DG REGIO: ERDF - Innovative actions | Research Council of Norway |
|---------------------|--|---|--|--|
| Research objectives | <p>Bringing the academic research level in the Beneficiary States closer to the EU/EFTA level.</p> <p>Exploiting synergies by bringing together expertise.</p> | <p>Strengthening the scientific and technological base of industry and encouraging its international competitiveness.</p> <p>The FPs was explicitly designed to support the creation of the European Research Area (ERA).</p> <p>Promoting research activities in support of other EU policies.</p> | <p>Reducing the gap between regions in the fields of innovation and research and technological development and in the level of use of new information and communication technologies - by giving regions where developments are lagging behind or conversion is under way easier access to experimental tools in future-oriented fields.</p> | <p>Promoting the establishment of new fields of research and attainment of higher calibre research.</p> <p>Designing a sound underlying structure for the research system.</p> |
| Wider objectives | <p>Contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area.</p> | <p>EU becoming the most competitive and knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010, capable of sustainable growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion (Lisbon Agenda).</p> <p>Europe 2020 reinforces the target of combined public and private investment levels to reach 3% of EU's GDP as well as better conditions for R&D and Innovation.</p> | <p>Contribution to the EU's overall strategy aimed at reinforcing the competitiveness of the European economy via at the regional level helping the transition to a knowledge-based economy and society by better policies for the information society, as well as by stepping up the process of structural reform for competitiveness and innovation.</p> | <p>Implementing new initiatives to meet the needs of society.</p> <p>Developing new forms of interaction between research, trade and industry, and society at large.</p> |

Source: EEA (2007), EEA (2010a), EEA (2010a), EC (2002), EC (2006b), EC (2007a), EC (2007b), EC (2010a), Research Council of Norway (2009).

Thematic priorities

The formulation of strategic themes or priorities differs somewhat between the different financial mechanisms, as it is evident from Table A5-3 below regarding the level of detail of the thematic priorities. More specifically, the three strategic themes of the ERDF innovative actions are very broadly formulated. In fact, the first of these: "Regional economies based on knowledge and technological innovation: helping less-favoured regions to raise their technological level" is so general that it is not possible to incorporate it into the table.

The academic research programmes/funds and projects supported by the EEA/Norway Grants within the 2004-2009 period belong to one or more of the five thematic priorities shown in the first column of Table A5-3. Hence, the four remaining thematic priorities: "Schengen and the judiciary", "Acquis communautaire", "Civil society", and "Regional policy and cross-border activities" have not been addressed by academic research projects.

For the 2009-2014 periods (second column), it is only the EEA Grants - Programme area no. 18: "Research within Priority Sectors" which explicitly specifies which research areas will be eligible for support (EEA, 2010a). The EEA Grants - Programme area no 19: "Scholarships" as well as the Norway Grants - Programme area no. 23: "Bilateral Research Cooperation", and no. 24: "Bilateral Scholarship Cooperation" do not specify such requirements. Apart from the priority sector "Civil Society", the priority sectors compare reasonably with those of the 2004-2009 periods. However, the 2009-2014 priority sectors consist of more detailed programme areas which must be addressed by the project applicants.

Table A5-3 shows that the EEA/Norway Grants are the only form of explicit priority support for the issue of European cultural heritage generally, and thus support academic research projects more specifically in this area. However, innovative actions within the ERDF can also focus on regional identity. Secondly, the more general focus on the promotion of sustainable development within the EEA/Norway Grants is unlike the more specific focuses of FP7 and the Research Council of Norway. Thirdly, FP6 and FP7 have more and wider thematic priorities than the other two.

Naturally, this latter observation should also be viewed in light of the amount of co-funding provided. While the EEA/Norway Grants during 2004-2009 spent EUR 82 million on supporting academic research activities and the Research Council of Norway in 2011 has an overall budget for R&D-related activities of around EUR 0.9 billion, the FP6 had a budget of EUR 17.5 billion while the budget for FP7 amounts to more than EUR 50 bn.

Table A5-3 Thematic priorities

| EEA/Norway Grants (2004-2009) | EEA Grants (2009-2014) | EU DG Research & Innovation: FP6 | EU DG Research & Innovation: FP7 | EU DG REGIO: ERDF - Innovative actions | Research Council of Norway |
|--|--|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| Protection of the environment | Environmental Protection and Management Climate Change and Renewable Energy | Sustainable development, global change and ecosystems | Environment (including climate change) | | Energy and the environment |
| Promotion of sustainable development | Environmental Protection and Management Climate Change and Renewable Energy | Sustainable development, global change and ecosystems | (Energy) | Regional identity and sustainable development | Oceans |
| Conservation of European cultural heritage | Protecting Cultural Heritage | | | Regional identity and sustainable development | |
| Human resource development | Human and Social Development | Human resources & mobility (Block 2) - Marie Curie | Marie Curie | | |
| Health and childcare | Human and Social Development | Life sciences, genomics and biotechnology for health | Health | | Health and welfare Biotechnology |
| | | Information society technologies | Information and communication technologies | e-EuropeRegio: the information society at the service of regional development | ICT |
| | | Nanotechnologies and nanosciences, knowledge-based functional materials, new production processes and devices | Nanosciences, nanotechnologies, materials and new production technologies | | New materials |
| | | Aeronautics and space | Transport (including aeronautics) Space | | |
| | | Food quality and safety | Food, agriculture and fisheries, and biotechnology | | Food |
| | Civil Society | Citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society | Socio-economic sciences and humanities | | |
| | | | Security | | |

Source: EEA (2007), EEA (2010a), EEA (2010a), EC (2002), EC (2006b), EC (2007a), EC (2007b), EC (2010a), Research Council of Norway (2009).

From the above comparisons, one can observe that it is not straightforward process to assess whether or not the support of the EEA/Norway Grants given to academic research was relevant in an international context. Such an assessment requires insight into whether or not the synergies and/or differences between the different financial instruments are exploited in practice.

There are several issues which call for a low score in Table A5-4. Firstly, there is minimal written evidence in the documents or from the websites provided by the other financial mechanisms of their knowledge of the EEA/Norway Grants. Only the website of the Research Council of Norway has a section which provides a presentation, but neither "In the Vanguard of Research" nor in its "Strategy for International Cooperation 2010-2020" (Research Council of Norway, 2009 and 2010, respectively) is there reference to the EEA/Norway Grants. Secondly, it seems that prior to this evaluation, there was very limited knowledge within DG Research & Innovation regarding the existence of the EEA/Norway Grants, and so no efforts have been made to pursue consistency or complementarity. Thirdly, it can be argued that because the size of the funding from the EEA/Norway Grants is negligible compared with that coming from the EU, it is not a level playing field for aligning support to academic research projects.

However, the perspective above regarding a lack of formal coordination between the EEA/Norway Grants and the other funding instruments is not necessarily a good indicator of the irrelevance of the supported projects in an international context. In some cases, extensive coordination efforts might involve higher costs than the benefits reaped. Furthermore, it appears from the brief review of the EU's financial instruments that they are not always fully coordinated between themselves. This is also the case for the different funding modes applied within the FPs by DG Research & Innovation. For example, the interim evaluation of FP7 (EC, 2010b) concludes that the introduction of many novel funding modes has increased complexity from the point of view of the research community, especially industry and SMEs. Although some of the new modes appear to be very successful and have been implemented with little friction, others have elicited criticisms, some of which go beyond mere teething troubles to suggest flaws that are more fundamental. In this context, it is recommended that great caution should be exercised when proposing any further new measures for FP8 until those currently in place have been convincingly evaluated. EC (2010b) also emphasises that improved coordination of research funding between the Member State and EU level is needed.

There are also several issues which advocate a high score in Table A5-4. Some of these are actual while others are potential i.e. not yet fully exploited. One of the actual issues is that the EEA/Norway Grants complements the EU efforts of social cohesion through directly bringing the academic research level in the Beneficiary States closer to the EU/EFTA level. In this context, it can be argued that it fills a gap or establishes a link between the efforts of DG Research & Innovation and DG REGIO. As with the FPs, it has a strong focus on achieving research results of high quality through strong partnerships, while like the ERDF innovative actions; it has a focus on raising the technological level in less-developed regions. In other words, unlike the FPs, the EEA/Norway Grants allow a focus on solving complex research problems which are specific to certain less-developed countries in an appropriate partnership. At the same time, it appears that, more than the ERDF innovative actions; the EEA/Norway Grants enable a maintained focus on research and capacity building. In other words, there are fewer requirements to pursue actual regional economic development within the single EEA/Norway Grants projects.

Another real issue which favours a high score is the strong focus within the EEA/Norway Grants on research in sustainability and well-being topics in less-developed areas. This is fully in line with the Europe 2020 strategy (EC, 2010a) which requires an integrated and coherent approach to support smart, sustainable and inclusive growth rooted in greater coordination of policies at national and European levels.

An issue that has not been fully exploited to date is the benefit gained from improved coordination between the different financial instruments. As mentioned above, they each have some strengths and weaknesses, and benefits can arise from multiplying strengths i.e. from synergies. For example, a transnational FP project might identify the need for information from certain EU Member States in order to provide research results of sufficient European Added Value (EAV). The EEA/Norway Grants might help to build up the research capacity to provide such information in some of these Member States. Finally, better coordination will also help to avoid unnecessarily duplicating research efforts.

To conclude, as shown in Table A5-4, we assess that the issues in favour of a high score have more weight than those in favour of a low score, and it is therefore assessed that the activities supported by the EEA/Norway Grants are in line with the EU/EFTA academic research agendas to a satisfactory extent.

Table A5-4 How relevant was the supported activities in an EU/EFTA context?

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The activities supported by the EEA/Norway Grants are fully in line with the EU/EFTA academic research agendas. |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> 3 | The activities supported are in line with the EU/EFTA academic research agendas to a satisfactory extent. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The activities supported are in line with the EU/EFTA academic research agendas to a limited extent. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The activities supported are not in line with the EU/EFTA academic research agendas or only to a very limited extent. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

3. Impact/effectiveness

It is outside the scope of the present evaluation to compare the general impacts or effectiveness of the EEA/Norway Grants vis-à-vis those of the DG Research & Innovation, DG REGIO or the Research Council of Norway. This would, for example, require reviewing numerous evaluations carried out for the different FP thematic areas or the innovative actions. Furthermore, the somewhat different strategic objectives in between the different financial mechanisms, as described above, make such comparisons difficult.

Hence, the assessments of the impact/effectiveness of the activities supported by the EEA/Norway Grants are primarily made on Beneficiary State level - and thus presented in the following three Annexes.

However, there are aspects of the aforementioned similarities and differences between the financial mechanisms which are central to a comparison of impacts and effectiveness. For example, from the evaluation of collaboration characteristics in Table A5-1 it is evident that partnerships can be used in somewhat different ways to achieve impacts effectively. In other words, there are some differences in the intervention logics applied. The FPs and the Research Council of Norway have a focus on

achieving significant impacts via the creation of critical mass of expertise. Hence, sufficient experts in both similar and dissimilar research disciplines are brought together to solve the research problems – which, at least for the FPs, concern European level research problems. The EEA/Norway Grants have a similar focus but with a smaller geographical focus, i.e. bringing together expertise on a bilateral level to solve national level research problems. In contrast, the intervention logic of ERDF innovative actions tends to focus more on making use of partnerships in the technology transfer process, i.e. in getting the research results to the market place and/or on the policy agenda.

The strategic objectives presented in Table A5-2 also support the view that there are differences in the intervention logics applied. These differences are described above.

4. Efficiency

It is similarly outside the scope of this evaluation to assess the efficiency of the EEA/Norway Grants in a general international context, i.e. in comparison with the other financial mechanisms. However, the interviews carried out as part of this evaluation in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic do shed some light on some differences experienced by the national stakeholders. These are discussed in the following three Annexes.

Common to the stakeholders in these three countries is the fact that they generally find it cumbersome to comply with administrative procedures - both those of the EEA/Norway Grants and those of the EU programmes. However, the latter procedures are considered to be by far more cumbersome than the former, and in practice many find the chance to be a project holder of an EEA/Norwegian Grants project an excellent "playing ground" for being a future FP project coordinator.

5. Sustainability

Finally, it is very difficult to compare the sustainability of research findings between the different financial mechanisms, particularly with respect to how project deliverables and impacts persist and thus how the intervention logic continues to exist.

It is also difficult to compare the sustainability of the established research collaborations. For all financial instruments, it seems to be the case that projects have led to increased confidence between researchers from different institutions, for example, regarding the sharing of knowledge/findings with the resulting appreciation of benefits gained from continuing research relationships. For a few funding modes, such as the FP's Networks of Excellence, there are more formal requirements for the establishment of legal entities beyond the programme period. However, these requirements have not always been fulfilled (see e.g. EC, 2009)

Annex 6: Evaluation results – Poland

1. Introduction

Poland was the main recipient of research funding from the EEA/Norway Grants during 2004-2009, receiving more than 50% of total funding. Hence, particular attention has been given to evaluating the Polish achievements and experience, in order to learn lessons for the 2009-2014 support periods. It should be noted that the scope of the evaluation is formative - and so intends to focus on what can be learned (opposed to a summative evaluation - with a focus on what has been achieved). In this context, it must be taken into account that the evaluation is based on a small selection of stakeholders. Nevertheless, the evaluation does use common evaluation themes such as relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impacts - but must be interpreted from a formative perspective.

The EEA /Norway Grants' Academic Research sector is implemented in Poland in two ways, as in Hungary and the Czech Republic. It is either implemented through large funds/programmes which are managed by appointed administrative bodies or through open calls by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. In the case of Poland, the Information Processing Centre oversaw the Polish-Norwegian Research Fund, and the Foundation for Polish Science oversaw the part of the Homing Program which was funded by the EEA/Norway Grants (the program continues with funding from the European Union). The use of the Grants is regulated on the Polish side by an operational program prepared by the Ministry of Regional Development (July 2005). A joint Polish and Norwegian document has been developed for the Polish-Norwegian Research Fund (Annex III of the Agreement of the Fund).

The findings based on earlier evaluations are presented below, along with interviews with the Polish Focal Point (Ministry of Regional Development), Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the Information Processing Centre (PL0071 - Polish-Norwegian Research Fund) and the Foundation for Polish Science (PL0072 - Homing program). In addition, the following three individual projects have been interviewed individually:

PL0078 - Ecosystem approach to marine spatial planning - Polish marine areas and the Natura 2000 network

PL0256 - Epidemiology of Mental Disorders and Access to Care

PL0259 - Advanced methods of materials engineering in diagnostics of art works after renovation by means of shaped, high-energy laser radiation pulses (MATLAS)

Additionally, a further four individual recipients under the PL0072 - Homing program, together with the following four sub-projects under the PL0071 - Polish-Norwegian Research Fund, participated in a focus group interview:

PL0071 –Sub-project: Gender & Care in Health Sector Reform

PL0071 – Sub-project: Development of High-Efficiency Heat Pumping Units

PL0071 –Sub-project: International Workshop on Social Informatics

PL0071 –Sub-project: The Alkb protein and its eukaryotic homologues

Finally, the individual interviews have been conducted with Norwegian partner organisations together with the Norwegian Research Council and, finally, with comments from the Norwegian Embassy of Poland.

The various interviewees have been weighted differently according to different levels in the evaluation. Hence, the views of the Focal Point, the intermediate body and the fund managers are particularly applicable on matters of relevance. Regarding impact and effectiveness, it seems that the input from individual projects and sub-projects are significant. On efficiency, inputs from most stakeholders are included. Finally, sustainability is mainly substantiated thorough statements by individual projects and sub-projects.

Aside from the interviews conducted are findings included from earlier evaluations of the Homing programme and the Polish-Norwegian Research Fund (Bryl (2009) and Baszio et al. (2009)).

In relation to the achievements of the two funds/programmes, the Polish-Norwegian Research Fund and the Homing programme, it is acknowledged that the funds/programmes supported during the first funding period mainly related to input-based management, while the objective in the second period is to apply result-based management.

The lessons learnt from Poland are combined with those of Hungary and the Czech Republic (presented in Annexes 7 and 8) and those gleaned from the international perspective (Annex 5) are integrated into the findings, conclusions, and recommendations outlined in the main report.

2. Relevance

The relevance of the EEA/Norway Grants' activities and achievements are assessed below with respect to different objectives and perspectives. Since relevance to the EU context was analysed in Annex 5, the focus is here on relevance with respect to the Polish research agenda and the objectives of the EEA/Norway Grants - the latter regarding both priority sectors and bilateral relationships. These relevance achievements are as presented in Table A6-3, analysed using the views of the Focal Point and the Intermediate Body, of the two fund/programme managers of the Polish project holders, and of EFTA (Norwegian) stakeholders.

Earlier findings on relevance

The monitoring report by Bryl (2009) was carried out according to the FMO External Monitoring Manual (EEA, 2008). Its main purpose was to verify that the Polish-Norwegian Research Fund was proceeding according to the grant agreement, and so the dominant focus has been on assessing the efficiency of the fund management regarding the selection and guidance of sub-projects and regarding compliance with financial and administrative rules. Hence, only minimal emphasis was placed on the evaluation of relevance, apart from recommending that the funds are consistent with other international or national programmes.

The evaluation report of the Homing programme by Baszio et al. (2009) does not question the relevance of the project - i.e. to help solve the problem of Polish brain drain, since the Polish research

system is a net-exporter of researchers abroad. However, they emphasise that the mobility of researchers per se is a positive feature of the dynamics of a research system.

The Polish research policy context is that of the National Research Programme from 2005, which was converted into the National Strategic Research and Development Programme (Ministry of Science and Higher Education, 2008). Furthermore, the National Foresight Programme "Polska 2020" (Ministry of Science and Higher Education, 2006) and the Operational Programme: Innovative Economy 2007-2013 (Ministry of Regional Development, 2007) also exist.

In the project framework for the Polish-Norwegian Research Fund (Ministry of Science and Information Society Technologies, 2005) it is underlined that there should be a focus on common research goals between Poland and Norway - achieved through joint research projects, a mobility programme to increase the number of Polish and Norwegian scientists working in other countries, and workshops and seminars facilitating Polish-Norwegian research cooperation.

Overall objectives

The EEA/Norway Grants Academic Research sector has two main overall objectives. The first is the reduction of economic and social disparities and the second is the support of bilateral relations. Both requirements are part of the regulatory framework of the EEA/Norway Grants Academic Research sector in Poland.

During the interview with the Focal Point at the Ministry of Regional Development, it was underlined that during the selection process all criteria, as stated in the regulations, were followed. This effectively means that only projects which are in line with the overall objectives are funded. The obligatory inclusion of an international project partner in the sub-projects of the Polish-Norwegian Research Fund and the additional 10 points for partnerships in the open calls underlines this fact.

Following the interview with the Focal Point (which covered both the evaluation of the Academic Research sector and the Health and Childcare sector), it was mentioned that there are some primarily administrative challenges to be addressed by the projects in connection to partnerships. This is despite the fact that partnerships have proved themselves effective during the course of the implementation of the Fund. This is an approach also to be pursued in future funds/programmes. This view is supported by comments from the Norwegian Embassy in Warsaw who regards Academic Research to be the field in which establishment of partnerships has been the most successful, both in calls where partnerships have provided additional points and in the first call, where they did not.

Addressing the overall objectives of the EEA/Norway Grants are viewed equally by the fund managers (the Polish-Norwegian Research Fund and the Homing Programme) and intermediate body (the Ministry of Science and Higher Education) as a largely administrative task in the selection process. By selecting the projects based on the Operational Programme and the specific regulations for the Research Fund, full alignment with the overall objectives are achieved.

However, specific circumstances regarding the Homing Programme make it difficult to include the partnership aspects. The nature of the Homing Programme is inwards looking, so countering the tide of the Polish "brain-drain". Including partners from the EEA/Norway thus makes little sense, and Polish researches that are enrolled in the programme often come from other destinations besides the

EEA and Norway. On the other hand, the Homing Program has a clearer impact on social and economic disparities by supporting researchers in returning to Poland.

In relation to the Polish Norwegian Research Fund, the opposite seems to be apparent. During the interview it was mentioned that *"it was difficult for many researchers to understand the concept of social cohesion - as a selection criterion"*. Therefore the OPI had to guide many applicants in this respect.

Addressing relevance in accordance with the overall objectives during the interviews on project and sub-project level provides a slightly different perspective on the matter. In relation to reduction of economic and social disparities, it is fair to conclude that this is mainly a matter for programme level. Yet in relation to the partnerships, individual projects, sub-projects and Norwegian research partners, all give a more nuanced description of the relevance of partnerships on project level - views which go beyond describing mere administrative burdens. During the interviews with individual projects, cooperation with Norwegian partners were described in these terms: *"They [the cooperation partner] were not very important", "It must be said that the Norwegians only got a little new knowledge out of it", "[...] there was not really a close collaboration with the University of Oslo" and that it was "more a friendly relationship than a research relationship"*.

That the views on partnerships at project level can be validated to a certain extent by the interviews with Norwegian (open call) project partners. It was stated by one project that *"[we] were not the right partner"* and another: *"collaboration on joint research papers does...not seem to have occurred"*. A third project states that *"...it is generally relevant to meet with the Polish experts, they are considered to be very qualified statisticians. We have however not seen any of the Polish results yet [the project is near closure]"*.

The statements were further substantiated during the focus group interview with different sub-projects under the Polish Norwegian Research Fund (PNRF) and under the Foundation for Polish Science (The Homing Programme). Here, some participants argued that their partnership was not genuine since they were merely expected to give additional "selection points". In these cases, the cooperation often primarily consisted of mutual participation in conferences and/or seminars and joint visits.

According to the Information Processing Centre (IPC), the beneficiaries of the Polish-Norwegian Research Fund (PNRF) have never raised any of the issues mentioned above. At the same time, the IPC points out that the Fund is a scientific programme dedicated to the research activities carried out mainly in the home institutions of involved scientists. In addition, in the case of compulsory partnership in PNRF, the criterion for choosing the Norwegian partner was only scientific competence, so according to the IPC, there is no possibility of mismatching the partners in this case.

As emphasised by other representatives in the focus group interview, there certainly exist good examples of partnerships where the Beneficiary has teamed up with Norwegian partners that are "world leaders" within the research topic – also being of relevance to Poland. In other words, bilateral partnerships were particularly relevant in those cases where the research topic was relevant both to Poland and Norway and where there was also synergy potential. During the focus group it was also mentioned that the cultural aspects of partnerships in particular, have provided new perspectives on research.

National research policies

The Polish research system is, like in many other Central European countries, undergoing substantial changes. This also has implications in relation to considerations regarding the relevance of the implementation of the EEA/Norway Grants in the context of Polish national research policy. All interviewees shared the view that national research policies are deemed to provide little or no constraints on the scope of their activities.

That accordance with national policies is easily established is stated by the Focal Point. In addition, the Polish-Norwegian Research Fund has focused their activities on two sectors: "protection of the environment" and "healthcare". This specific focus was decided jointly in an agreement between Poland and Norway and thus covers Polish, Norwegian as well as EEA Grant priorities. The result of this is to make the review process easier, in the view of the OPI. Hence, only reviewers for two subjects have to be identified for appraisals. However, due to their broad scope, submitted projects were much diversified, so the Fund Operator had to ensure reviewers from different scientific disciplines.

The Homing Program has a direct link to the Polish policies in the field. The rationale of the program was actually established before the EEA/Norway Grants were considered a feasible source of financing. Hence the implementation of the EEA/Norway Grants is to be considered very relevant vis-à-vis the Polish policy on countering "brain-drain".

Whether the Grants have relevance in relation to the national research agenda is difficult to say for the interviewed projects. In general, they all seemed to have had little or no problems making their project applications correspond to the EEA/Norway Grants, indicating that the programming of the grant does not obstruct the priorities on the level of the research institutions (which on an aggregated level seem to constitute the Polish research policy).

Table A6-1 How relevant was the supported activities for the national research agenda?

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The activities supported by the EEA/Norway Grants were both in line with the national research agenda and the achievements have been integrated into this agenda. |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> 3 | The activities supported were in line with the national research agenda. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The activities supported were partially in line with the national research agenda. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The activities supported were not or only minimally in line with the national research agenda. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

The priority sectors

The priority sectors of the EEA/Norway grant are accepted by all Polish stakeholders included in this study. The regulatory documents of the EEA/Norway Grants are seen as authoritative and the main task of the Intermediate Body and the fund managers, in this respect, is only to ensure proper administrative implementation. This includes making sure that all funded projects are within the prioritised sectors. Among the stakeholders interviewed there is a common understanding that the priorities of the EEA/Norway Grants on the matter of priority sectors is that they are able to embrace most projects, hence none of the interviewees felt this is be a problem. For the Polish-Norwegian Research

Fund it has been specifically agreed between Norway and Poland that two specific sectors should be supported.

The EEA/Norway Grants are popular among the Beneficiary projects. The Grants are seen as clearly filling a gap where international funding is sought. Compared to EC funding (FP7 etc.), requirements regarding multinational partnerships are less strict and thus more flexible. Moreover, compared to polish funds the EEA/Norway Grants are larger.

Table A6-2 How relevant was the supported activities with respect to the five priority sectors?

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The activities supported by the EEA/Norway Grants address fully the chosen areas within the priority sectors. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The activities supported address to a satisfactory extent the chosen areas within the priority sectors. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The activities supported address to a limited extent the chosen areas within the priority sectors. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The activities supported do not or only to a very limited extent address the chosen areas within the priority sectors. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

Table A6-3 Relevance of EEA/Norway Grants support to Poland

| | Focal Point and Intermediate Body | Fund/Programme managers | Polish project holders | EFTA (Norwegian) stakeholders |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| Polish research agenda | Accordance with national policies is easily established | Good underpinning of the Polish "brain-drain" agenda. The Polish research agenda generally seems to be undergoing a period of change, and is thus hard to pinpoint. | - | - |
| EEA/Norway Grants - priority sectors | Alignment ensured during Operational Program and joint Polish-Norwegian agreement on the Fund. | Selected priority sectors have been given specific attention (Environment and Healthcare). Priority sectors only play a small role in the Homing Programme. | The priority sectors are viewed in a positive way to be both wide and flexible. The Grants clearly fill a gap. | Polish Norwegian Research Fund based on joint priorities. |
| EEA/Norway Grants - bilateral relationships | Partnerships have, during the course of the implementation of the Fund, proved to be effective. An approach also to be pursued in future funds/programmes | The partnership projects provide a learning opportunity for future EU Framework projects. | It is sometimes possible to pursue both the research agenda in Poland and Norway, but this is difficult due to lack of knowledge regarding the Norwegian priorities. Often difficult to find a good match –e.g. partnerships where the research topic is relevant both to Poland and Norway and where there is also an evident synergy potential. | Not always possible to find a good match. |

Source: Interviews with stakeholders.

3. Impact/effectiveness

During the interviews with the relevant stakeholders and especially with the projects and sub-projects, matters of impact and effectiveness were addressed. In relation to the current evaluation it must be borne in mind that matters of impacts and effectiveness are included for formative purposes only and that the study is based on statements from key stakeholders and a sample of projects.

Impacts and effectiveness have been analysed earlier in the evaluations of the Polish-Norwegian Research Fund and the Homing Program. It was thus highlighted by Bryl (2009) that the Polish-Norwegian Research Fund had, to a large degree, supported Polish beneficiaries who already had experience of cooperating with Norwegian partners with well-established research histories. Hence, according to Bryl, it was questioned how the support has led to added value in the form of new collaborations and/or new research areas. In other words, it was suggested that any added value mainly takes place via high quality research projects - i.e. where the research quality has been enhanced as a result of the EEA/Norway Grants' co-funding.

Regarding the parallel analysis carried out by Baszio et al. (2009), it was assessed that the Homing programme has made it easier for outstanding Polish post-doctoral researchers to return in order to pursue a research career in Poland. However, it was debated whether the programme really had encouraged researchers to return to Poland or merely facilitated the process for those who had already decided to return. The programme was deemed effective in the sense that at the time of the evaluations, 149 applications had been received and 47 laureates had been given financial support (i.e. the budget was spent). However, it was recommended that the eligibility restriction which currently allows applications within only four years after completion of their PhD should be eliminated for applicants. However, many scientists abroad prefer to undertake a second post-doc project before making the decision to return to their home country. By dropping this eligibility criterion, Baszio et al. concluded that the Homing programme would be able to attract the best scientists at various career stages.

During the interviews of the current formative evaluation with the FP and Intermediate Body it was clearly stated that funded initiatives must reach the planned goals and deliverables, as required in the application. This is supported by the statements of the fund managers, who from their monitoring activities conclude that projects meet the goals.

During the interviews with projects and sub-projects, the impression of the evaluator was that planned activities are conducted, and if relevant, changes are made following the respective procedures for approval of project changes within the fund/programme and open calls. Examples were presented of minor technical/administrative challenges (e.g. activities which had wrongfully not been publicly tendered) which had postponed a deliverable. However, all projects generally deliver as planned. In addition, the impression reached was that research of a high quality is produced and in terms of impact (understood as more than "output" such as publications and patents), examples were given of the take-up of results on a policy level (e.g. *"the report with recommendations...is to be used by the Ministry of Health and other Ministries..."* and on development on future policies of the Ministry of the Environment *"...we are likely to get involved in this - and also use the research results"*).

In connection with the statements made by the project and sub-project promoters presented in relation to relevance - some matters in relation to bilateral relations do seem to come up against some

obstacles which affect impact and effectiveness. This view is, to some extent, supported by a Norwegian partner on an individual project who states that in relation to the specific activities "*...the project results have little impact*" on future scope of the research of the organisation. Rather, the "*...main impact is an increase in competences*". However, it should also be stated that other impacts can be gained through partnerships, hence another Norwegian open call project partner states that the "*...reason for participating was to maintain the partnership*". A general remark on impacts in Norway is made by the Norwegian Research Council which states that "*...the impact in Norway is little if the share of funding is small*".

In relation to this comment, the Information Processing Centre (the fund manager of the Polish - Norwegian Research Fund (PNRF)) points out that it is beyond the competence of the Fund Operator to modify the rules and procedures (including sharing the funds). However, all Norwegian partners of the PNRF subprojects could have their expenditures refunded, and until June 2011, this amount was equal to 7.153.500 EUR (31% of the total reimbursement). Furthermore, the Information Processing Centre stressed that the division of expenditures depends on the project and on the role of particular partners.

Table A6-4 Have the supported activities resulted in the planned deliverables?

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | Fund/programme and project activities have resulted in the planned deliverables - which are of high quality due to the EEA/Norway Grants' support. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | Fund/programme and project activities have resulted in most of the planned deliverables - which are of high quality due to the EEA/Norway Grants' support. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | Fund/programme and project activities have resulted in some of the planned deliverables only. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | Fund/programme and project activities have resulted in few of the planned deliverables. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

It has been difficult for the FP to assess the actual impact of the programmes. Common indicators must be established together with a baseline and progress on the established indicators. Impact has therefore mainly been assessed on a project level. This view is partly shared by the fund managers who also focus on the impact produced at the level of the individual project. Poland thus shares a classic challenge with most other research stakeholders: that of being able to provide evidence for societal impacts of research and innovation activities within the short time of the actual research. It is thus generally fair to state that societal effects (i.e. increased ability to compete; increased business turnover; more and better jobs etc.) cannot be seen before 2-5 years after the supported activities have ended.

According to the projects interviewed, impacts are indeed hard to measure for research activities, but some projects mention direct impact in terms of influence on governmental policies within healthcare and environment (quoted above). Examples of tangible output of the (prototypes) were also described during the interviews.

Regarding this issue, the Information Centre (IPC) points out, that the research projects are specific and cannot be evaluated in the same ways as industrial ones. According to the IPC, indicators of success in research projects cannot often be defined "in advance" in the application form, because the research is intended to check the result. The result which establishes the contrary of the scientific

thesis is also a result, although not the one which the scientist expected when starting the research, the IPC states.

However, the core indicators defined in the application form can give an indication of the potential impacts of the supported activities under the EEA/Norway Grants. The core indicators in focus here are: "Patents", "Supported PhD's" and "Publications".⁹ The indicators are characteristic of what would be called "output" (follow project activities but not actual societal impact) in an evaluation context. The indicators are divided into output from Fund/programme funded sub-projects and individual open call projects.

Under the Fund/programme supported sub-projects (in this case PNRF and the Homing programme), none of the 12 patents in October 2010 are Polish.¹⁰ This is also the case for the number of supported PhDs. On the other hand, 64% of the total number of potential publications is estimated to be Polish. With a total Polish share of the academic research sector funds at approximately 52%, this indicates a significantly higher than average level of publications. It also indicates that the Polish Norwegian Research Fund and the Homing Programme are less focused on applications for patents and support for PhDs.

The core indicators for the individual projects (which constitute approximately half of the grants in Poland) reveal a substantially higher level of potential patent applications, with the Polish contribution representing 52% of the total 23. Regarding the number of PhDs, Polish open call projects had the intention of supporting 24% out of a total of 154. Finally, 46% of the 773 potential publications from individual projects are Polish.

Table A6-5 Have the funds/programmes or projects successfully led to impact?

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The funds/programmes or projects have successfully led to the planned impacts, and any unplanned impacts have not changed this view. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The funds/programmes or projects have led to many of the planned impacts, and any unplanned impacts have not changed this view significantly. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The funds/programmes or projects have only led to some of the planned impacts, and unplanned impacts have not improved this view. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The funds/programmes or projects have not been successful in leading to impacts. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

The dedicated focus on generating publications is mirrored by the dissemination activities of the interviewed projects. The Polish fund managers stated that dissemination is largely conducted by the researchers themselves, which results in fewer activities directed towards a broader community, however. This is therefore a priority which seems relevant when taking into account the nature of the research activities. Yet it should also be noted that in some cases, projects target a broader

⁹ The Information Processing Centre (IPC) points out that the indicators depend on the project, and that the three mentioned here are ranked among others - e.g. they are not the only ones and should therefore – according to IPC – not be considered as being the most important.

¹⁰ EEA/Norway Grants, Key Facts, Academic Research Funds, 19. October 2010.

community through their promotional activities.¹¹ This is supported by the interviews conducted at project level. Here, academic papers appear to be the preferred source of dissemination, which in some cases is supported by workshops and seminars targeted at relevant researchers. Workshops and seminars often seem to be the context in which the EEA/Norway partners are most frequently included.

The Information Processing Centre's means of dissemination depends on the specific project in question. In some projects, a broader community is also the target of promotional activities.

According to the projects and sub-projects, the EEA/Norway grant's logos and information are always applied according to the regulation. This is supported by the OPI who verified this during their on-site visits.

Table A6-6 How effective were dissemination efforts to make the EEA/Norway Grants visible?

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The fund/programme manager or project holder had a strong focus on dissemination of findings to both direct users/beneficiaries, and the achievements of the EEA/Norway Grants have become highly visible. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The fund/programme manager or project holder carried out some dissemination of findings to both direct users/beneficiaries, and some of the achievements of the EEA/Norway Grants have become visible. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The fund/programme manager or project holder undertook limited dissemination of findings, and the achievements are only minimally visible. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | Dissemination of fund/programme or project findings was not a central focus. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

¹¹ The IPC mentions in this connection to sub-project PNR-150-AI-1/07 - Development of High-Efficiency Heat Pumping Units, which has promoted the project through advertisements on city buses.

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Table A6-7 Impact/effectiveness of EEA/Norway Grants' support to Poland

| | Focal Point and Intermediate Body | Fund/Programme managers | Polish project holders | EFTA (Norwegian) stakeholders |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Deliverables | The projects reach the goals defined in their application | According to the monitoring all projects meet their objectives. | Most deliverables provided in due time. | - |
| Dissemination | - | Dissemination is conducted mainly through academic publications | Mainly through publications but also via seminars and workshops. | - |
| Impact | Difficult to measure on a programme level. | Reporting on impacts is conducted by the beneficiaries | On a number of occasions impacts have been achieved at the governmental policy level. | Following the initial monitoring of potential outputs, the Polish beneficiaries show an inclination towards publications. Potential patent applications and supported PhDs are mainly envisaged by the individual projects (open call). |
| Visibility of EEA/Norway Grants | - | OPI verifies during site visits. | Visibility is ensured according to the regulation. | - |

Source: Interviews with stakeholders.

4. Efficiency

The implementation of the EEA/Norway Grants in the Academic Research sector has resulted in both objectives being met and impact made on research and society. The implementation of the Grants has also required an effort to ensure that the funds and Grants are managed effectively.

Two perspectives regarding efficiency were applied in this evaluation, one in relation to the Donor and one to the Beneficiary.

Overall, the EEA/Norway grants are perceived as providing clear guidelines for proposal procedures and as providing a good and comprehensive framework for research activities. The size of funding made available to the research projects is well proportioned and enables researchers to conduct the relevant activities. However, it is clear that the administrative interaction provides challenges. For both the individual open call projects and the fund/programme managed activities, a significant number of administrative levels are involved when communication is conducted between donor (I.e. the FMO) and beneficiary. In the case of the individual projects, communication goes from the project through the intermediate body to the Focal Point to the FMO (and back) – a division of Beneficiary and FMO with two layers. For the Fund/programme supported sub-projects, requests would go through three layers: the Fund Manager to the Ministry of Higher Education to the Focal Point to the FMO (and Back).

The administrative set-up provides a significant challenge to both project and sub-projects, especially if the project implementation requires larger changes. During an interview with an individual project it is mentioned that the process of evaluation can easily take half a year, which is similar to EC funding but longer when compared to polish funds. During the focus group interview it was mentioned that changes to the budgets and activities which are subject to a decision by the FMO are also considered to be a major challenge and the projects' timelines usually have to be rescheduled several times during this process. This seems to be due to the above described administrative procedures which require the action of the FMO and thus includes communication through several administrative layers. These layers all add to time to the actual administrative decision, which might be made within a few days or weeks.

Table A6-8 Was the EEA Norway Grants' financial mechanism efficient in supporting achievements?

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The EEA/Norway Grants' financial mechanism was very efficient when supporting the academic research achievements. |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> 3 | The EEA/Norway Grants' financial mechanism was fairly efficient when supporting the academic research achievements. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The EEA/Norway Grants' financial mechanism was barely efficient when supporting the academic research achievements. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The EEA/Norway Grants financial mechanism was inefficient when supporting the academic research achievements. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

When referring to beneficiary efficiency, this is understood to be the efficiency of the national stakeholders. From the intermediate body, the set-up is generally considered to be adequate. This view is supported by the fund managers. However, some procedures such as sending copies of all invoices to the intermediate body are considered by both the OPI and the Homing programme as cumbersome. The Polish-Norwegian Research Fund and the Intermediate Body do see some potential in streamlining the Polish set-up, resulting in Grants being implemented through one single Polish fund.

From a project point of the view, the reporting requirements seem to be the most challenging. More specifically: quarterly reporting; the detailed handling of overheads based on actual expenses; the minimal flexibility in relation to shifts in budgets and exchange rate issues stood out during the interviews. The projects state that the EEA/Norway Grants provide the possibility of doing something innovative, but that it is also good that the focus is much less on research policies than on the Framework Programmes of the EU.

It was stated by the Polish Norwegian Research Fund that quarterly reporting might not be a major challenge, since this would make it possible for projects with little cash flow to request payments on a quarterly basis. The reporting challenges are also described as being mainly a problem for the partners from Donor Countries. Other factors which hinder efficiency are connected to partnerships. The restricted level of input from the EEA/Norway partners due to their relatively high man-hour cost makes it even more difficult to establish a genuine research partnership. It was stated by one individual project that: *"...there was a large discrepancy in the costs between Norway and Poland, the partner could therefore only really provide minimal man-hours within their budget share"*. In addition, the aforementioned absence of exact matching between competencies on a sufficiently high level of research has led to inefficiently applied funds.

In the opinion of the Information processing Centre (IPC) this problem does not relate to the PNRF subprojects, because the research projects required the fitting scientific expertise of all partners.

Table A6-9 Was the Beneficiary efficient in implementing the project?

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The Beneficiary was very efficient when implementing the project. |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> 3 | The Beneficiary was fairly efficient when implementing the project. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The Beneficiary was only minimally efficient when implementing the project. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The Beneficiary was not efficient when implementing the project. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

Table A6-10 Efficiency of EEA/Norway Grants' support to Poland

| | Focal Point and Intermediate Body | Fund/Programme managers | Polish project holders | EFTA (Norwegian) stakeholders |
|-------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Donor | The administrative turnaround is generally very time-consuming. | Has to go through a series of authorities to reach the FMO. | Good guidelines for applicants and scope and size of funding adequate. Long waiting periods in relation to administrative matters. | - |
| Beneficiary State | The set-up is deemed to be adequate. | Very detailed reporting to the Intermediate body is cumbersome. Quarterly project reporting has a positive effect on cash flow. | Quarterly reporting together with applications in both English and Polish is demanding. Administrative requirements are a specific hindrance for international partners. | Difficult to comply with unfamiliar reporting requirements. |

Source: Interviews with stakeholders.

5. Sustainability

Continuation of the impact made by the EEA/Norway Grant funded activities is an important factor. How the sustainability of the research activities and their output is handled is therefore included in this study. Sustainability is considered both in relation to the established partnerships and the conducted research.

How impacts of both research and partnerships are handled in practise is largely a matter for the individual projects and sub-projects. It is thus stated by the Focal Point that publication of research is the primary route to securing sustainability. The requirement of ensuring access to information regarding the projects (i.e. websites) for five years and the archiving of the documentation in ten years will sustain the impact, as is mentioned by the Intermediate Body and the Polish-Norwegian Research Fund. More specifically, for the Homing program, the whole institutional set-up is more or less continued in the context of the European Regional Development Fund which has a longer implementation period.

All of the interviewed projects have, to some extent, institutionalised their activities within their own organisations, and in some cases the activities continue in newly established research centres. Dissemination of the research results is also maintained by all projects.

Table A6-11 Are project outcomes sustained beyond the EEA/Norway Grants' co-funding period?

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The project outcomes and impacts are fully sustained beyond the EEA/Norway Grants' co-funding period. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The project outcomes and impacts are partly sustained beyond the EEA/Norway Grants' co-funding period. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The project outcomes and impacts are only sustained to a limited degree beyond the EEA/Norway Grants' co-funding period. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The project outcomes and impacts are not sustained beyond the EEA/Norway Grants' co-funding period. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

It was stated during the focus group interview with the sub-projects that genuine partnerships will be sustained after the projects have ended. Genuine partnerships are defined as those which incorporate Norwegian research in their activities. This leads to a recurring subject during most of the interviews: namely, the difficulties in establishing relevant partnerships based on natural synergies. When strong and meaningful partnerships are established several examples illustrate that a sound basis for continued cooperation is established. Even though desirable, it is the general view of the Norwegian Research Council that sustainability of the partnerships cannot be required after the final report.

In the opinion of the Information Processing Centre (IPC), the sustainability of the partnerships should not be required. However, according to the Fund Operator, the partnerships resulting from the Polish-Norwegian Research Fund (PNRF) sub-projects will be continued after completion of the projects' financing.

Table A6-12 Are partnerships sustained beyond the EEA/Norway Grants' co-funding period?

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The partnerships are fully sustained beyond the EEA/Norway Grants' co-funding period. |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> 3 | The partnerships are partly sustained beyond the EEA/Norway Grants' co-funding period. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The partnerships are sustained only to a limited degree beyond the EEA/Norway Grants' co-funding period. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The partnerships are not sustained beyond the EEA/Norway Grants' co-funding period. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

Table A6-13 Sustainability of EEA/Norway Grants' support to Poland

| | Focal Point and Intermediate Body | Fund/Programme managers | Polish project holders | EFTA (Norwegian) stakeholders |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Partnerships | - | - | Must be genuine to continue beyond the project. | Desirable, but sustainability of the partnerships cannot be required after the final report. |
| Impacts | Ensured through academic publications | Information is accessible for at least five years and in document form for ten years ERDF continues the Homing Programme | Activities and new knowledge institutionalised in own organisation or in new research centres Dissemination continues | - |

Source: Interviews with stakeholders.

6. Conclusions

The study of the implementation of the EEA/Norway Grant Academic Research sector in Poland leads to a number of relevant findings which can underpin a formative perspective on future implementation of the Grants.

Overall, the Grants in their current form seem to be appreciated by the Polish research community. The Grants provide a number of possibilities which would have been difficult for Polish research organisations to pursue in any other way. The Grants thus allow for larger projects with international participation and multidisciplinary perspectives.

The selected projects appear to be based on relevant criteria and conduct research activities with relevance in a Polish context. On the other hand, the relevance in relation to an EEA/Norwegian context is less clear. Despite the fact that priorities have been established, specific Norwegian research priorities are not generally known among the Polish project owners.

This leads to one of two main obstacles for successful implementation of the Grants. The partnership aspect of the activities often generates challenges. The right partners in the Donor Countries can be hard to identify, and participation of the Donor Partner is sometimes reduced to input on seminars or workshops and does not therefore truly represent joint research activities. This is the case for both individual projects and sub-projects. This is strengthened by the fact that the relatively high man-hour rates applied by the Donor partners reduce both the actual input and the inclination to increase the donor part of the project. Finally, the administrative burdens are considered as high by the Donor Partners, who are usually working within another administrative regime.

According to the Information Processing Centre (IPC), the challenges described above concerning both finding the right partners in the Donor Countries and the relatively high man hour rates applied by the Donor Partners seems not to be relevant to the Polish-Norwegian Research Fund. In the opinion of the IPC, none of the Norwegian partners was marginalised. Moreover, their involvement in the projects was appreciated by Polish Beneficiaries. In this context, the IPC emphasizes that the role of each partner depends on the character of the project and the skills/experience/know-how of the particular institution.

The administrative burdens constitute the second challenge to the projects. Quarterly reporting to different authorities and the use of both Polish and English requires substantial administrative input. However, these issues are usually resolved positively. The main problems in relation to the administrative burdens are the substantial delays resulting from the need to get budgets revised. Hence, the uncertainties very often encountered by research projects, due to their exploratory nature, are less than optimally handled in the existing administrative set-up.

Annex 7: Evaluation results – Hungary

1. Introduction

Hungary was the second biggest beneficiary of research funding from EEA/Norway Grants during 2004-2009. During the period from 2004 to 2009, Hungary received a total of EUR 13,745,018 in the field of academic research. This accounts for around 13% of the total funding made available by the EEA/Norway Grants for Academic Research in Central and Southern Europe.

EUR 3, 5 million of the about EUR 14 million were distributed through two block grants to final beneficiaries (sub-projects). The two funds (block grants) are: OTKA (Hungarian Scientific Research Fund) (H0069) and the Hungarian Research Fund for the Észak-Alföld Region (H0016).

The Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA) is a non-profit organisation, which has existed since 1993 as a legal entity, supporting scientific research activities with the objective of formulating new scientific laws and cultivating new skills, methods and procedures¹².

The aim of the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund in the framework of EEA/Norway Grants (H0069) is to support sub-projects carried out by young Hungarian researchers under the age of 40 in the priority sectors of environment, sustainable development, human resources, cultural heritage, and health and childcare. The overall objective is to foster a new generation of researchers in research and development in Hungary¹³, hereunder to ensure that young researchers remain in Hungary. To this end, the fund support three-year research projects totalling approximately EUR 2 million during the period 2004-2009. The expected long-term result of the project is an increase in the Hungarian research and development activities at the European level and widespread economic and social benefits¹⁴.

The aim of the Hungarian Research Fund for the Észak-Alföld Region is to encourage R&D and technological innovation at universities, colleges and research institutions in the Észak-Alföld Region. The objective of the fund is to develop regional innovation processes, encourage applied research and promote the practical application of research results, with special focus on renewable resources and agrarian innovation¹⁵. The Hungarian Research Fund for the Észak-Alföld Region has provided grants to 10 research institutions.

The focus in this annex is on the achievements of the two funds described above and the achievements of two selected individual partnership projects “*Hungarian-Norwegian research-based innova-*

¹² Annex No. 7: Project plan (For research fund application)

¹³

<http://www.eeagrants.org/id/13?act=search&numprpage=10&page=0&country=Hungary&mainsector=Academic+research&funds=all&fundsCheck=1&freetext=Free+text&casenumber=Case+number>

¹⁴

<http://www.eeagrants.org/id/13?act=search&numprpage=10&page=0&country=Hungary&mainsector=Academic+research&funds=all&fundsCheck=1&freetext=Free+text&casenumber=Case+number>

¹⁵ <http://www.eeagrants.org/id/1587?casenumber=HU0016>

tion for the development of new, environmental friendly, competitive robot technology for selected target groups" (HUNOROB) (HU0045) and "The role of political participation and representation in increasing democratic capacity" (HU0089).

The assessment of the achievements of the two funds includes an assessment of both the fund/programme and sub-projects with respect to relevance, impact/effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

In addition to the assessment of the relevance, impact/effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, the assessment of the achievements of the two individual partnership projects includes an assessment of project achievements in strengthening bilateral relations between academic researchers in the Beneficiary States and in the EFTA states.

In this context, it should be mentioned that the individual partnership project *"The role of political participation and representation in increasing democratic capacity"* was implemented in partnership with the Norwegian Social Science Data Services. In the same way, the individual partnership project *"Hungarian - Norwegian research based innovation for the development of new, environmental friendly, competitive robot technology for selected target groups"* was implemented in partnership with Széchenyi István University, Budapest University of Technology and Economics, the Norwegian company Productive Programming Methods AS (PPM AS), the Norwegian University of Science and Technology and Narvik University College¹⁶.

Information for this evaluation has been gathered through interviews with

- the National Focal Point (National Development Agency, Managing Authority for International Co-operation Programmes)
- the responsible ministry for the national research strategy (The Ministry of National Resources - State Secretariat for Health, Department for Development Policy)
- the manager of the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund project (H0069)
- the manager of the Hungarian Research Fund for the Észak-Alföld Region (H0016)
- the project holder of the individual partnership project: Hungarian - Norwegian research based innovation for the development of new, environmental friendly, competitive robot technology for selected target groups (H0045)¹⁷
- the project holder of the individual partnership project: the role of political participation and representation in increasing democratic capacity (H0089)
- the Norwegian partner to the individual partnership project HU0089: Norwegian Social Science Data Services.

Furthermore, a focus group interview was conducted with representatives of the Focal Point (FP), the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund and three of the funds sub-projects:

¹⁶ See the Project Portal on the website: <http://www.eeagrants.org> for more information

¹⁷ We have used the Detailed Monitoring Report from February 2011 concerning this project to supplement the information, we have received through the interview: Szigeti A. and Teszler I. INBAS/CEU Consulting (2011), Detailed Monitoring Report – Part "A". February.

- Integrated botanical and zoological research in conservation ecology to restore, conserve and increase grassland biodiversity
- Argonauts Programme
- Heat-shock and metabolic stress responses in aging.

More detailed information about the institutions and persons consulted is found in Annex 2.

The lesson learnt from Hungary, lessons from Poland and the Czech Republic (presented in Annexes 6 and 8 respectively) and lessons from the international experience (Annex 5) are compiled into the findings, conclusions, and recommendations provided in the main report.

The assessments in this annex are based on the information received from interviewees with main stakeholders from carefully selected projects and our subsequent analysis of information. The approach chosen allows us to obtain more detailed descriptions on how the EEA/Norway Grant setup is perceived in Hungary by the crucial stakeholders and by a representative sample of project holders. On the other hand, the approach has its limitations, as it does not permit an exhaustive investigation of the perception of the current utilization of grant funds by all participants. From the outset, the focus of the evaluation has been formative by nature, and therefore mainly addressing the lessons learnt opposed to a traditional summative evaluation mainly focusing on accumulated outcome, impacts and efficiency.

In this context it should be mentioned that the information received from the interviewees have been supplemented by information from relevant accessible documents as for example Application Form (HU0016, HU0069), Detailed Appraisal Reports (HU0016, HU0069) and the Detailed Monitoring Report concerning the Individual Project: “Hungarian – Norwegian research innovation for the development of new, environmental friendly, competitive robot technology for selected target groups (HUNOROB) (HU0045)¹⁸.

2. Relevance

In the following, the relevance of the EEA/Norway Grants activities and achievements is assessed with respect to different objectives and from different perspectives. Since the relevance in the EU context was analysed in Annex 5, the focus is here on the relevance with respect to the Hungarian research agenda and the objectives of the EEA/Norway Grants; the latter regarding both priority sectors and bilateral relationships. These relevance achievements are analysed based on the views of The Ministry of Natural Resources, the Focal Point, the managers of the interviewed funds, the project holders of the individual partnership projects and Norwegian partners (EFTA Stakeholder).

The overall objectives of the EEA/Norway grants are clear; i.e. reducing economic and social disparities in Europe and supporting bilateral relations between the donor and beneficiary states.

¹⁸ Szigeti A. and Teszler I. (2011), Detailed Monitoring Report – Part ”A”. INBAS/CEU Consulting. February

The overall aim of the EEA/Norway Grants support to the academic sector in the period from 2004 to 2009 was to integrate its bilateral support into the research policy-making agendas in the Beneficiary States, hereunder create ownership at the political level.

The Department responsible for the development policy in the Ministry of National Resources is in charge of the development of the health-related strategy for Hungary. The Department points out that the strategy serves as the basis for allocating funding from, among other funds, the Structural Funds of EU. The focus of the strategy is on the health industry, and industry-related research. It also supports the development of the research basis as well as the networking of various stakeholders. Accordingly, the health related strategy is to some extent in line with the objectives of EEA/Norway Grants.

Although the Department has not been involved in the setting of the priorities for the EEA/Norway Grant and does not have generic knowledge of the EEA/Norway Grants, the Department assesses that the programme takes on a number of important issues – proposed by the background institutions of the health sector. The Department appreciates that, but at the same time it states that some of the fields are overlapping with those supported by the Structural Funds and further that greater synergies should be sought. The department would like to take a more active role in the selection and monitoring processes in the next round to realize the synergy potential.

The Focal Point emphasis' that they are very careful not to overlap with the EU funds in the programming phase, and that they see the EEA/Norway grants as complementary to EU funds. To this end, the Focal Point mentions that unlike the EU funds, the EEA/Norway Grants fund projects in the field cultural heritage, which is an important and successful area in Hungary. Unlike EU funds, the EEA/Norway grants also accept relatively small projects, block grants and non-commercial projects. As a result, the EEA/Norway Grants fill an important financial gap in the research area in Hungary.

With respect to the national research agenda, the Focal Point sees it as a set framework into which the EEA/Norway grants are to be fitted while at the same time taking the agendas of the EU funds into account. During both the planning and the implementation phase has the National Focal Point been in close contact with relevant Ministries.

Although there is no direct link between the national research agenda and the EEA/Norway Grants, we assess that the activities supported by the EEA/Norway are in line with the national research agenda (See table 7.1). The alignment is ensured indirectly as indicated by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

The fund manager of OTKA explains it in this way: *“The fund does not directly refer to a specific research agenda, but does so indirectly via its large committee of 30 experts involved in the selection process”*.

The Hungarian Research Fund for the Észak-Alföld Region is co-financed by the “National Innovation Fund” and it does in this respect pursue compliance with the Hungarian research agenda – with a focus on regional development i.e. applied research and within agriculture and energy.

Table A7-1 How relevant was the supported activities for the national research agenda?

| | |
|-----|---|
| ○ 4 | The activities supported by the EEA/Norway Grants were both in line with the national research agenda and |
|-----|---|

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| | the achievements have been integrated into this agenda. |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> 3 | The activities supported were in line with the national research agenda. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The activities supported were partially in line with the national research agenda. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The activities supported were not or only minimally in line with the national research agenda. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

Regarding the priority sectors of the fund, these are given by the Regulation of the EEA/Norway Grants. Concerning the question of which national sources guided the choice of areas to be addressed by academic research support – within each of the five priority sectors – the Ministry of Natural Resources points out that a general problem is that the national system is fragmentary. There are various Departments dealing with their own narrow field of interests, and there is very weak communication among them. Even within these Departments, there are separate units dealing with EU/International funds. Consequently, there is no one singly national entity dealing with the questions concerning the EEA/Norway Grants, including gathering lesson learnt from the projects financed by the EEA/Norway Grants.

According to the representatives of the sub-projects, each priority is adequate in the Hungarian context, and in practice the call for proposals was not that strict. The experience is that the FMO only afterwards categorised the projects according to priority sectors.

At the same time representatives of the sub-projects characterize the priorities of the EEA/Norway Grants programme as both important and relevant. They emphasize the importance of supporting basic research and maintaining focus on broader fields and not least the flexibility of the programme. The argument is that science is a process of looking for something new, and therefore it is not useful to have too rigid result targets from the start. A representative of one of the sub-projects pointed out that the call for proposals was very broad rendering it difficult not to formulate a project objective.

To the question of how chosen areas – the priority sectors - have created added value in Hungary – e.g. by filling gaps and/or addressing the most important problems, a representative of one of the subprojects answers *“The EEA/Norway Grants were considered as a golden opportunity to receive research funding. It was larger in size than feasible from Hungarian funds and it was more flexible and allowed creativity”*.

In the same way, the manager of the OTKA programme explains that the original priorities of the EEA/Norway Grants coincide with those of the OTKA, and at the same time the average size of the EEA/Norway Grants is well above what OTKA normally gives out. Therefore, in the eyes of OTKA, the grants give added value to the chosen areas.

The EEA/Norway Grants supplement the strategy objectives of the National Innovation Fund at the regional level. In this way, the chosen areas also create added value at the regional level - especially in the energy sector, which is a priority sector of the Hungarian Research Fund in the Észak-Alföld Region.

Against this background, it is our assessment that the supported activities address the chosen areas within the priority sectors to a satisfactory extent.

Table A7-2 How relevant was the supported activities with respect to the five priority sectors?

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The activities supported by the EEA/Norway Grants address fully the chosen areas within the priority sectors. |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> 3 | The activities supported address the chosen areas within the priority sectors to a satisfactory extent. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The activities supported address the chosen areas within the priority sectors to a limited extent. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The activities supported do not address the chosen areas within the priority sectors or do so to a very limited extent. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

It seems that none of the projects/programmes covered by this evaluation has considered the EFTA country research agenda when choosing areas to address by academic research support. One of the arguments is that it is difficult to formulate projects that fit both the Hungarian and the Norwegian agendas and that the projects lack knowledge of the Norwegians priorities in the research area. As a representative, of one of the subprojects formulate it *“We do not know where the Norwegians want to be. “Although it is envisaged, that the Norwegians want the “developing” countries to get closer to Europe and to pursue gender equality, sustainability and novelty”.*

At the same time, not all projects have established bilateral partnerships. One of argument here is that it is difficult to establish the right bilateral partnership within the short project application period and to make full use of it within the short project implementation period. Another argument is that bilateral relationships are not always relevant.

It seems that in those cases where the research topic primarily is relevant to the Hungarian setting, it is not always relevant to establish bilateral relationships with partners in Norway. Conversely, in those cases where the research topic is relevant both to Hungary and Norway and where there is also an evident synergy potential, it will often be relevant and often also profitable to establish bilateral relationships. In this context, several of the representatives of the subprojects emphasized that - sometimes - the two aims supporting Norwegian-Hungarian partnership and supporting research excellence are in conflict with each other. From the point of view of a sub-project, it is important that the relationships result in valuable and internationally competitive research and not just in joint visits and common research.

The two individual partnership projects have established relationships with Norwegian research partners and have benefited from the relationship. The one project more so than the other due to internal problems in the Hungarian project (see the next sections). There are no reported cases of benefits having influenced the national research agenda.

The Hungarian Research fund in the Észak-Alföld Region did not demand participation of EFTA/Norwegian experts in the sub-projects. The fund manager is of the opinion that there should not be a general bilateral relationship requirement as this is unlikely to fit a regional focus.

The Focal Point is also of the opinion that bilateral partnerships are not relevant to all project, and that not all projects should be given points for partnership.

The table down under sums up the conclusions from this chapter.

Table A7-3 **Relevance of EEA/Norway Grants support to Hungary**

| | Focal Point and Intermediate Body | Fund/Programme managers | Hungarian project holders | EFTA (Norwegian) stakeholders |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Hungarian research agenda | EEA/Norway Grants are relevant to the Hungarian research agenda. However, the national research agenda is seen as a set framework, which the EEA/Norway Grants programme is fitted into while at the same time taking the programmes of the structural funds into account. The lesson learnt from the projects financed by the EEA/Norway Grants are not gathered at the national level nor integrated in the research policy in Hungary as there is no formal cooperation between the Focal Point and the relevant ministries. | The relevance is ensured, indirectly, by the representation of the various experts in the selection process (OTKA) and/or by national co-financing by the National Innovation Fund (The Hungarian Research Fund for the Észak-Alföld Region). | The activities supported are relevant to the Hungarian research agenda. | N.A |
| EEA/Norway Grants - priority sectors | The EEA/Norway Grants priority sectors are relevant. However, it is a problem that there is no clear framework at the national level, which can provide guidance on the areas that should be addressed by the academic research support. | The priority sectors are relevant and in accordance with the priority sectors of the fund/programmes, and create added value in the chosen areas. | The priority sectors are both important and relevant. The support of basic research and not least the flexibility of the program are important. The fact that the priority sectors is relatively broadly formulated is also seen as a positive aspect as it enhances the research process and ensures that many research topics can be covered, including topics that are not covered by other funds. | N.A |
| EEA/Norway Grants - bilateral relationships | The EEA/Norway Grants are seen as a very important tool in strengthening bilateral relationships, which are also a part of the national research agenda. But it is also recognised that bilat- | The EEA/Norway Grants bilateral relationships are relevant, but are not exploited in every case. The Hungarian Research Fund in the Észak-Alföld Region does not require that EFTA/Norwegian experts should | The grants encourage international collaboration, which is seen as an important element of the programme. | The relevance depends on the character of the relationship and to which extent the research topic is on the international agenda or at least on the Norwegian research agenda. In those cases where the research |

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| | Focal Point and Intermediate Body | Fund/Programme managers | Hungarian project holders | EFTA (Norwegian) stakeholders |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------------|---|
| | eral is not always relevant. | participate in the sub-projects. The manager of the fund/programme is of the opinion that the bilateral relationship requirement should be omitted as this is unlikely to fit into a regional focus. | | topic is more relevant at regional or national levels than at a more general level, the bilateral relationship is more relevant to the Hungarians than to the Norwegians. |

Sources: Interviews with stakeholders.

3. Impact/effectiveness

Concerning the actual impacts and effectiveness of the supported initiatives, input from projects that have been interviewed is of special interest.

The focus here is on the extent to which

- the activities have resulted in the planned deliverables and impacts
- the dissemination effort has been effective
- the achievements have become visible.

It seems that almost all the projects included in this evaluation have produced the planned deliverables. As one of the fund manager pointed out *“The rate of unsuccessful cases is very low. The whole system is formulated in a way that projects receiving funding can hardly fail”*.

Typically, deliverables consist of publications in scientific journals and conferences, exchanges of students and researchers, recruitment of PhDs and postdocs.

A project that did not produce the planned deliverables is the individual partnership project entitled: *“The role of political participation and representation in increasing democratic capacity”* (HU0089). The plan was to provide a high-quality analysis of the relationship between the political life and the public life and the political representation. The project developed a data collection methodology together with the three largest opinion poll companies in Hungary. In the middle of the project, VATI refused to pay the invoices because the project had not launched a tender/public procurement process to involve the opinion poll companies in the project. The project manager argued that they had asked for legal advice in connection with the application and that neither the legal advisors nor the programme managers had signalled that there was a problem with the application. The dispute was settled by arbitration, which supported the opinion of VATI. Although the project did not reach one of their main goals – the database – the project manager assesses that the project still is very valuable in scientific terms. The project has resulted in the dissemination of publications, research papers, reports and datasets, which can all be found on the project website. However, the collapse of database part of the project has had consequences for the bilateral relationship with the Norwegian partner as the partnership was centred on the creation of the database (see the next sections).

Besides having produced most of the planned deliverables, the deliverables are also - seen from the points of view of the subprojects - of a higher quality compared with similar deliverables – i.e. developments made at national level without EEA/Norway Grants. It is argued that only very good research activities/projects gets funding. In this context, the representatives of the subprojects want the Norwegians to draw more attention to the fact that Hungary, historically, has a good track record with many Nobel prizes, which should make the bilateral relationships more attractive to Norwegian partners.

Against this background, we assess that the supported activities have produced most of the planned deliverables, all being of high quality due to the EEA/Norway Grants support. One reservation in this respect is that we only have the word of the interviewed projects and funds/programmes stakeholders to support this assessment.

Table A7-4 Have the supported activities resulted in the planned deliverables?

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | Fund/programme and project activities have resulted in the planned deliverables - which are of high quality due to the support from EEA/Norway Grants. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | Fund/programme and project activities have resulted in most of the planned deliverables - which are of high quality due to the support from EEA/Norway Grants. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | Fund/programme and project activities have only resulted in some of the planned deliverables. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | Fund/programme and project activities have only resulted in a few of the planned deliverables. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

Concerning the question of quality, the Ministry of National Resources calls for more information about the deliverables produced by the projects. In the present practice, the Ministry only receives information on payments through the public website of the NDA (Focal Point). It is stated by the National Focal Points that relevant Ministries have been informed according to their requirements. The Ministry do not receive any further details from NDA or VÁTI related to monitoring. Usually, projects also publish their annual reports on the project websites, the Ministry explains. But this is not always the case as concerns the projects funded by the EEA/Norway Grants. The Ministry intends to create a new system to ensure closer monitoring of the activities of national institutions with the aim of making important achievements and lesson learnt more visible.

The project holders and the managers of the funds were asked to assess which measurable indicators of outcomes that can be derived from the project deliverables. We must note that it has been very difficult for the managers of the funds and the project holders to come up with new ideas. Today, the projects have to report on the number of publications, number of research activities and number of PhDs. One of the projects proposes that there can be established an indicator that measures the "Norwegian collaborations".

Along the same lines, measuring the projects and programme impacts are exceptionally difficult. This is especially the case with partnerships and social cohesion projects, but also with respect to research activities in general.

The sub-projects, which are represented by researchers, question to which extent the measures used today are appropriate, hereunder whether the number of publications published is a good indicator of the impacts achieved through the research projects. A more appropriate indicator may be the number of citations.

In the views of the subprojects, indicators measuring social cohesion are also questionable - as it is covered by the hiring of PhDs and postdocs. The problem is that PhD positions are usually filled by familiar students and seldom by nationwide advertisement. According to representative of the sub-projects, PhD students still leave Hungary and travels to the US or other countries due to better opportunities since there are practically no PhD training and postdoc positions in Hungary. Improvements in these fields are expected also to make Hungary more attractive to Norwegian PhD students who could then assist enhancing the impacts of the EEA/Norway Grants.

The issue of timeliness was also mentioned by the subprojects. During evaluations, it is not possible to assess whether the present research will be highly influential also during the next 5 to 10 years.

One of the interviewed representatives of subprojects mention that his current research will be referred for the next 10 years and that many further publications will refer to this particular research. However, there are no ways to signal this during the evaluation. Feedback after three to five years after project completion might highlight much more impact than anticipated by the evaluation directly after completion of research activities.

In accordance with these arguments, the Focal Point, the project holders and the managers of the fund/programmes state that it is too early to measure the impacts.

As a result, no unambiguous conclusions can be drawn concerning significant impacts of the funds/programmes or projects simply because we do not know at present.

To support our assessment of the impacts, we have looked at core indicators defined in the application form registered October 2010. The core indicators in focus here are: "Patents", "Supported PhD's" and "Publications".¹⁹ The indicators are characteristic of what would be called "output" (follow project activities but not actual societal impact) in an evaluation context.

The indicators show that in respect of the funds, none of 12 patents applied for resulting from EEA/Norway Grants sector academic research supported activities are Hungarian. The same is the case with the number of supported PhDs and the number of publications. The core indicators for the individual projects show a higher level of patent applications in Hungary in compare with Poland and Czech Republic. The Hungarian contribution sports 13 percent of a total of 23. Regarding the number of PhDs, Hungary supports 45 percent of a total of 154. Finally, 13 percent of the 773 publications from individual projects are Hungarian.

The core indicators of the funds indicate that the expected results are surprisingly poor. When it comes to the individual projects, the expected results are better. When assessing the indicators, it is important to remember that the Hungarian share of the sector academic research funds is approximately 15%. This indicates a significantly above average level of supported PhDs. It also indicates a focus of the Hungarian activities in supporting PhDs with the aim to ensure that more researchers stay in Hungary.

The relatively large amount of supported PhDs and the number of patents and publications is assumed to enhance the objectives of the Academic Research Fund in Hungary, as it is expected to have a positive impact on the brain drain in Hungary.

It is our assessment that the activities implemented will lead to some of the planned impacts only, and unplanned impacts have not improved this view. Our assessment here is very guarded because it is very difficult to assess the impacts of research activities. At the same time, our assessment is influenced by the fact that the indicators of the impacts of the funds/programmes yet are very poor.

¹⁹ The Information Processing Centre (IPC) points out that the indicators depend on the project, and that the three mentioned here are ranked among others - e.g. they are not the only ones and should therefore – according to IPC - not be considered as being the most important.

Table A7-5 Have the funds/programmes or projects successfully led to impact?

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The funds/programmes or projects have successfully led to the planned impacts, and any unplanned impacts have not changed this view. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The funds/programmes or projects have led to many of the planned impacts, and any unplanned impacts have not changed this view significantly. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The funds/programmes or projects have led to some of the planned impacts only, and unplanned impacts have not improved this view. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The funds/programmes or projects have not been successful in leading to impacts. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

The final issue with respect to the effectiveness and impact of the evaluation criteria is to which extent the dissemination efforts have been effective.

Disseminations have mainly been done through the usual channels: publications, CDs, websites, conferences, televised presentations and articles in the electronic and printed press etc.

The Focal Point emphasises that the Norwegian Embassy has helped them a lot concerning visibility. They visit projects and takes part in meetings, and FMO representatives often visit Hungary. The Focal Point itself has disseminated information via conferences and meetings with the project holders.

However, both the managers of the funds/programmes and the project holders believe that there is room for improvement. In their views, the information sources are too fragmented, and visibility is presently too limited.

A specific suggestion is about collecting and presenting research funded by the EEA/Norway Grants on the EEA/Norway Grants website and on the beneficiaries' websites. In this way, the overall visibility of the activities might be improved. In accordance with this suggestion, the Ministry of Natural Resources would also like to see that projects are more active in making achievements visible on the projects website, including their annual reports.

To this end, a representative of one of the subprojects points out that a good initiative is the "Researcher of the Month" column on the webpage of OTKA, although its visibility could be even better.

According to representatives of the subprojects, the general attitude seems to be that presently Hungarian research institutions are not fully geared to ensure dissemination of research results compared with some Western-European countries or the US,

Our assessment is that the dissemination efforts are not sufficiently effective today. There is room for improvement. In particular, there is a need to ensure that the research funded by the EEA/Norway Grants becomes more visible to the general public and in a more structured way.

Table A7-6 How effective were dissemination efforts in making the EEA/Norway Grants visible?

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The fund/programme manager or project holder had a strong focus on dissemination of findings to both direct users/beneficiaries, and the achievements of the EEA/Norway Grants have become highly visible. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The fund/programme manager or project holder carried out some dissemination of findings to both direct users/beneficiaries, and some of the achievements of the EEA/Norway Grants have become visible. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The fund/programme manager or project holder undertook limited dissemination of findings, and the achievements are only slightly visible. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | Dissemination of fund/programme or project findings was not a central focus. |

Source: Interviews with stakeholders

Table A7-7 Impact/effectiveness of EEA/Norway Grants support to Hungary

| | Focal Point and Intermediate Body | Fund/Programme managers | Hungarian project holders | EFTA (Norwegian) stakeholders |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| Deliverables | It is too early to say. However, for those finished they have been successful. | Most of the planned deliverables are delivered according to the managers of the funds/programmes. | Most planned deliverables are delivered according to project holders. | Nothing yet (database). |
| Dissemination | The Focal Point has spread information via press conferences and meetings with the project holders. The Norwegian embassy also helps a lot concerning visibility. They visit projects and take part in meetings, and FMO representatives often visit Hungary. | Dissemination activities are done through publications, international events/conferences, CDs and through the website of the fund/programmes as well as articles in the electronic and printed press. | Dissemination activities are done through publications, international events/conferences, CDs and through the website of the projects as well as articles in the electronic and printed press | N.A |
| Impact | The Focal Point stress that it is too early to measure the impact. | It is too early to say. The core indicators indicate that the Hungarian funds/programmes have not yet materialised in concrete impacts. | It is too early to say with certainty. However, the core indicators for the individual projects indicate that they will succeed in making some impacts. The relatively large expected amount of supported PhDs and the number of patents and publications enhance the objectives of the Academic research fund in Hungary, as it is expected to have a positive on the brain drain in Hungary. | The partnership has enhanced the contact between the University of Oslo and the University in Budapest. |
| Visibility of EEA/Norway Grants | Most information about the projects is visible on the EEA/Norway Grants national website. However, the projects financed by the EEA/Norway Grants are not as highlighted as the projects financed by the EU funds. The Ministry calls for a more active effort from projects in making their achievements visible on the website, including annual reports. | The visibility of the research funded by the EEA/Norway Grants is too limited and fragmented at the moment. There is a need for ensuring that the research funded by the EEA/Norway Grants become more visible to the public | The visibility of the research funded by the EEA/Norway Grants is too limited and fragmented at the moment There is a need for ensuring that the research funded by the EEA/Norway Grants becomes more visible to the public | N.A. |

Sources: Interviews with stakeholders.

4. Efficiency

According to the DAC evaluation criteria²⁰, efficiency measures the outputs in relation to the inputs. In this evaluation the focus is on the following three questions:

- How efficient was the EEA/Norway Grants financial mechanism in supporting the academic research achievements?
- How efficient were fund/programme and project implementation set-ups in the Beneficiary State?
- How efficient was the collaboration with stakeholders?

In the opinion of the Focal Point, the FMO is in general very helpful, easy and flexible to work with and not least very patient. However, the Focal Point emphasises that they have had difficulties complying with the reporting - e.g. financial - requirements of the FMO. One of reasons is that the Focal Point spends much time on assisting project promoters with implementation and financing issues because many project promoters are not used to applying for grants. Furthermore, the project promoters often have an application and implementation routine that do not necessarily comply with that of the Focal Point. At the same time, several project promoters obtain grants from other funds, the reporting requirements of which are different from those of the Focal Point and the FMO.

One of the few criticisms levelled against the FMO relates to the slow procedure of reporting (up to two months) back to the Focal Points on even small changes (spelling corrections). According to the Focal Point, there is scope for reducing the timeframe.

One of the fund/programmes joins the criticism of the FMO timeframe and points out that the time from application to grant award was too long and that the project period was shortened which had negative consequences for the possibilities of subprojects of forming partnerships: *"It took too long time from application to grant – and in the end little time for the a research project, hereunder for making partnerships."*

The specific fund manager is very critical of the FMO requirements, arguing that they are very difficult to meet. The fund manager explains that he will not take on a new project and suggests that the FMO instead adopts the procedures and rules of the EU to reduce the overall administrative burden: *"It would be much better if EU rules had been used rather than specific EEA rules – this would have reduced the administrative burden"*.

The manager of OTKA mentions that OTKA uses its own standard for financial evaluation and monitoring and not least their own scientific control. The difference here is the half-yearly compulsory audits, which requires extra work; however, this is accepted by OTKA.

On the other hand, the flexibility of the block grants is positively rated by both funds as it allows them to make minor changes to the projects independently of the FMO.

²⁰ <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/15/21/39119068.pdf>

We assess that The EEA/Norway Grants financial mechanism (FMO) have been fairly efficient in supporting academic research achievements. Nevertheless, it is important to consider how reporting requirements may be made easier to meet and how they are streamlined or coordinated with the EU requirements. Finally, thought should be given to reducing response time to requests for project changes.

Table A7-8 Was the EEA Norway Grants financial mechanism efficient in supporting achievements?

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The EEA/Norway Grants financial mechanism was very efficient in supporting the achievements in academic research. |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> 3 | The EEA/Norway Grants financial mechanism was fairly efficient in supporting achievements in academic research. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The EEA/Norway Grants financial mechanism was only partially efficient in supporting the achievements in academic research. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The EEA/Norway Grants financial mechanism was not efficient in supporting the achievements in academic research. |

Source: Interviews with stakeholders.

When it comes to beneficiary efficiency, projects holders agree that there is room for improvement of monitoring practices. According to representatives of the subprojects, most problems relate to the financial audit.

The subprojects forming part of this evaluation all receive grants from the programme managed by OTKA. Consequently, their projects are financially and professionally audited by the OTKA every six months. This evaluation process is undertaken through the usual OTKA system applied for other national programmes. In other programmes, evaluations are made on a yearly basis. The subprojects have no problem with the more frequent evaluation, but stated that yearly evaluations would be more convenient as the biannual audits add to administrative tasks of the applicants.

Another problem reported by the representatives of the subprojects is that modifications to the original budget breakdown (not modification of the amount but the distribution among different cost categories) can take up to one year. More flexibility in this field would be appreciated by project owners.

The representatives of the subprojects finally suggested that the grant share for equipment could be increased.

One of the project holders states that he experiences that regulation is more important than results/research. In his opinion this problem is worsened by the fact that it usually takes weeks or months for Hungarian Agencies (VÁTI and NDA) to respond to requests while the same agencies expect implementation of their requests a couple of days.

Based on the interviews, we assess that the Beneficiary was fairly efficient in implementing the project.

Table A7-9 was the Beneficiary efficient in implementing the project?

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The Beneficiary was very efficient in implementing the project. |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> 3 | The Beneficiary was fairly efficient in implementing the project. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The Beneficiary was only partially efficient in implementing the project. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The Beneficiary was not efficient in implementing the project. |

Source: Interviews with stakeholders.

Table A7-10 Efficiency of EEA/Norway Grants support to Hungary

| | Focal Point and Intermediate Body | Fund/Programme managers | Hungarian project holders | EFTA (Norwegian) stakeholders |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Donor | <p>The Ministry did not have any (or only very little) contact with the FMO.</p> <p>The Focal Point finds the FMO helpful and easy to work with. However, the requirements of the FMO are difficult to meet because the project promoters are often not used to apply for grants, and therefore need much assistance from the Focal Point. It is also a problem that it often takes a long time (up to two months) before the FMO reports back to the Focal Points on even minor changes (spelling corrections).</p> | <p>The fund/programmes have only had little contact with the FMO.</p> <p>The timeframe concerning the FMO's handling of the application is too long and has influenced the possibilities of sub-projects making partnerships.</p> <p>The requirements of the FMO are both very difficult to comply with and require prior experience to handle.</p> <p>In contrast, the flexibility of the block grants is positively viewed as it enables the board of the funds to decide on minor changes of the projects itself.</p> | N.A | The Norwegian partner was not involved with FMO. |
| Beneficiary State | <p>The National fund was set up in 1998 and is very experienced in the field.</p> <p>The main obstacles appear due to the institutional setup because the Focal Point is squeezed between different contexts (EU, EEA, national)</p> | <p>OTKA has its own fund management system, and it is very experienced in project implementation.</p> <p>The Hungarian Research Fund for the Észak-Alföld Region points out that the fund management worked well at the regional level, but that the VÁTI was too slow in getting things in place.</p> <p>The main problem faced by the Research Fund for the Észak-Alföld Region was the very cumbersome procedure involving that reports with copies of all invoices had to be sent to the Intermediate body and the fact that SMEs could not apply.</p> | The monitoring practice can be further improved. | N.A. |

Sources: Interviews with stakeholders.

5. Sustainability

Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding is withdrawn. In this evaluation, the focus is on the sustainability of partnerships and impacts. The replies to these questions have mainly been gathered from the project level and the Detailed Monitoring Report (Szigeti A. and Teszler I. (2011))²¹ concerning the project *“Hungary – Norwegian based innovation for the development of new, environmental friendly, competitive robot technology for selected target groups (HUNOROB)”*.

It seems that the sustainability of the partnership depends to a high extent on the character of the bilateral relationship and the relevance of the project to the Norwegian partner.

In this context, the bilateral relationship between the project *“Hungary – Norwegian based innovation for the development of new, environmental friendly, competitive robot technology for selected target groups (HUNOROB)”* and their Norwegian partners has been classified as a successful model of co-operation. “It may serve as a best practice for the design of multilateral research programmes in the future” the monitoring Agents wrote in the Detailed Monitoring Report from February 2011 (Szigeti A. and Teszler I. (2011))²².

There are several success factors, one of which is cooperation between the Hungarians and the three Norwegians partners dating back to 2000. At that time, they operated on a small budget that enabled them to investigate the value of further collaboration. The possibility of getting EEA/Norway Grants came up when it was really needed. Another contributor to success was the synergy-based cooperation: while the Norwegians had particular skills within specific topics, the Hungarians had a stronger general, 'virtual' platform for robot technology. From the beginning, the mutual dependency of the partners was a strong driver for successful cooperation. The Detailed Monitoring Report (February 2011) mentions the establishment of a sustainable bridge of bilateral cooperation for student exchange, exchange of professors and academic staff, and both sides want to continue and deepen their cooperation. These elements speak in favour of a partnership and impacts that are sustainable.

Looking at the other individual partnership project in focus in this evaluation, there is no indication at present that the relationship will continue beyond the co-funding period. This is despite the fact that one of the main targets of the project, a database, was designed and developed jointly with the partners from Bergen and the idea was that the partnership should be long lasting. The Norwegian partner has not been active in the project for the last 1½ year (since 2010). There have not been any partner activities, and the plans made two years ago are not implemented. This is due to internal problems at the Hungarian partner. The Norwegian partner tried to contact the Hungarians concerning the status of the project only to receive the message that internal problems persist. From the perspective of the Norwegian partner, the impact has yet to be seen.

The attitude among representatives of the sub-projects is that partnerships will sustain when they are true - i.e. with the scientific input of the Norwegians being integrated into the projects.

²¹ Szigeti A. and Teszler I.(2011), Detailed Monitoring Report – Part “A” (HU0045). INBAS/CEU Consulting. February.

²² Szigeti A. and Teszler I.(2011), Detailed Monitoring Report – Part “A” (HU0045). INBAS/CEU Consulting. February.

Still, the programme is seen as important and successful that the fund (OTKA) is ready to continue this activity if the opportunity is offered in the next round.

The same cannot be said for the other fund, which will not exist beyond the co-funding period. However, The Regional Development Agency will still continue its activities.

Based on the answers from the interviewees, we assess that the partnerships will only sustain to a limited degree beyond the EEA/Norway Grant co-funding period and that the project outcomes and impacts will only sustain to a limited degree beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period.

Table A7-11 Do partnerships sustain beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period?

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The partnerships are fully sustainable beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The partnerships are partly sustainable beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> 2 | The partnerships are sustainable only to a limited degree beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The partnerships are not sustainable beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |

Source: Interviews with stakeholders

Table A7-12 Do project outcomes sustain beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period?

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The project outcomes and impacts are fully sustainable beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The project outcomes and impacts are partly sustainable beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> 2 | The project outcomes and impacts are sustainable only to a limited degree beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The project outcomes and impacts are not sustainable beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |

Source: Interviews with stakeholders

Overall, it seems that partnerships are more likely to sustain in cases where the scientific input of the Norwegian partner has been integrated into the projects from the start. This holds especially for those cases where core activities of the project are planned with a view to being expanded in the future and/or in cases where the research topic is on both the Hungarian and the Norwegian research agendas.

In those cases where partnership cooperation has rather been based on exchange of information and common analysis and production of publications, chances of a partnership that sustains beyond the co-funding period are slim. Especially if the research topic is of a more general character.

Table A7-13 Sustainability of EEA/Norway Grants support to Hungary

| | Focal Point and Intermediate Body | Fund/Programme managers | Hungarian project holders | EFTA (Norwegian) stakeholders |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--|--|
| Partnerships | N.A | N.A | The attitudes among the sub-projects are that the partnerships will sustain when they are true - i.e. with the scientific input of the Norwegian being integrated into the projects. | The idea was that the partnership should have been a long-term relationship, but because of the problems with the Hungarian project setting for the database, the partnership is on hold for the moment. |
| Impacts | N.A | N.A | The publications disseminated continue to be disseminated. | There has not been any practical impact yet ²³ . Only a prototype of the database has been developed. |

Sources: Interviews with stakeholders.

²³ This only concerns the project: "The role of political participation and representation in increasing democratic capacity". We do not have any

6. Conclusions

The study of the implementation of the EEA/Norway Grant sector Academic Research in Hungary leads to a number of findings concerning partly the achievements of the funds/programmes and the projects and partly lessons learnt during the period 2004-2009.

The overall aim of the EEA/Norway Grants during the period was to integrate its bilateral support into the research policy-making agendas in the Beneficiary States – i.e. to create ownership at the political level.

However, this seems not to be the case, as there is no formal cooperation between the Focal Point and the relevant ministries. The Focal Point sees the national research agenda as a set framework, which the EEA/Norway Grants programme is fitted into while at the same time taking the programmes of the structural funds into account. At the same time, the lessons learnt from the projects financed by the EEA/Norway Grants are not gathered at the national level.

The Ministry of Natural Resources wants to strengthen the relationship between the Ministry and Focal Point in the future with the aim of ensuring a better synergy between the national research strategy, the structural funds of EU and the EEA/Norway Grants. The Ministry of Natural Resources also calls for more information about the deliverables and scientific results produced by the projects. In the present practice, the Ministry only receives information on payments through the public website of the NDA (Focal Point).

From the perspectives of the managers of the funds and the project holders, the EEA/Norway Grants are seen as both a relevant and important source of funding as it complements the funding of EU and is larger in size and more flexible than other Hungarian funding opportunities. The project holders especially highlight the fact that the EEA/Norway Grants do not have rigid result targets. This is important because science is a process of looking for something new.

The Ministry of National Resources, the Focal Point, the managers of the funds and the project holders all agree that the EEA/Norway Grants are a very important tool in strengthening bilateral relationships in the research field. However, it is also agreed that bilateral relationships are not relevant in every case and that it is important that the bilateral relationships – when relevant - result in valuable and internationally competitive research and not just in joint visits and common research. The relevance and not least the sustainability of the relationship seem to depend on the extent to which the research topic is relevant in both Hungary and the EFTA Country and the extent to which there is an evident synergy potential.

Concerning the achievements of the programmes and projects funded by the EEA/Norway Grants, most projects and subprojects have succeeded in delivering their planned deliverables, but the impacts are not yet impressive, according to the interviewed.

Having said that, it is still too early to measure all impacts, and it is at the same time very difficult to measure the impacts of research activities. The interviewed representatives of the funded programmes and projects are well aware of this, but do not have any suggestions for new measurable indicators of outcomes and impacts. More work is required in this area and in our view, more of the project holders could with advantage contribute to taking this work further.

Based on the existing core indicators, it seems that the individual partnership projects have been more successful than the fund/programmes. For instance, the core indicators for the individual projects show a higher level of patent applications, number of PhDs and produced publications. The level of supported PhDs are significantly above the average level of supported PhDs, which indicates a focus of the Hungarian activities in supporting PhDs with the aim to ensure that more researchers stay in Hungary.

Besides having produced most of the planned deliverables, the deliverables are also - seen from the points of view of the subprojects - of a higher quality compared with similar deliverables – i.e. developments made at national level without EEA/Norway Grants.

Although successful, there is also room for improvement especially when it comes to the question of the efficiency.

Then main challenge in this field is the reporting requirements, including the fact it differs from the requirements of the EU structural funds. It is a challenge both to the Focal Point, which spends many resources helping the projects, and to the projects, the owners of which are in many cases not familiar with applying for grants. Another challenge needing attention is the time used by the FMO for assessing the applications and changes of the projects in the implementation period.

Overall, we assess that the EEA/Norway Grants financial mechanism (FMO) was fairly efficient in supporting the academic research achievements. Still, it is important to consider how reporting requirements may be made easier to meet and how they are streamlined or coordinated with the EU requirements and not least how the response time for processing of applications and requests for project changes can be reduced.

Annex 8: Evaluation results - Czech Republic

1. Introduction

The Czech Republic is the third largest recipient of funding for Academic Research under the EEA/Norway Grants system. During the period 2004-2009 a total of 8,474,074 EUR was awarded to academic research. This accounts for around 10% of the total funding made available by EEA/Norway Grants for Academic Research in Central and Southern Europe.

4.4 million EUR of the aforementioned 8.5 million EUR has been distributed through a block grant: The Czech Research Fund. In addition to the Czech Research Fund and its sub-projects, eight large individual research projects have also been funded. These are as follows:

| | |
|--------|---|
| CZ0049 | National - Study of PM10 particles in ambient air |
| CZ0051 | National - Monitoring of sulphur and nitrogen pollution |
| CZ0091 | National - Pilot monitoring of fish stock |
| CZ0092 | Pribram - Energy Plantations on contaminated land |
| CZ0099 | Olomouc - Research of childhood chronic diseases |
| CZ0112 | Prague - The Era and Work of Karel Škréta |
| CZ0124 | Brno - Gait Assessment for Orthopaedic Surgery in Children with Cerebral Palsy |
| CZ0135 | National Monitoring and assessment of chlorine in ecosystems. Improved understanding of chlorine cycling and its effects in forest ecosystems |

The selection of these individual projects was achieved through calls for collaboration between the Ministry of Finance and the relevant sector Ministry (e.g. The Ministry of the Environment) or the regional authority. Following the formal approval of the project applications, a selection process was conducted by an evaluation committee at the relevant Ministry. The selected projects were then presented to the National Focal Point, which makes further recommendations and detailed assessments. The final decision was made by the monitoring committee who submits to the FMO.

The Czech Research Fund²⁴ is operated by an intermediate body. Following a national tender, the assignment was awarded to the National Training Fund. The National Training Fund was originally set up by the Ministry of Labour as the Czech coordinator of the European Social Fund (ESF). The Czech Research Fund is divided into two measures. A: Directed towards research projects of up to 250,000 EUR and B: Directed at the exchange of experts with a budget of up to 15,000 EUR. Both measures are made available through open calls. According to statistics provided by the FMO, the Czech Research Fund has supported 79 sub-projects. According to the interview conducted with the Fund, they have received three times the number of applications expected.

²⁴ <http://www.eea-researchfund.cz/>

Information for this evaluation has been gathered through interviews with the national Focal Point (The Ministry of Finance); the Intermediate Body of the Czech Research Fund (the National Training Fund); two individual projects²⁵ and 4 sub-projects.²⁶ The interviews were conducted in Prague during a visit on 13-15 May 2011.

The political and economic transformation of the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries in the 1990s has also affected the Czech research system. The radical changes, including also a more or less deep decrease in financing, initiated major reforms to R&D systems. The implementation of these reforms²⁷ was constrained by the economic and fiscal crisis which followed the transition to a market economy. The decisions and strategies devised regarding how to cope with both new problems and opportunities were different in CEE countries²⁸ according to their situation, their specific research systems, and also their traditions and cultural aspects. There are both general trends and significant differences between CEE countries and research disciplines. These differences can be found in financial threats and coping strategies; reduced personnel; forms of institutional transformation; relations between academies and the university sector; support for basic and applied research; engagement of the business and enterprise sector in research activities and new patterns of international collaboration in research.

As a result of the changes to date, foundations have been laid for the construction of a research system based on pluralism, free competition and support for top-level, internationally compatible research projects. In the Czech Republic, the research system has now been adjusted to the institutional forms applied in Western democracies, and it operates quite satisfactorily (at least in the sphere of basic research).

Traditionally, basic research has been conducted by the Academy of Sciences²⁹ (ASCR) and financed from specific chapters in the national budgets, running for several years. This gave a clear focus and responsibility to the ASCR for long-term basic research. The primary mission of the ASCR and its 54 public research institutes is to conduct basic research in a broad spectrum across the natural, technical and social sciences and the humanities. The Academy employs about 7,000 employees, more than a half of whom are researchers with university degrees.

Research has also been closely linked to the relevant sector Ministry (e.g. Education, Youth and Sport, Environment, Health, Transport etc.). Following the political and ideological shift in the early 1990s, research has been steadily liberalised. As a result, institutes, mainly in the Business Enterprise Sector, have been privatised in two waves within the framework of so-called 'big privatisation'.

Universities have also taken on a role as research institutions, and are increasingly providing both research and research-based education. Research-focused universities are gradually taking shape in the Czech Republic. The Research system of the Czech Republic can thus be seen as steadily turning

²⁵ CZ0092 - "Energy plantations technologies on contaminated land" and CZ0051 - "Monitoring of sulphur and nitrogen pollution".

²⁶ A/1/0015, A/1/0022, A/2/0017, A/2/0013.

²⁷ Provazník, St., Filáček, A., Křížová-Frýdová, E., Loudín, J., Machleidt, P. (1998) Transformation of Science and Research in the Czech Republic (in Czech). Filosofia, Prague.

²⁸ Mayntz, R., Schimank, U., Weingart, P. (eds.) (1998) East European Academies in Transition. Kluwer Publ., Dordrecht.

²⁹ http://www.cas.cz/veda_a_vyzkum/index.html

towards a classic Western system with independent research universities and other research organisations competing for funding by providing excellence in research.

For the last twenty years, the legislative responsibility for science, research and development in the Czech Republic is given to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport. The duty and responsibility to distribute public finances (in this case all are from the state budget, including advancing the EU programmes and advancing the EEA/Norway Grants) to sectors of R&D expenditures is now that of the newly appointed Research, Development and Innovation Council (R&D&I Council) of the Czech Republic.³⁰

Changes are still taking place in the Czech science and research system. Reforms and new policies have been launched since 2008 and are still in the implementation phase. In April 2011, the Czech Government approved "Principles for preparation of national priorities for research, development and innovations" and a respective Committee of experts was established. One of the aims of the "National Research, Development and Innovation Policy of the Czech Republic in 2009 – 2015"³¹ is a rethinking of the priorities for applied research, development and innovation processes in relation to sustainable development of the Czech Republic. The responsibility in this matter is that of the R&D&I Council.

These changes have also had a specific impact on how the quality of research is evaluated, a process which has stirred considerable debate in both the academic community and the general public, as in other countries.³² Another development includes the establishment by law of the Technological Agency of the Czech Republic in 2009. The agency focuses on applied research, development and innovation but also on national research programming, competitions within research etc.

2. Relevance

The relevance of the EEA/Norway Grants' activities and achievements lies in the following assessment, with respect to different objectives and perspectives. Since its relevance in the EU context was analysed in Annex 5 of the main report, the focus is here on its relevance to the Czech research agenda and to the objectives of the EEA/Norway Grants - the latter regarding both priority sectors and bilateral relationships. These relevant achievements are as presented in Table A8-3 and were analysed with reference to the views of the Focal Point, the Czech Research Fund, Czech project promoters and EFTA (Norwegian) stakeholders.

The overall objectives of the EEA/Norway Grants are clear: to reduce economic and social disparities in Europe and to support bilateral relations. As regards academic research in the Czech Republic, it is very clear that increasing bilateral relations with the EEA countries, especially Norway, is absolutely the primary objective. According to the National Focal Point, the Academic Research sector is where bilateral cooperation is implemented with the most success. The feedback from the manager of the Czech Research Funds also supports this view, as it underlines the fact that creating and supporting bilateral relations in addition to conducting research, is the main focus of the fund. One of the meas-

³⁰ <http://www.vyzkum.cz/FrontClanek.aspx?idsekce=592654>

³¹ <http://www.vyzkum.cz/FrontClanek.aspx?idsekce=631>

³² <http://www.msmt.cz/european-union/ipn-in-the-field-of-tertiary-education-research-and-development/international-audit-of-rdi>

ures under the Czech Research Fund (Measure B) is solely directed at creating and supporting bilateral relations through supporting exchange activities.

Addressing the issue in relation to individual projects and sub-projects also reveals a significant focus on bilateral relations. All the projects interviewed have bilateral relations, as part of their set-up, as a main driver in their research activities. This is achieved either by building on and extending existing relations, or by pursuing possibilities for cooperation with excellent research institutions identified by the project promoter in the Donor Countries.

Reducing economic and social disparities in Europe receives significantly less attention from Czech research stakeholders. The Focal Point is unable to identify a clear perspective in relation to the matter in available research, and neither the fund manager nor the projects or sub-projects have a clear view as to its contribution in this respect. Both the Focal Point and the programme manager see the EEA/Norway Funds available to research as being too small when compared to national research funding to have any significantly measurable effects on the societal level. It is, however, commonly agreed between the Focal Point, Fund and projects that a causal relation does exist between support for research and subsequent socio-economic development in terms of more and improved jobs and increased earnings. Examples of a direct economic spin-off from one project were mentioned during the interview.

In relation to the relevance of the EEA/Norway Grants to the National research agendas, this must, to some extent, be seen in relation to the development of the Czech research system during the last few decades. Traditionally, more focus has been given to basic research and less attention has been placed on downstream research and innovation activities. According to the project promoters, the EEA/Norway Grants have been a very helpful tool for filling in the gap left by this lack in focus regarding innovation and applied research.

During much of the implementation period of the EEA/Norway Grant, a significant role has been given to relevant sector Ministries in setting overall objectives for research. By giving these ministries a central role in the calls for individual research projects, alignment with national policies has been ensured.

As mentioned earlier, the research system is changing, giving a more independent role to a larger number of research performers. This change has been embraced during the organisation of the Czech Research Fund. The composition of the steering committee clearly illustrates the increased plurality of the research stakeholders, including Ministries, the Academies of Science, private and public universities and different associations.

Table A8-1 How relevant was the supported activities to the national research agenda?

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The activities supported by the EEA/Norway Grants were both in line with the national research agenda and the achievements have been integrated into this agenda. |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> 3 | The activities supported were in line with the national research agenda. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The activities supported were partially in line with the national research agenda. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The activities supported were not or only minimally in line with the national research agenda. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

The priority sectors of the fund are awarded by the Regulation of the EEA/Norway Grants. These are deemed relevant by the Fund Manager of the Czech Research Fund, leaving adequate room to manoeuvre. By conducting different calls, this process has been used by the fund to shift focus to the most relevant priority sectors, and is assisted by an expert panel. In the end, all priority sectors have been covered.

During the interview, a request for increased focus on the medicinal aspects of health and on research within transportation and infrastructures was made directly to the project promoters. In general, the priority sectors are deemed relevant among the projects.

Table A8-2 How relevant was the supported activities with respect to the five priority sectors?

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> 4 | The activities supported by the EEA/Norway Grants address fully the chosen areas within the priority sectors. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The activities supported address the chosen areas within the priority sectors to a satisfactory extent. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The activities supported address the chosen areas within the priority sectors to a limited extent. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The activities supported do not address the chosen areas within the priority sectors or do so to a very limited extent. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

Table A8-3 Relevance of EEA/Norway Grants support to the Czech Republic

| | Focal Point | The Czech Research Fund | Czech project holders | EFTA (Norwegian) stakeholders |
|---|--|--|---|-------------------------------|
| Czech research agenda | Relevance is ensured by including the relevant sector ministries and regional authorities in the process of conducting the calls for individual research projects. | Relevant Czech stakeholders have been included in the steering committee and other relevant advisory bodies of the Fund. | Gaps have existed in relation to the funding of applied research and innovation but these EEA/Norway grants have helped to fill this gap. | |
| EEA/Norway Grants - priority sectors | The priority sectors are deemed to be as given. | The priority sectors are deemed to cover all relevant areas and leave room to manoeuvre. | All deemed to be relevant - increased focus on medicinal and transport research is requested. | |
| EEA/Norway Grants - bilateral relationships | The Academic Research sector is highly successful in this field. | Establishing and developing bilateral relations is definitely the main driver and focus. | Highly relevant - and a main driver when applying for funding either to develop existing relations or to initiate new contacts with excellent research institutions in Donor Countries. | |

Source: Interviews with stakeholders.

3. Impact/effectiveness

In relation to the actual impacts and effectiveness of the supported initiatives, input from the projects which have been interviewed is of particular interest. Even so, the Focal Point noted during the interview that all projects have succeeded in achieving their objectives. This is supported by the views of the Czech Research Fund.

By addressing the issue with the projects' support during interviews, it was established that objectives have been met and impact (understood as relevant research performed and bilateral relations established or deepened), been achieved. During the in-depth project interview, the project results have been of a very high quality and have constituted a significant part of the overall activities of the interviewed research organisation. The Data, having international relevance, have been gathered by the project and has resulted in a substantial number of publications. Additional results from the supported study will also be published during the next few years, and the project's body of work will most likely be used as both a national and international point of reference. State of the art Norwegian research in the field has played a substantial role during this process.

Table A8-4 Have the supported activities resulted in the planned deliverables?

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | Fund/programme and project activities have resulted in the planned deliverables - which are of high quality due to the support from EEA/Norway Grants. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | Fund/programme and project activities have resulted in most of the planned deliverables - which are of high quality due to the support from EEA/Norway Grants. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | Fund/programme and project activities have only resulted in some of the planned deliverables. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | Fund/programme and project activities have only resulted in a few of the planned deliverables. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

The success noted above seems to be mirrored in the rest of the projects receiving funding from the EEA/Norway grants when looking at the initially planned outputs of the EEA/Norway Grant sector Academic Research (core indicators ex ante). Even though the Czech Republic only accounts for around 10% of the total funding, 83% of all patents planned to be developed under the Fund section of the EEA/Norway Grant are Czech. On the other hand, none of the 23 patents planned to be applied for under the individual projects are Czech. Regarding the planned number of PhDs awarded the Czech Republic accounts for 67% of doctoral research supported by the funds and 7% for individual projects. Regarding the planned number of publications, the Czech Republic accounts for 22% of the total number under the fund and 5% of the total under individual projects. Regarding the size of funding, the Czech Republic is thus seemingly quite successful in terms of deliverables according to the core indicators, particularly under their research fund.

The projects' dissemination activities are also deemed to be highly satisfactory. The interviews with the Czech Research Fund and the various projects reveal a diversified approach to dissemination which covers a multitude of media, including traditional publications, electronic media, offensive media approaches, conferences and seminars. In addition, the projects reflect an intention to adopt the most relevant and effective means of communications by studying the effects of different approaches and tools on their own initiative.

Impacts of research are a contested matter, not only in relation to the EEA/Norway

Grants, but in general. As the evaluator, we are therefore left with the impression that the EEA/Norway grant has had a small but important impact on research in the Czech Republic. This is, of course, due to the relatively small size of the funding in question, but also due to a considerable focus on bilateral relations. The researchers are driven by the desire to create excellent research together with their existing EEA/Norwegian partners or with newly identified partners based on their reputation or given their research excellence.

Table A8-5 Have the funds/programmes or projects successfully led to impact?

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The funds/programmes or projects have successfully led to the planned impacts, and any unplanned impacts have not changed this view. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The funds/programmes or projects have led to many of the planned impacts, and any unplanned impacts have not changed this view significantly. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The funds/programmes or projects have led to some of the planned impacts only, and unplanned impacts have not improved this view. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The funds/programmes or projects have not been successful in leading to impacts. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

The visibility of the EEA/Norway Grants is, again, subject to the relative size of the fund. In the general, public research does not receive much attention, which is also the case for research supported by the EEA/Norway Grants. Other parts of the EEA/Norway Grants directed at conservation of cultural heritage do receive significantly more attention. However, accordingly to the project promoters and the Czech Research Fund, the fund is, nevertheless, widely known and appreciated by the research community, mainly as a tool for joint research activities, particularly with Norwegian partners. According to the Czech Research Fund, they receive three times as many applications than they can accommodate, indicating a healthy interest in the activities of the fund. The individual projects also mention a general acknowledgment of the role of EEA/Grants within their own organisations as both an important and significant funding possibility.

Table A8-6 How effective were dissemination efforts in making the EEA/Norway Grants visible?

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The fund/programme manager or project holder had a strong focus on dissemination of findings to both direct users/beneficiaries, and the achievements of the EEA/Norway Grants have become highly visible. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The fund/programme manager or project holder carried out some dissemination of findings to both direct users/beneficiaries, and some of the achievements of the EEA/Norway Grants have become visible. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The fund/programme manager or project holder undertook limited dissemination of findings, and the achievements are only slightly visible. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | Dissemination of fund/programme or project findings was not a central focus. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

Table A8-7 **Impact/effectiveness of EEA/Norway Grants support to the Czech Republic**

| | Focal Point and Intermediate Body | Fund/Programme managers | Czech project holders | EFTA (Norwegian) stakeholders |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|-------------------------------|
| Deliverables | Meeting all objectives. | Meeting all objectives. | Meeting all objectives. | |
| Dissemination | - | Application of media activities. | Applying a multitude of means of communication. The intention to apply the most efficient. A significant number of publications. | |
| Impact | Fund too small to have significant impact. | A substantial impact in relation to bilateral relations in particular. | Highly effective core indicators (patents, PhDs, publications). Projects often examples of excellent research. | |
| Visibility of EEA/Norway Grants | - | Research generally has less focus in the public eye. Well known in the research community. | Well known in the research community. Highly recognised and appreciated in organisations with individual research projects. | |

Source: Interviews with stakeholders.

4. Efficiency

On the matter of efficiency, the feedback from all Czech interviewees is that the EEA/Norway Grants are generally implemented as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

The requirements for good governance, however, are set at a certain level, which results in a number of challenges for the project promoters and partners.

From the point of view of the Focal Point, the Czech Research Fund and the projects' interaction with the FMO level is always of high quality and is conducted in a positive and polite manner. However, due to the administrative strains on the FMO, answering times have constituted a challenge for the projects. We have the impression that this particular challenge will diminish as the administrative burdens of the FMO are reduced. An interviewee proposed that future Regulation could leave more room for interpretation by the Focal Point or Intermediate Body, thus reducing the strain on the FMO.

Table A8-8 Was the EEA Norway Grants financial mechanism efficient in supporting achievements?

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The EEA/Norway Grants financial mechanism was very efficient in supporting the achievements in academic research. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The EEA/Norway Grants financial mechanism was fairly efficient in supporting achievements in academic research. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The EEA/Norway Grants financial mechanism was only partially efficient in supporting the achievements in academic research. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The EEA/Norway Grants financial mechanism was not efficient in supporting the achievements in academic research. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

Regarding the interaction between the Focal Point and/or intermediate body and the projects, the impression was gained that the administration was of high quality and conducted in a polite but in a rather strict way. More specifically, "double-reporting" by the individual projects was to take place four times a year to the Focal Point and the relevant sector ministry was cumbersome. This, of course, has to be viewed in a context where "double-reporting" is conducted where pre-finance is provided by a sector ministry, and problems in connection with cash flow for the project have subsequently reduced significantly. Nevertheless, the real challenge in connection to reporting was the financial aspect. Compliance with the Czech accounting rules has proved particularly troublesome.

Little can be done in relation to financial reporting - new rules are imminent which will bring Czech legislation in the field of research funding more in line with the rules of the FP7 and similar funding possibilities in other EU countries. This will probably result in fixed-rate based funding rather than on the actual salaries paid to research staff. The challenges which are presented to the Czech project promoters are much smaller than those of their counterparts in the Donor Countries, this being one of the most significant factors currently hampering the Academic Research sector.

The Donor Country partners, which seem to be almost exclusively Norwegian, have serious troubles accounting correctly for the EEA/Norway grants. EEA/Norway Grants are, by definition, to be consid-

ered part of the Czech state budget, and hence Czech accounting rules and practises apply. This leads to some frustration among the Norwegian partners, who have difficulties understanding why they have to account in such a strict manner for "their own money". Examples exist of project partners waiving their part of the funding due to the administrative burdens related to getting reimbursed. Taking into account the crucial role of bilateral cooperation in the Academic Research sector, this might prove to be the main barrier for further success of the fund in the Czech Republic.

The organisational set-up for administering the EEA/Norway grant is, as described above, essential to ensure good governance, by introducing several layers of stakeholders in both the planning and implementation of the calls. On the other hand, the system requires a dedicated effort insuring compliance in terms of accounting and reporting. Even though this proved a challenge to the project, no significant desire to change the existing set-up surfaced. The researchers and their support staff all find a way to deal with these challenges - the participants in the group interview actually agreed that they would like to retain the existing set-up.

Table A8-9 Was the Beneficiary efficient in implementing the project?

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The Beneficiary was very efficient in implementing the project. |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | The Beneficiary was fairly efficient in implementing the project. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The Beneficiary was only partially efficient in implementing the project. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The Beneficiary was not efficient in implementing the project. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

The EEA/Norway grant has other possibilities for improvements. A number of projects find it practically impossible to fit actual research activities within the time limits provided. Hence, to be able to conduct medical research, for example, three years is the minimum time required in order to complete the necessary consecutive trials. Another challenge is the level of pre-financing. Taking into account the size of some of the project promoters and the liabilities connected to having a currency which is not fixed to the Euro leaves the projects with some challenges. These challenges involve dealing with currency fluctuations and expenditures in relation to securing loans to ensure cash flow. A higher level of pre-financing would counter these uncertainties and non-reimbursable expenditures. This might not be an unreasonable inclination, taking into account the high success rate of the Czech projects in both applying all their funding according to the regulations and meeting the project objectives. Finally, there was some discussion regarding the possibilities of operating the whole grant in English (reporting, guidance etc.). This should be done to ease the interaction with the partners from the Donor Countries. It was not possible to confirm whether this idea had the support of all stakeholders.

Table A8-10 Efficiency of EEA/Norway Grants support to the Czech Republic

| | Focal Point and Intermediate Body | Fund/Programme managers | Czech project holders | EFTA (Norwegian) stakeholders |
|-------------------|--|--|--|-------------------------------|
| Donor | Sometimes of quality Often long time before answer is given by the FMO | Adequately designed priorities Seek more flexibility in interpretation of the Regulation (thus reducing the administrative burden on the FMO) | Short operational period of program (the Czech Research Fund) makes it difficult to implement some re-search projects | |
| Beneficiary State | High level of governance Projects highly efficient in meeting objectives and indicators | Good interaction Strict reporting demands | Well organised and correct Time-consuming to report Higher level of pre-financing would reduce risk and non reimbursable costs | |

Source: Interviews with stakeholders.

5. Sustainability

Regarding sustainability issues, responses in this evaluation have mainly been gathered from the project level.

The interviews showed that sustainability is a concern of the project holders. Although the main focus is on the actual deliverables, these are often seen as important inputs for future cooperation and further research.

A substantial number of articles has been publicised from the projects, ensuring both dissemination of the results and provision of a basis for further R&I activities and cooperation with partners from the Donor Countries.

Table A8-11 Do project outcomes sustain beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period?

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The project outcomes and impacts are fully sustainable beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> 3 | The project outcomes and impacts are partly sustainable beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The project outcomes and impacts are sustainable only to a limited degree beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The project outcomes and impacts are not sustainable beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

Regarding partnerships, it seems that EEA/Norway Grant funded projects mark an important stepping stone for further partner activities. This could either take shape via new EEA/Norway Grant projects or through other internationally funded projects. Participating in smaller EEA/Norway funded projects thus creates the necessary trust between partners to apply for larger either EEA/Norway or EU funded projects. There seem to be no significant problems with the absorption capacity of EEA/Norway funding for partnerships either in the Czech Republic or in Norway. It seems, however, that very few or no partnerships are developed with the remaining EEA countries.

Table A8-12 Are partnerships sustainable beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period?

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | The partnerships are fully sustainable beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> 3 | The partnerships are partly sustainable beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | The partnerships are sustainable only to a limited degree beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | The partnerships are not sustainable beyond the EEA/Norway Grants co-funding period. |

Source: Assessment of evaluator on the basis of desk study and interviews.

The projects receiving more substantial research funding from the EEA/Norway Grants also regard the funding as an important stepping stone, but the actual research results also play a significant role as they provide a basis for additional publications and as a point of reference for further research.

Table A8-13 Sustainability of EEA/Norway Grants support to the Czech Republic

| | Focal Point and Intermediate Body | Fund/Programme managers | Czech project holders | EFTA (Norwegian) stakeholders |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Partnerships | - | - | <p>Future partnerships often incorporate fruitful partnerships.</p> <p>No absorption issues have been encountered in relation to future partnerships with Norway.</p> | |
| Impacts | - | - | <p>A fair share of publications makes future impacts possible.</p> <p>Actual results have already been deemed as having substantial impacts on future research.</p> | |

Source: Interviews with stakeholders.

6. Conclusions

The EEA/Norway Grants Academic Research sector appears to be implemented through a well run set-up in the Czech Republic, which is deemed to be a success by both stakeholders, particularly regarding the core indicators. The Grants are subject to healthy interest from researchers and no evidence of critical aspects in relation to the absorption capacity was noted.

The grants play a small yet both significant and visible role the Czech research society. Here, it helps to fill a gap, especially in relation to funding for applied research and innovation. It also paves the way for the further Europeanization of Czech research by strengthening international partnerships and increasing the possibility and ability to successfully apply for EU research funding.

The implementation of the funds has clearly strengthened the ties between the Czech and the Norwegian research communities, and such relationships often become deeper in the future. There are, nevertheless, obstacles which may hinder continued success. These mainly concern the partners' capacity to deal with the administrative burden of project management.

A less burdensome reporting process would be highly welcomed by the Czech project promoters. This could be achieved by applying a "one chain" reporting set-up, where projects only have to report to one authority. This would, however, provide a significant challenge to the Czech Authorities as funding derives from different budget lines and requires individual reporting by law. In addition, reporting could be reduced from quarterly intervals to twice or three times a year. Finally, it could be considered that the administrative language is changed to English. This would be in line with the ever increasing internationalization of research, underlining the multi- and bilateral aspects of the Grants, and last but not least, assist the partners in the Donor Countries in finding their way around the EEA/Norway Grants.

This also leads to what is deemed to be the main weakness of the EEA/Norway Grants (Academic Research) in the Czech Republic, namely the establishment of more nationally balanced research partnerships (i.e. the Norwegian partnerships). There is a need for improved assistance to Norwegian researchers in particular, who operate within the EEA/Norway Grants AND the Czech legislative framework. Increasing such assistance for Norwegian researchers from e.g. the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and their local representation could be one way of dealing with capacity building, increasing international capabilities and the outreach activities of the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research.

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