



National Focal Point of Estonia

Norwegian Financial Mechanism STRATEGIC REPORT 2015

Strategic Report on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial
Mechanism 2009–2014 in Estonia



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF FINANCE

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overall objectives of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009–2014 are to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area (EEA) and to strengthen bilateral relations between the donor state and the beneficiary states.

To achieve the overall objectives, the donor state Norway contributes to Estonia 25 600 000 euros, out of which 7,5% is assigned for donor state's management costs and the net amount available for Estonia is 23 680 000 euros.

During negotiations between Norway and Estonia seven programme areas were identified as most relevant in order to achieve the overall objectives. As a result of the negotiations, the total amount available was divided between the following programme areas: i) Green Industry Innovation; ii) Global fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue; iii) Bilateral Research Cooperation; iv) Bilateral Scholarship Programme; v) Public Health Initiatives; vi) Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance; and vii) Domestic and Gender-Based Violence.

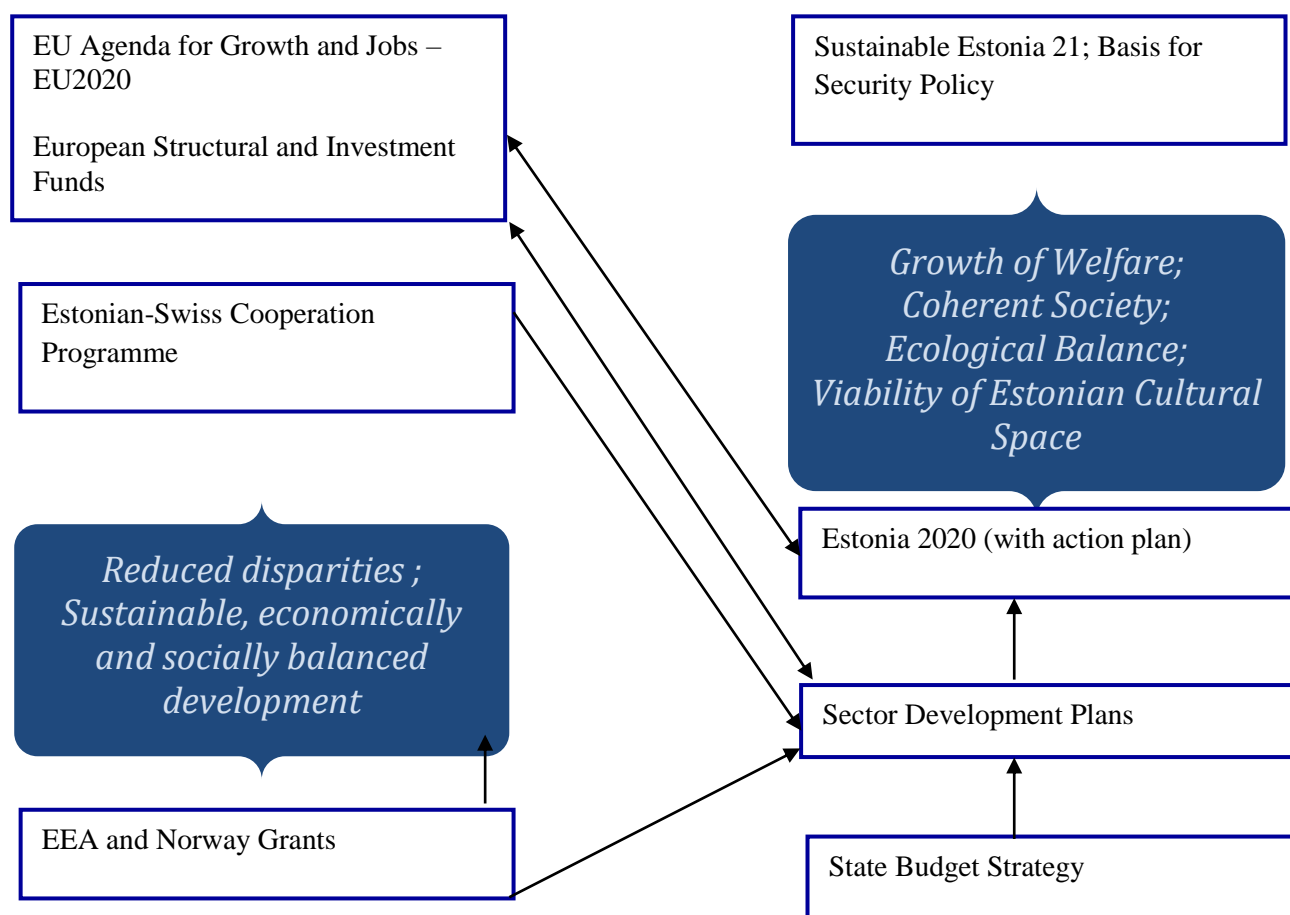
Since all the programmes were approved at the end of 2012, in 2013 the Programme Operators were engaged in launching the programmes, organising match-making events and other publicity events, and setting up and describing the management and control systems at the same time. The Project Promoters began implementation in 2013 for almost all programmes where pre-defined projects were foreseen in the programme agreement. Most of the planned calls for proposals were launched in 2013, and in several cases the grant decisions were also made. During 2014, the processes of launching calls and making grant decisions developed quickly and by the end of the reporting period all the planned calls were carried out and most of the grant decisions were made.

As a result of this, the commitment rates in the programmes have reached 98-100 percent and all the programmes are in general progressing as expected. The focus from now on is on successful finishing of the programmes and if necessary, making necessary adjustments to ensure maximum impact. The Audit Authority carried out management and control system audits and audits on projects for five programmes.

2 ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECT OF THE GRANTS

The main goals of Estonia for the long term are increase in welfare, a cohesive society, ecological balance and viability of the Estonian cultural space¹. The funding from the EEA and Norway Grants 2009–2014 with the objective to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area helps to address the Estonian development needs in specific priority sectors, which all contribute to longer term internal strategies such as Sustainable Estonia 21 or Competitiveness plan Estonia 2020.

Strategic link



An important function of the EEA and Norway Grants has been the exchange of knowhow and best-practice in order to increase the effectiveness of activities in the priority fields and for the longer perspective enabling strengthened cooperation in the future.

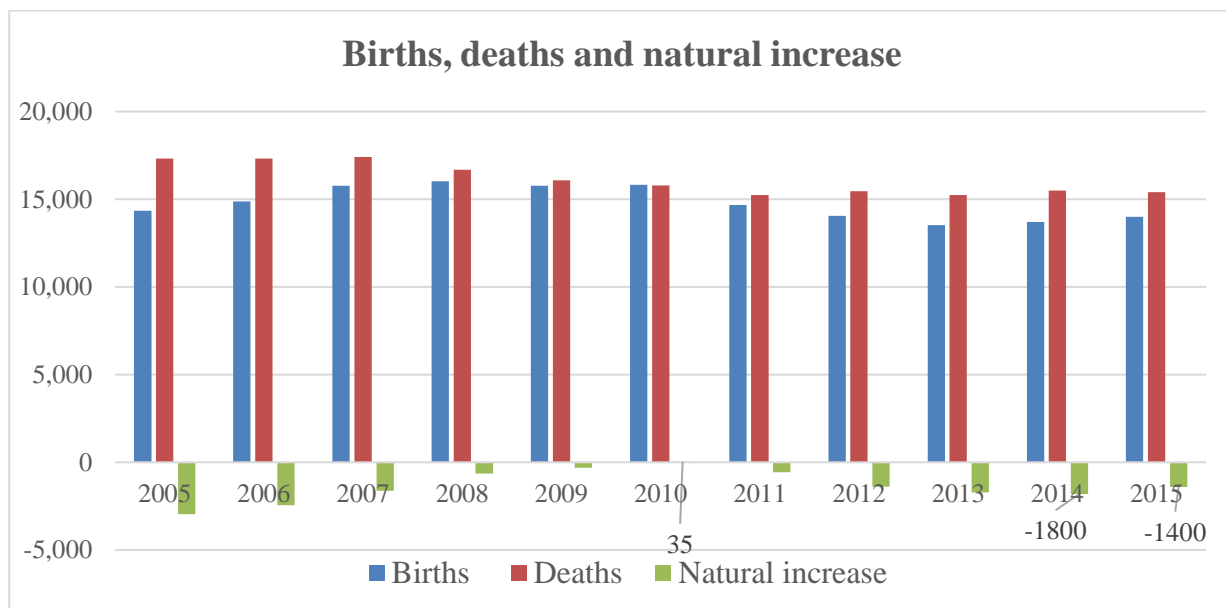
EEA and Norway Grants financial contribution has made possible to address specific problems in the areas, which fall out of the eligibility scope of other funding but are still at great relevance considering the objective of sustainable, economically and socially balanced development and reduced disparities. Thus the support enables to tackle the specific problems so that the overall development needs would be most effectively and efficiently covered, which means that the EEA and Norway Grants' contribution offers real added value. Although it is sometimes difficult

¹ Sustainable Estonia 21.

to indicate the direct share in the higher indicator level reached, the systematic approach of cooperation and support allows us to believe that the funded programmes and implemented projects will lead to positive long-term impact.

According to the initial estimates of Statistics Estonia, the population number in Estonia was 1 311 800 on 1st January 2016, which is 1 500 persons less than at the same time a year ago.

The population decreased by 1400 due to negative natural increase (the number of deaths exceeded the number of births and by 100 due to negative net migration (more persons emigrated from than immigrated to Estonia). In total the population of Estonia decreased by 0,1% in 2015. In the last few years, the population decline has slowed down.

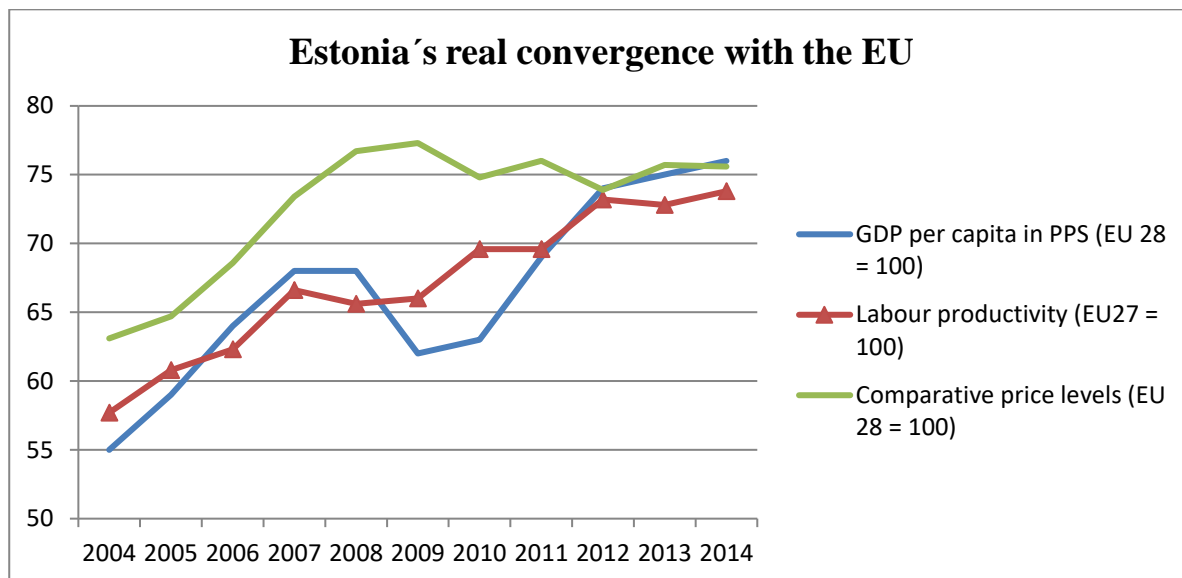


Source: Statistics Estonia

According to Statistics Estonia in 2015 the gross domestic product of Estonia increased by 1,1% compared to 2014, the GDP at current prices was 20,5 billion euros. The year was characterised by a slow but steady growth of the Estonian economy.

Various unfavourable factors independent of the Estonian economic environment had a negative impact on gross product growth late last year. Warm weather reduced added value in the energy sector, keeping demand and consequently prices low in our market region. Demand for electronic devices was in decline in the second half of the year due to the high level of the reference base. The low price of oil on the global market also reduced the production volumes and sale prices of shale oil. The logistics sector struggled because of smaller foreign trade volumes, while production in the construction sector is restricted by the continuing decrease in the number of new-builds and reconstructions.

Agriculture, forestry and fishing contributed to the increase of the GDP. In addition, professional, scientific and technical activities and trade contributed the most to GDP growth in 2015.



Source: Ministry of Finance, Eurostat²³⁴, compared to EU 28

GDP per capita in comparison with the EU28 continues to be low (76%; EU28 being 100%; Norway 178%), and the primary reason is relatively low productivity.

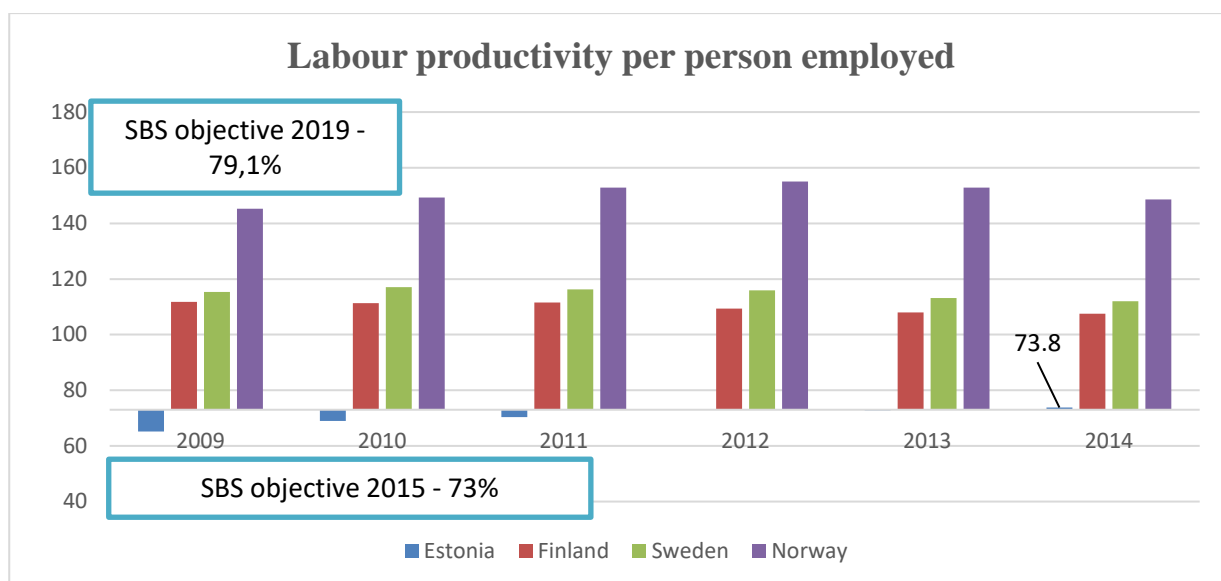
Increasing the productivity and innovation of the economy is one of the most important preconditions of achieving the growth of GDP per capita. For that purpose the Estonian Government has set the target to increase the productivity per person employed up to 73% of the EU average by 2015⁵ and to 80% by 2020. By the end of 2014 Estonia reached the level of 73,8% (73,2% in 2012 and 72,8% in 2013), thus productivity per person employed is approaching slowly to the set target of reaching the EU average.

² <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tec00116>

³ <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tec00120>

⁴ <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tec00114>

⁵ Estonia 2020



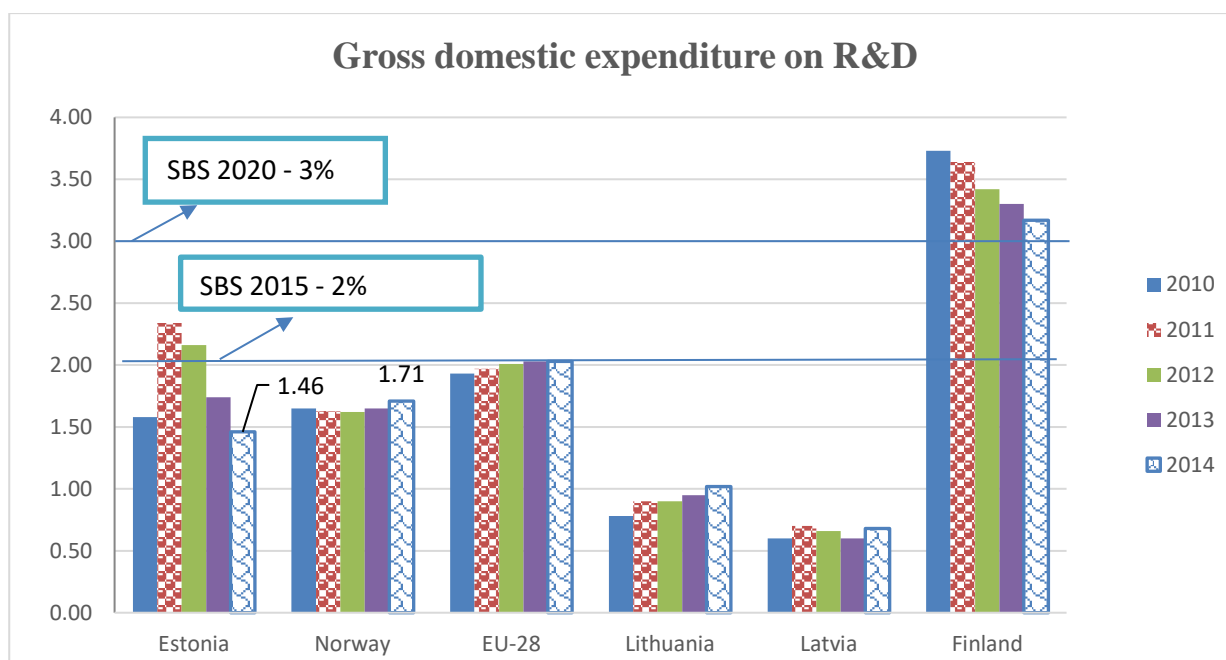
Source: Eurostat⁶

The gross domestic expenditure on R&D was 1,58% in 2010 and 1,46% by the end of 2014, which is below the European Union average. Level of achievement being less than 2%, which was the objective for 2015 is too low to reach the target set for 2020, which is the level of 3%.

Thus finding and participating in new areas of growth is of even greater importance as well as combining of the research, development and innovations systems with the needs of the economy and moving up in the value chains.

This has also been under focus in the Entrepreneurship Growth Strategy for 2014–2020, where it is pointed out that 44% of Estonian SMEs have carried out some product or process innovation, 34% have introduced changes in the area of marketing or management and around one third of them have managed to implement those improvements without any external help. However, innovative entrepreneurs in Estonia are still behind their European partners when it comes to the growth of turnover based on new products and services. Therefore a rather paradoxical situation has appeared where there are more innovative companies in Estonia than the EU average but the turnover of new products in Estonia is considerably smaller.

⁶ <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tec00116>



Source: Eurostat⁷

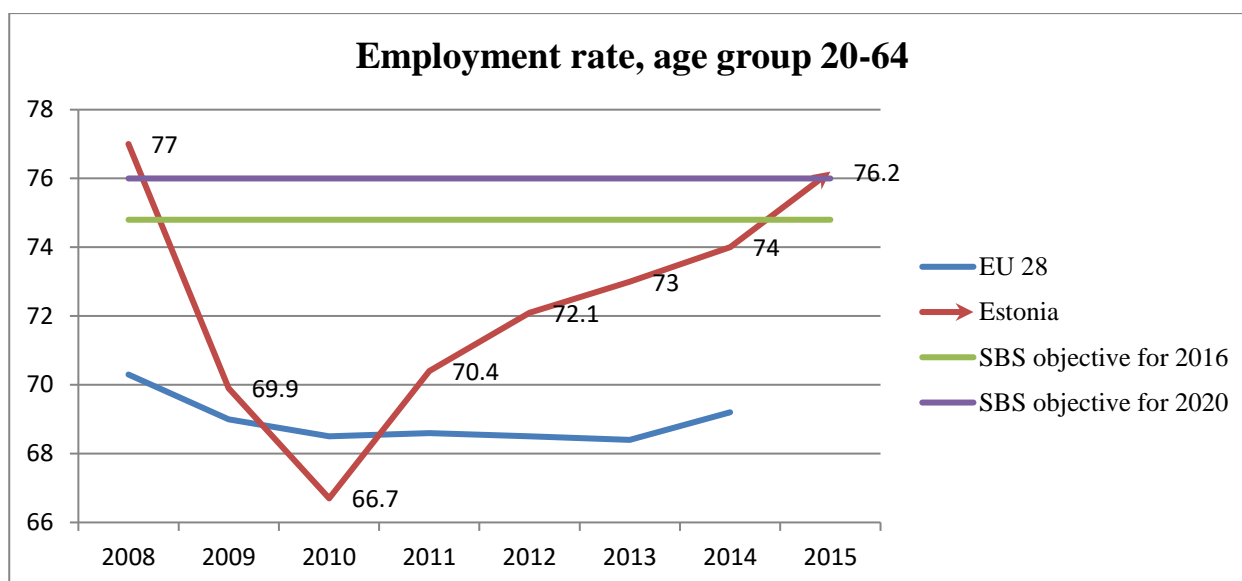
In this context the inputs of the EEA and Norway Grants' research and scholarships programmes' as well as of the Green Industry Innovation programme focusing on green ICT are seen as valuable contribution to and in synergy with EU funding under the specific objective "R&D and higher education are of a high level, and Estonia is active and visible in international cooperation in the field of RD&I" given in the Operational Programme of 2014–2020 period, addresses one of the most essential development needs of increasing innovation capacity and competitiveness.

Finding new growth models and a knowledge-based economy also help to address other challenges, such as the ageing population and limited availability of natural resources.

Estonia has set a target of achieving a 76% employment rate in the 20-64 age group by 2020, this objective was achieved by the end of 2015 when the level of employment reached 76,1%. The level of employment started to recover rapidly in 2011; in 2012 the employment rate in the 20-64 age group increased reaching the level of 72,1%⁸, 73% by 2013, and 74% by 2014.

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=t2020_20

⁸ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=t2020_10



Source: Eurostat⁹ and Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia

This positive trend of raising employment rate is partially explained by compulsory registration of employees since July 2014. In coming years labour market developments are also strongly affected by Work Ability Reform, which implementation will start mid 2016 and helps people, with partial work ability to return to the labour market. It is assumed though that remained skills of people, who are being activated by the reform, are not in line with the labour market needs and employers' capability to hire such people is low, resulting in increasing unemployment as of 2017. Positive effects from the Work Ability Reform via increased labour supply are expected to gradually increase in time. This and other activation measures addressed to each age group are prerequisite to cope with the shrinkage of working age population. As the number of people in employment is expected to stop growing due to demographic developments and start declining after 2017, then in the next years economic growth can only be driven by productivity and investments supporting it.

Unemployment in the 15-74 age group decreased to 10,2%¹⁰ in 2012 and continued to decline, reaching 8,6% in 2013, 7,4% in 2014 and 6,2% in 2015¹¹.

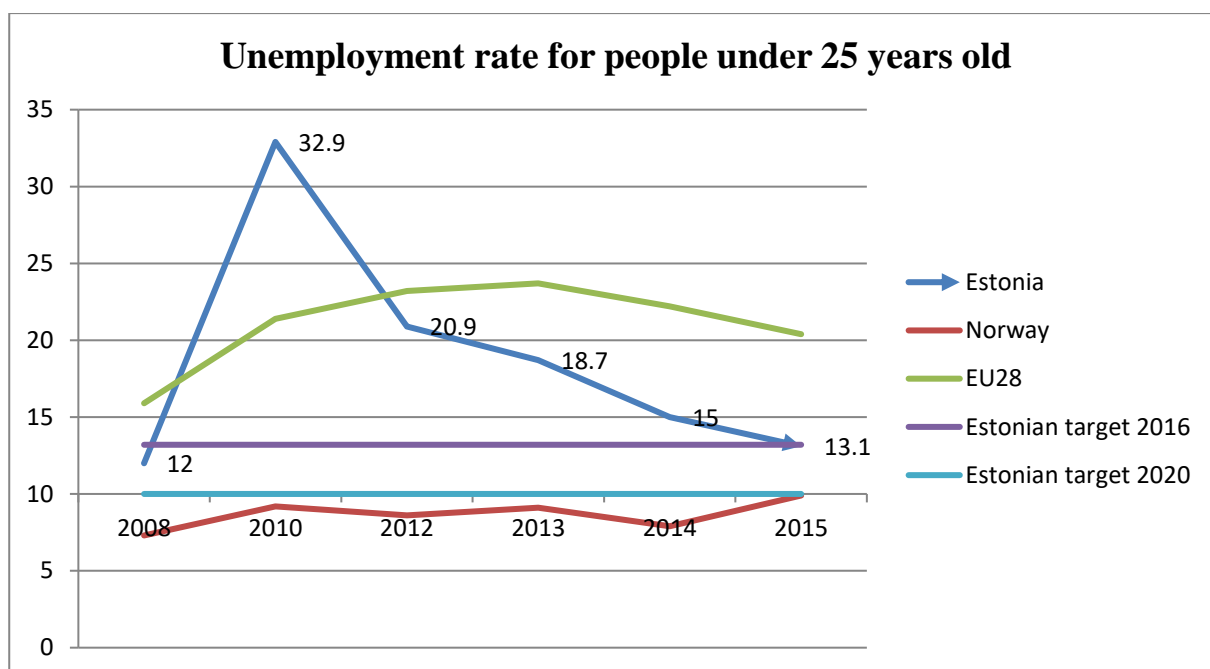
Reducing youth (age group 15-24 years) unemployment remains an important challenge for Estonia. In 2015 compared to 2014, the unemployment rate dropped considerably among young people, being 13,1% (15% in 2014), but was still higher compared to other age groups, that still shows that entering the labour market and staying there is still a serious problem for the young. Estonia is committed to decreasing the unemployment rate of young people to 10% by 2020.

The Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Social Affairs have developed special employment and education measures for youth, which support and prepare for transitions between the education system and labour market. These efforts are supported with the activities under the programme Children and Youth at Risk.

⁹ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=t2020_10

¹⁰ <http://www.stat.ee/66661>

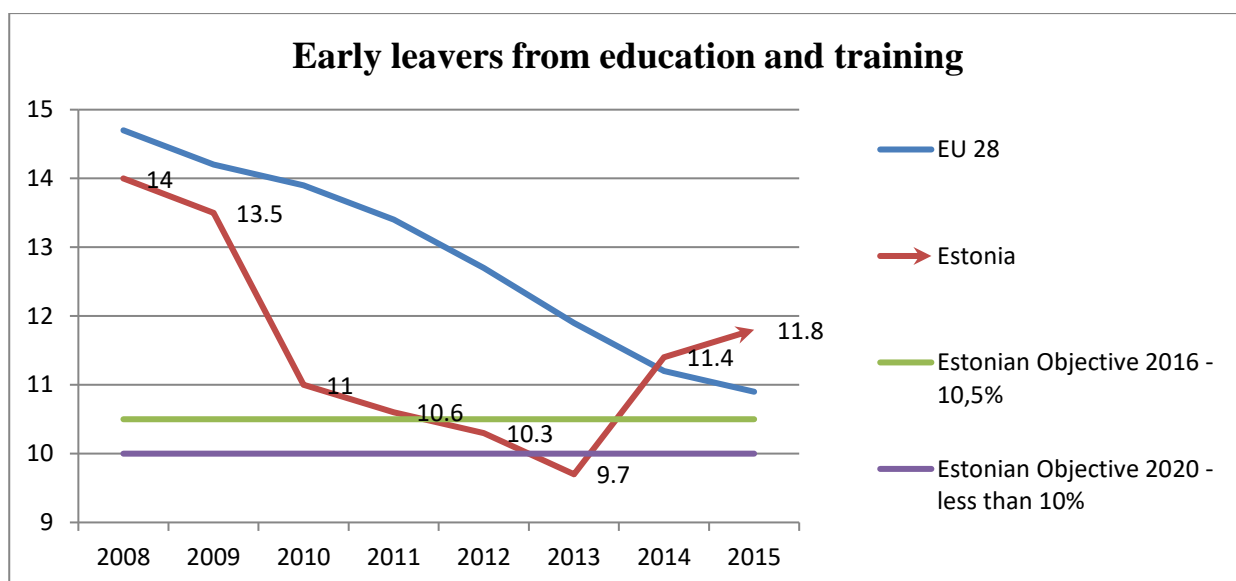
¹¹ Statistics Estonia - <http://pub.stat.ee/px-web.2001/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=TT35&ti=T%D6%D6TUSE+M%C4%C4R+SOO+JA+VANUSER%DCHMA+J%C4RGI&path=../Database/Sotsiaalelu/15Tooturg/10Tootud/02Aastastatistika/&lang=2>



Source: Eurostat¹² and Statistics Estonia

Namely through the programme Children and Youth at Risk addressing child welfare, professionals in different agencies are supported in order to provide adequate early intervention and provision of evidence and knowledge-based interventions to support parenting skills and prevent juvenile delinquency. Preventing or minimising negative consequences and reducing the costs of juvenile offending, developing social competences and cohesion in society contribute to achievement of the objectives of the EEA and Norway Grants and move towards socially balanced development. Activities under the programme also contribute directly to the aim to reduce the youth unemployment rate as well as the Europe 2020 goal to reduce the percentage of early school leavers (age group 18-24 years).

¹² http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=une_rt_a&lang=en



Source: Eurostat¹³

According to Statistics Estonia, in 2014, 21,6% (2013, 22,1% and 2012, 18,6%) of the Estonian population lived in relative poverty and 6,3% (2013, 8,0% and 2012, 7,3%) in absolute poverty. In 2014, a fifth of children under 18 lived in relative poverty as before, while the absolute poverty rate of children has slightly decreased (10% in 2013 and 9% in 2014).

The level of education significantly affects the risk of falling into poverty. Among persons with basic or lower education in 2014 every third was in the poorest and only every fourteenth in the richest income quintile. At the same time, one-third of people with higher education belonged to the richest fifth.

By means of reducing regional disparities between EU countries and Estonia the following table shows improvements with regard to set convergence objectives, where it can be seen that although Estonia has with regard to some indicators already exceeded the EU average, then compared to achievement levels of Norway, Estonia still needs a lot of improvement and experience gained through partnerships under the EEA and Norway Grants enhances the positive development perspectives.

¹³ <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tsdsc410>

Indicator	EU 28 average	Norway	Estonia					
	2014	2014	Objective 2016/2020 ¹⁴	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
GDP per capita in PPS ¹⁵	100	178	N/A	N/A	76	75	74	69
Level of R&D investments of the GDP, %	2,03	1,71	2/3	N/A	1,46	1,74	2,16	2,34
Employment rate of the age group 20-64, % ¹⁶	69,2	79,6	74,8/76	76,2	74	73,3	72,1	70,4
At-risk of poverty rate after social transfers, % ¹⁷	17,2	10,9	16,5/15	N/A	21,8	18,6	17,5	17,5

Source: Eurostat and Estonian Statistics

¹⁴ State Budget Strategy 2014-2017

¹⁵ <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tec00114>

¹⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=t2020_10

¹⁷ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tps00184>

2.1 Cohesion

2.1.1 Environment and climate change

The priority sector includes one programme – Green Industry Innovation. With this programme there are clear connections and valuable contribution to the objectives of Estonian Environmental Strategy (EES2030), which is a strategy for developing the sphere of the environment. EES2030 serves as the basis for the preparation and revision of all sector-specific development plans within the sphere of the environment and to the objectives of Estonian Research and Development and Innovation strategy which aims at making the structure of the economy more knowledge-intensive and foresees measures for participation in international RDI cooperation.

a) Contextual trends

The environmental challenges of the future are to secure a low-carbon, resource constrained world while preventing environmental degradation, biodiversity loss and unsustainable use of resources. Increasing resource efficiency is one of the priorities of Estonia 2020. A growing share of production should be based, first of all, on the use of raw materials, reduction of waste generation, and increased recovery, recycling and reuse of waste, rather than expanding the use of natural resources.

In 2012, the percentage of renewable energy in final energy consumption was 25,8%, in 2013 25,6%¹⁸, which exceeds the goal set for 2020 and in 2014 already 26,5%. The target set in state budget strategy 2015-2018 was changed towards a more ambitious objective, 28% by 2020.

In addition to meeting the needs of people and enterprises, increased resource efficiency of the economy (incl. through eco-innovation) is also an important factor in climate change mitigation and adaptation. New business and employment opportunities should be created, a clean environment should be preserved and climate change should be fought through the development and introduction of green and low-carbon technologies. Compiling the “Climate Change Adaption Strategy” is in progress and planned to be approved during 2016.

b) Norway Grants' contribution

Green ICT policy measures are one of the priorities outlined in the Competitiveness Plan Estonia2020, where it is stated that energy and resource efficiency measures as well as measures for reducing CO2 emissions must be developed through innovative investment schemes. In order to achieve economic development and industrial competitiveness, it is important to support R&D in resource efficiency and eco-innovation investments. Development of green technologies in water and waste management needs special attention since in case of Estonia natural circumstances offer a competitive advantage in these areas compared to other countries.

The Green Industry Innovation programme targets “greening with ICT”, narrowing its strategy to four focus areas and challenges, which drive the development of green innovations with international potential. These green innovation horizontal topics are: energy management systems, transport and logistics, manufacturing and trade, e-health.

¹⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=t2020_31&plugin=1

Through Norway Grants it is possible to address the challenges of increasing the companies' innovation capability and providing systematic support, including know-how transfer, for young innovative enterprises. Interest towards the programme has proven to be higher than expected, which also reflects the companies' willingness to develop green solutions within the selected focus areas and greening the entrepreneurship in general. Implementation progress of selected projects is good and so far finalized projects have developed new solutions or improved existing environmental technologies for the wider range of the final end users.

Based on the partnership agreements within the open call projects the 11 projects out of 15 are implemented in close partnership of Estonian and Norwegian companies. This reflects a high interest to set up a knowledge transfer between the two countries. As a result of the grant long-term partnerships are made possible, one outstanding success-story for the reporting period is the project – Energy management system: Demand Response, Project Partner Brightpark OÜ. The objective is to develop an information and management system for effective electricity consumption and production. It constitutes a smart grid solution positioned between an energy retailer and an electricity consumer. Solution enables to save energy costs through interactive energy market communication solution. 70% of the functionality is ready and the software will be accepted in May. Co-operation offered among other knowledge how to sell the product and target it to the Norwegian market. As of today Brightspark has signed an agreement with Norwegian company Correlate AS and decided to invest in Correlate and aims to put together a team that will create the software in the course of two years. The size of the investment by Brightspark is half a million euros during two years. In connection with the investment, 20-30 new jobs will be created in Estonia in 2016.

2.1.2 Research and scholarships

The priority sector includes the Scholarship programme and the Norwegian-Estonian Research Cooperation programme. These programmes will be implemented in cooperation with each other and the Scholarship programme financed from EEA Grants.

a) Contextual Trends

Finding new sources of growth, making economy more knowledge-intensive and increasing the impact of Estonian science are according to analyses made at the end of 2011 Estonia's essential development needs in the 10 years perspective. R&D and more generally the higher education system should be means of achieving structural changes in the economy and the wise positioning of Estonia in the international division of work.

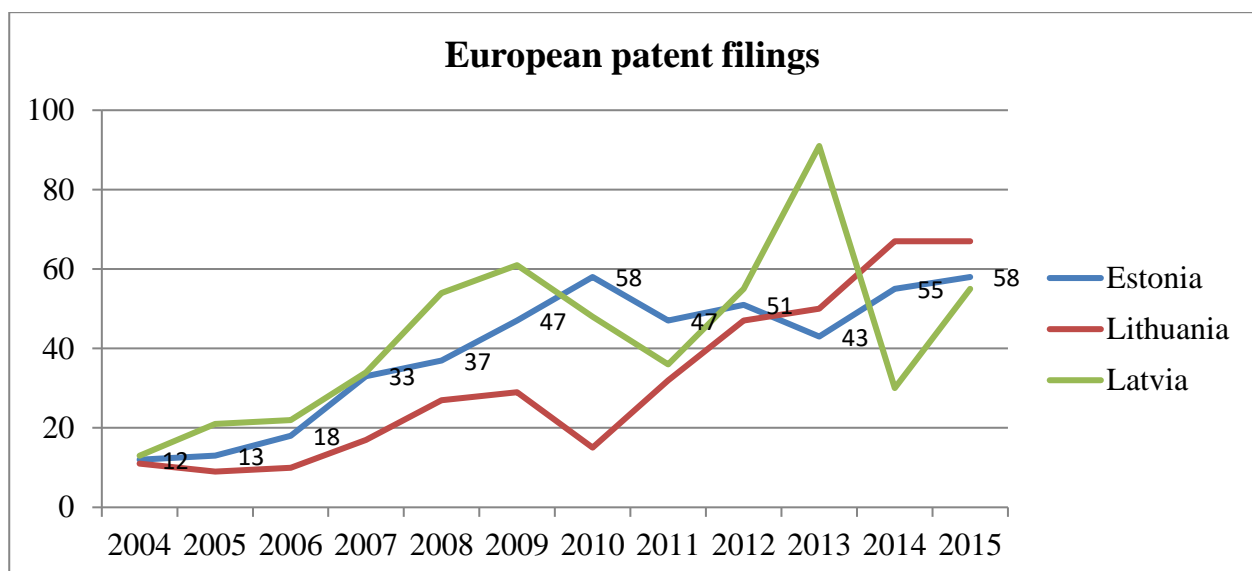
Thus the objective written into the National Reform Programme "Estonia 2020" is to create preconditions for increasing the volumes of research and development in the private sector and raising the number and quality of innovation outputs.

Public sector R&D capability, including the placement of our universities in international ranking lists as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of R&D, play a key role in companies' research and development capability. The academic activity is a key connecting link between domestic and international networking of people and knowledge, which is one source for raising the innovation capacity of companies and attaining higher value added. In future, R&D&I will depend more on developments in other European countries and on Estonia's capacity to contribute to international cooperation. Economic growth, employment and social well-being

increasingly depend on the interaction and substantial cooperation between higher educational institutions science communities and businesses.

Estonia 2020 sets the target of raising the level of investment in R&D to 2% of GDP by the end of 2015 and to 3% by the end of 2020 (achievement level – 2,19% in 2012, 1,74% in 2013 and 1,46% in 2014) and ensuring that the increase in labour costs does not significantly exceed the growth rate of productivity. The aim is to support the development of growth-capable sectors selected using the smart specialisation methodology and to support cooperation between enterprises and research institutions.

Country Specific analysis 2016 under European Semester include finding that only limited number of companies collaborate with research institutions, resulting in a low level on patent applications. There were 58 patent filings by Estonian companies in 2015 compared to Norway where the number of patents filings in 2015 was 775 or Finland with 2371.



Source: European Patent Office¹⁹

b) Norway Grants' contribution

The overall objective of the Research Cooperation programme is enhanced research-based knowledge development in Estonia through cooperation between Norway and Estonia. The programme will strengthen bilateral relations with the aim of stimulating long-term cooperation, capacity and competence-building.

The programme contributes especially to the achievement of two aims of the Estonian RD&I strategy 2014–2020: that research is of high quality, that Estonia is an attractive place for R&D and that the career of a researcher is a popular choice; and that Estonia is active and visible in international co-operation in the field of RD&I.

The objectives for 2020:

¹⁹ <http://www.epo.org/about-us/annual-reports-statistics/statistics.html#filings>

- 11% scientific publications in Estonia will be within the 10% most cited scientific publications worldwide (7,5% in 2008, 8,5% in 2009) 8,5% in 2014; 8,5% in 2015 (Innovation Union Scoreboard 2014; 2015);
- 300 PhD graduates per academic year (190 in 2012, 233 in 2013, 213 in 2013/2014, 208 in 2014/2015);²⁰
- 1600 scientific publications per million population (1231 in 2012, 1420 in 2013) – 1511 in 2014; 1025 in 2015* (as of Dec 1, 2015)

Under the Norwegian-Estonian Research Cooperation Programme 13 donor partnership projects are funded. The projects represent all areas of research: culture and society (6 projects), environment and biosciences (3 projects), physical sciences and engineering (2 projects), and health (2 projects).

The joint projects are expected to result in high-quality joint scientific publications and to support the PhD students in their studies. Data from project contracts and interim reports (results by the end of 2014) already show that there are more than twice as many PhD students involved in the projects as the expected target level that is 33 instead of 15. We can expect evident contribution to the objectives of the Estonian RD&I Strategy 2014–2020.

2.1.3 Justice and home affairs

The programme area contains one programme financed from Norway Grants: Domestic and Gender-based Violence.

a) Contextual Trends

Tackling domestic violence has become one of the priority issues on the governmental level in 2014 and has continued to be in 2015. "Domestic violence is public policy priority" stressed Mr Urmas Reinsalu, the Minister of Justice, on the international day for the Elimination of the Violence Against Women on November 25, 2015.

A new national Development Strategy for Preventing Violence 2015–2020 was approved by the Government in February 2015. It is a strategy to reduce violence related to children, domestic violence, gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings. All the relevant ministries and NGOs are involved in implementing the development plan. Preventing activities such as information campaigns against sexual violence and human trafficking, lectures to high school and vocational school student on violence and human trafficking, and many other preventive actions are being described in the plan. Services for victims of gender based violence, sexual violence and human trafficking, including prostitution, have their section in the development plan.

The Guiding material for identifying and supporting victims of human trafficking will be revised and improved in 2016 in order to meet the needs of possible identifiers better, and to enable better cooperation between different counterparts such as police, Prosecutors Office, Social Insurance Board and NGOs providing services for victims. Special emphasis will be given to NGOs, as starting from 2017, they will have the right to identify victims again. The change of Victim Support Act was prepared during 2015, the law proposal will be sent to Government in

²⁰ Source: Estonian Education Information System EHIS.

March 2016 and it will be in effect from January 1st 2017. Potential victims of trafficking can get services for up to 60 days also if police has not been informed by providing offence notice to them.

Despite the Estonian government's clear commitment and concern, gender-based violence and trafficking remain grave challenges for the Estonian society. Domestic violence is widespread but tends to go unrecognised.

In 2015, 7889 (2014, 7489) crimes related to violence were registered, which is 5% more than in 2014.

Domestic violence crimes shows unfortunately steady growth trend in recent years, 2997 domestic violence cases were registered in 2015 (2721 in 2014), which means that the number has slightly increased. 38% of the crimes related violence were the cases of domestic violence. Approximately in ¼ of the cases a child was whether a witness or victim of domestic violence. In 2015 2/3 of the cases took place between current or former partners, 14% of the cases parents against their children and 9% of the cases children against their parents.

During the first steps of implementing the programme, a stronger need to address sexual violence issues was realized. There were 161 case of rape in 2015 (147 in 2014, 135 in 2013) of which 85 against juveniles and 76 against adults. The number of reported cases has grown, still a large number is believed to go unreported.

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Number of victims of human trafficking helped	55	78	57	56	22	22	4	16
Number of victims of exploitation in prostitution helped in rehabilitation centres					150	235	234	312

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs.

b) Norway Grants' contribution

With the contribution of Norway Grants it is aimed at raising the awareness among general population with regard to domestic and gender-based violence as well as raising the quality of the services offered to the victims in addition to developing specialised services for victims of sexual exploitation.

As one of the key issues for tackling gender-based violence is the availability of statistics and general information on the extent of the subject, the surveys carried or about to be carried out under the programme are most needed. Until now, Estonia has mainly dealt with consequences of domestic violence. Now, with projects implemented under Norway Grants support it has been possible to move towards prevention.

The survey to measure awareness and attitudes of the general population about gender based violence and trafficking in human beings at the beginning of the programme was carried out in 2014. The survey showed quite a good understanding of the need for intervention and services

for victims to tackle GBV and human trafficking. However, the survey revealed the main challenges are attitude of blaming victims, lack of knowledge about the services available and need to raise awareness of general public as well as specialists. 54% of the respondents believed that the victim of domestic violence is to be blamed; 77% of people do not think domestic violence concerns only the family and 94% find that violence in family relations/close relationships is a crime; 48% of people are aware of the Victim Support and Estonian Women's Shelters Union and their hotline. The survey gave a valuable input to the National Development Strategy for Preventing Violence 2015-2020.

2015 also improved knowledge and data about the nature and spread of sexual violence in Estonia (1 survey and 1 study) and launched the services for the victims of sexual violence.

Domestic and gender-based violence has been openly discussed in public throughout the year 2015. Triggers for the public discussion and media coverage were the revelation of the surveys, studies, conferences, campaigns, press releases that were done under the Programme.

An ongoing project by the Estonian Sexual Health Association creates network and readiness in hospitals to provide specialised support for rape victims, this is also something new in Estonia.

Estonian Women's Shelters Union project "Developing services for victims of domestic violence, strengthening co-operation between different institutions and raising awareness among victims and the general public" has improved the quality of the services for the victims of domestic violence through trainings of the staff of the shelters and also regional networking. There are 13 shelters-support centres with qualified and trained staff providing accommodation, psycho-logical and legal consulting at the same quality standards all over the country. Between October 2014 and September 2015 1266 victims got psychological and legal consulting service at 13 shelters-support centres. Hotline 1492 service was available 24/7 and served 1190 people during 12 months. 2 network trainings for different specialists took place in 2015 with 77 participants.

The project "Human trafficking prevention and victim support through anti-trafficking hotline services" carried out by *NGO Living for Tomorrow* (hereinafter: LFT) supports the sustainability of well-organised services for labour trafficking victims. From March 2013 until September 2015, 29 victims of human trafficking (4 of them during the reporting period) and 62 victims of labour exploitation have been identified and assisted.

The project of *NGO Eluliin* project „Supporting victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation through improving the services provided by the rehabilitation centre Atoll and shelter Vega" continued providing 2 new services: self-help groups for women who would like to exit prostitution and a mother and child group for supporting improvement of parental skills and tighten the relation between mothers and their children. The number of women who benefited from the group-work last year was 30.

2.1.4 Human and social development

The priority sector contains two programmes – Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance and Public Health Initiatives.

a) Contextual Trends

Social cohesion indicators in Estonia are considerably lower than in Northern and Western Europe. The low status of certain social groups (e.g. disabled people, the elderly, ethnic minorities) and their limited involvement in community life shows social inequalities in the society of Estonia. It is important to guarantee that the society of Estonia is tolerant and that the principles of equal treatment are adhered to.

The Estonian Human Development Index's rank is 30 according to Human Development Report as of 2014, which has slightly improved compared to previous years (2013 and 2012 being 33).²¹

The Estonian society has historically been very traditional and gender roles, which existed in the past, have to some extent remained to this day. According to Eurostat, Estonia has the highest gender pay gap in Europe, as a result of which women face limited opportunities in the labour market, limited access to power and management and difficulties balancing family and work. Possibilities for flexible working arrangements are limited and awareness on gender equality among citizens and professionals is generally low. One of the main reasons behind the large gender pay gap is also the high level of labour market horizontal segregation (24,9% in 2014)²².

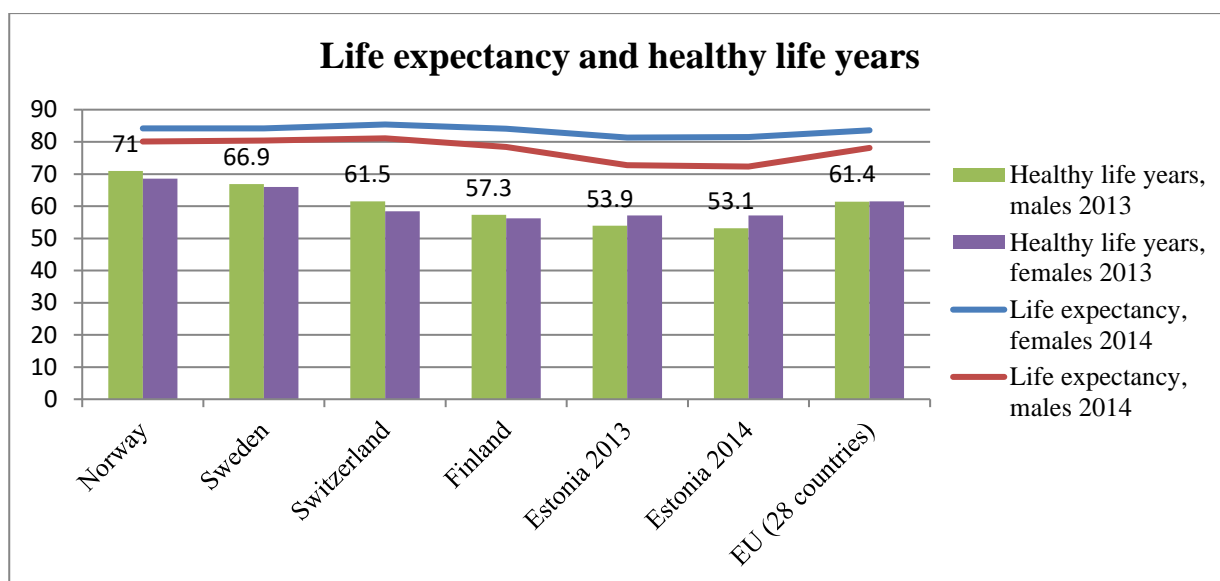
To lower gender pay gap Labour Inspectorate will monitor wages and benefits for same kind of jobs. Gender equality law amendment draft will be completed in May 2016.

The Ministry of Social Affairs continued to co-ordinate elaboration of development and action plan in the policy areas of labour, employment, social security, social inclusion, gender equality and equal opportunities for the years 2016–2023. Concerning gender equality, the plan will target the issues of equal economic independence of women and men, balanced participation of women and men in all levels of decision-making and management in politics, public and private sectors, reducing negative impact of gender stereotypes on decisions and everyday life of women and men, enhancing right protection concerning equal treatment of women and men and guaranteeing institutional capacity to promote gender equality, including gender mainstreaming. The development plan is prepared in co-operation with a broad circle of stakeholders and target groups and is expected to be approved by the Government in the first quarter of 2016.

The area where Estonia shows poorest results in EEA and where the disparities between Estonia and western and Northern Europe are biggest is health. Although life expectancy (and the number of healthy life years) is rising, it is still considerably below the EU average. The large gender gap in life expectancy (in favour of women by almost 10 years) attracts attention, and the regional differences in life expectancy are also remarkable.

²¹ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/hdi>

²² Data for 2015 will be available in March 2017.



Source: Eurostat²³ and Ministry of Social Affairs.

The main focus of the Public Health Initiatives programme is improving the field of children's mental health in Estonia. In 2014 among 0-19 years old the rate of newly diagnosed psychological and behavioural disorders was 2092.²⁴

The health system performance assessment in Estonia showed that mental health problems have been one of the leading causes slowing life expectancy and the largest cause of long-term incapacity to work. Therefore earlier interventions of mental health problems are important steps to take.

In 2014 there were 460 death cases from diseases related to alcohol use, 77% of all cases where among males. According to the Ministry of Social Affairs the decrease in alcohol consumption, smoking and injuries has the biggest potential of raising life expectancy and healthy life years.

b) Norway Grants' contribution

The Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance programme is concentrated on raising awareness and research on gender issues. Considering the level of unadjusted gender pay gap, which is remarkably higher than EU27 average, then one of the objectives to increase women's possibility to achieve a higher position in their working life combined with the pre-defined projects' aim to enhance protection against discrimination and raise awareness on gender equality is expected to have a considerable impact on the change in belief and respective behaviour.

By the end of 2015 17 project were in implementation. Supported activities aim at promoting gender equality through contributing to the reconciliation of work, family and private life. Fair amount of attention was directed toward the field of education. For example under the project of Estonian Women's Associations Roundtable "GOAL – Integrating Gender into Teacher Education and Training" for Tallinn University and University of Tartu pre-school, general and vocational teacher education curricula was analysed and syllabi developed for an

²³ <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=tsdph100&language=en>

²⁴ Data for 2015 is not yet available.

optional course focusing on gender in education; 10 gender trainings for 207 pre-, general education and vocational schools' teachers across Estonia were carried out. Under the project of Praxis Centre for Policy Studies "Gender Equality Programme for Social Sciences and Teacher Education Programme Students" university students' survey was carried out; courses "Gender and education" and "Gender (Im)Balance in Society: Analysis and Solutions" were developed and carried out in spring semester at the University of Tartu.

For promoting employee and family friendly social and working environment the project by the Responsible Business Forum held thematic seminars for employers and thematic seminars for wider public, social media campaign was made and new webpage created.

In the framework of the project by Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner "Promoting Gender Equality Through Empowerment and Mainstreaming" 15 legal counselling sessions in 14 counties took place, a study on prevalence of inequality was carried out. Expertise on gender mainstreaming was provided in the framework of preparing the new development plan in the areas of labour, employment, social security, social inclusion, gender equality and equal opportunities for 2016–2023.

Under Statistics Estonia project "Increased Availability of Gender Pay Gap Statistics" gender pay gap statistics were calculated for 2010–2013 based on new integrated database. New pay gap indicators were developed and published on Statistics Estonia webpage also publication was produced in Estonian and English.

The impact of these and other specific activities under the programme will be felt after years, the basis as precondition for the positive impact has been created.

The central aim was to achieve the changes in attitudes. When in 2009 59% of people completely agreed that a society where women and men are equal is a good society, then Gender Equality Monitoring shows that there has been a 5 percentage points increase by 2013 (64% of the people agree). Next monitoring will be conducted in 2016.

The second objective was to achieve higher employment level of women with children under three years. While data for 2012 indicated that the desired growth had been achieved – 30.6% (adjusted to 30.8% in 2014 by Statistics Estonia) of mothers with small children were engaged in paid work – new statistics indicate a significant drop in the number with 23.2% of mothers with small children engaged in paid work in 2013 and 23.4% in 2014. The drop in the numbers may be attributed to an overall improvement in the economy. Namely, the number of unemployed men grew more than that of unemployed women because male-dominated sectors were hit hardest during the economic recession. Therefore, women were most likely forced to return to the formal labour market sooner than they would have ideally liked to. As the economy has recovered and men have begun returning to the labour market, we are witnessing a drop in the number of employed women because they have the opportunity to stay home longer. The achievement of this objective depends on very many actors, thus here the synergy with activities under Norwegian programme combined with national and Structural Funds support among other to create nearly new childcare places and services for children up to the age of seven in next 3 years will help to achieve this rather ambitious objective of 30%.

With implementation of the programme capacity of gender equality organisations and networks has been strengthened. One project (Estonian Human Rights Centre) is aiming to target altogether 57 employers in their "Estonian Diversity Charter network".

The Public Health Initiatives programme has an undoubtedly substantial value to the health policy field, especially since the specific area of mental health in Estonia had the biggest gaps in financing and lack of integration of relevant other sectors and services. Improving children's mental health services and system has become a high priority for the government which is essential for guaranteeing sustainability of the programme main activities.

As a result of the programme the infrastructure for Tallinn Children's Mental health centre is established and the plan for integrated services to improve children's mental health is developed. Training and supervisions for the staff working in the centre have been continuing and also trainings for other specialist mostly from education, social and primary health care system have taken place.

Activities under the mental health centres projects, especially established local mental health outpatient counselling teams have been very successful. Satisfaction surveys among patients showed that 87% of participated patients from the Pärnu mental health centres are satisfied with service. Patient satisfaction survey in Tartu University Hospital Child Psychiatry Outpatient Unit showed even higher rate – 97% of patients were happy with the service.

Under the objective of improving access to and quality of health services, including reproductive and preventive child healthcare, 681 boys and 478 girls with mental health problems got integrated and improved services during 2015, over the whole implementation period 1600 boys and 1032 girls.

One objective of the programme was to prevent and reduce life-style related diseases for that purpose social marketing campaigns were made and awareness of them among the target group was measured. Average awareness rate of social campaign introducing term "Passive drinking" was 86% after first wave of campaign and 89% after second wave. Target group was the wider public with a special focus on young people age 15-19 and policy makers.

In addition it was aimed at prevention and treatment of communicable diseases (including HIV/AIDS and TB). So far, Estonian prisons have been lacking the resources for testing inmates for Hepatitis C. Inmates are tested for HIV on a regular basis but more resources were needed for detecting and treating inmates with Hepatitis C. In 2015, some 951 inmates were diagnosed with Hepatitis C. The number has exceeded the target value as the support under Norwegian grants increased availability of resources. In 2015, in total 20 inmates have received treatment for Hepatitis C.

As seen from the above data, programme has positive results and considering the nature of the activities the long-term impact will appear with time lag since for the behavioural change to take place time is need. Thereafter long-lasting effect on public health improvement and reduced health inequalities between Estonia and the donor states as well as support children with specific needs could be expected.

2.2 Bilateral relations

Extent of cooperation, improved knowledge, and mutual understanding

As in previous years of implementation, during 2015 the POs also played an active role in fostering bilateral relations. There have been organised cooperation events, seminars and study tours, international conferences with invited guest speakers from Norway, also a Norwegian expert was called to participate in the information seminar for SGS.

All of the POs highlighted in the annual reports the very important role of the donor programme partners, who have been excellent advisers in all matters concerning the implementation of the programmes (e.g. preparations of the work plans and budgets, advice on possible speakers for conferences and seminars, discussions about communication and reporting issues, etc.) and a particularly great help in finding partners through their professional networks distributing information to potential partners. The cooperation with donor programme partner was very intensive during the reporting period.

The Norwegian Embassy in Tallinn continues to be a good partner to the POs in information and publicity activities (e.g. opening programmes' events, publishing news about the supported projects and programmes).

To support bilateral cooperation between Estonia and Norway several programme operators opened calls for proposals from bilateral relations fund during reporting period. Unfortunately, not all calls resulted in project partnerships (e.g. programme EE09: Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance – additional call for proposals under the SGS did not result in any project partnerships, the target for the bilateral indicator will not be met).

From the bilateral fund on the national level the Norwegian-Estonian e-Governance Initiative was launched (the activities will continue in 2016) and to facilitate that, the allocation of the fund was increased in 2015. The aim is to strengthen cooperation between Norway and Estonia and in particular to strengthen, implement and develop cooperation between leading partners in Norway and Estonia within the areas of innovation, business development and e-governance. The second initiative funded on a national level is the cooperation between Estonian and Norwegian Swimming Organisations.

Shared results and wider effects

There have also been bilateral achievements beyond the programme during the reporting period as an Estonian project partner signed a contract for a long-term cooperation with a Norwegian company. The first contact between the partners was created during a matchmaking event of the GII programme in 2013. The further cooperation between donor and beneficiary countries indicates that the programme is contributing to the achievement of the Financial Mechanism overall objective, which is related to strengthening of bilateral relations.

3 REPORTING ON PROGRAMMES

3.1 Overview of Programme status

	Programme	Open calls launched/closed	Commitments made by PO ²⁵	Disbursements made by PO ²⁶
EE06	Norwegian-Estonian Research Cooperation	Open call completed in 2013	3 000 000 100%	1 970 218 65,7%
EE07	Green Industry Innovation	All planned open calls launched and project contracts signed	6 005 004 100,1%	3 798 294 63,3%
EE08	Public Health Initiatives	All planned open calls launched and project contracts signed	8 827 255 99%	7 063 312 79,3%
EE09	Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance	All planned open calls launched and project contracts signed. Outside of the initial plan an additional SGS call was organised in March 2015, 5 projects were selected, all project contracts signed	1 977 293 98,9%	1 406 491 70,3%
EE10	Norwegian-Estonian Scholarship Programme	All planned open calls launched, last grant decisions were made in 2015, 11 projects were approved	1 576 911 ²⁷ 98,6%	1 074 488 67,2%
EE11	Domestic and Gender-based Violence	All planned open calls launched. An additional open call was organised for the Fund for Bilateral Relations, 3 applications are in the evaluation process, contracts not signed yet	1 965 979 98,3%	1 591 533 79,6%

3.2 Individual Programme summaries

3.2.1 Norwegian-Estonian Research Cooperation Programme

The programme has two expected outcomes and two outputs under each:

1st expected outcome – “Increased research cooperation between Norway and Estonia” and its outputs:

- Cooperating research institutions
- Cooperating researchers

2nd expected outcome – “Strengthened research capacity in Estonia and increased application of research results through research cooperation between Norway and Estonia” and its outputs:

- Experts visits to Estonia

²⁵ According to the Structural Funds Operating System (31/12/2015).

²⁶ According to the Structural Funds Operating System (31/12/2015).

²⁷ Together with the EEA Scholarship Programme

- Staff exchange visits to access unique facilities or training opportunities

No calls were carried out during the reporting period. One single call for proposals was launched in 2013 to achieve both outcomes. As a result of a very tough competition, 13 high-quality donor partnership projects received the grant in four general areas as follows: culture and society – 6; environment and biosciences – 3; physical sciences and engineering – 2; health – 2. The first projects started in September 2013 and the latest one in September 2014.

It can be forecasted that all the target values of the outcome and output indicators agreed in the programme agreement will not be fully achieved by the end of the programme. One of the biggest reasons behind this outlook is that the maximum grant per project was raised at a later stage from an initial 200 000 to 300 000 euros and it was possible to finance less projects, but the indicators remained as planned earlier.

Reporting on some of the achieved values of indicators can be done (target value shown in the programme agreement in brackets):

- The number of cooperative projects between Estonian and Norwegian research and development institutions – 13 (15)
- The number of cooperating research institutions of Estonia – 4 (15)
- The number of cooperating research institutions of Norway – 8 (15)
- The number female project leaders – 1 (6)

Target level was fixed based on assumption that 15 projects would be financed, while in reality 13 projects have received support from the programme. The target of 15 therefore will not be reached but a result of 13 means that all projects have delivered on a given indicator.

The number of cooperating research institutions of Estonia and Norway is smaller compared to target value. This target was based on the fact that there are 18 positively evaluated R&D institutions in Estonia, however, only 4 made it to the top of the rank list with their projects. In comparison, the situation on the side of the Norwegian institutions is better: there are 8 Norwegian institutions involved as partners; two of the projects have an additional partner from Norway. However, it should be noted that although the same institution acts as project promoter or partner in several projects, these are large universities with many departments and research groups. Projects are distributed across different faculties and departments, meaning that the number of research groups involved in the cooperation and network building is much higher than what the count of institutions can show.

There were no special measures taken or budget set aside to ensure that projects with female leader get financed. One of the principles followed in the selection process was prioritizing project proposals with a female project leader (as it appeared to be gender less represented) in case of equal scores but it did not have any effect on the rank list of those projects, which were eventually financed.

In 2015, the funds for bilateral relations were used for a capacity building conference on intellectual property rights. International conference “Applied research linked intellectual property aspects in Estonia and in Europe” was held in September 2015 in Tallinn. Funds have been also used for covering registration fees of 8 participants to take part in the 21th Annual Conference of the European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (EARMA) held in Leiden in June/July 2015. The conference was focused on Global Outreach: Enabling Cultures and Diversity in Research Management and Administration.

As for horizontal concerns, Tallinn University and University of Bergen work together to understand the political and social factors for migration. The project addresses directly the horizontal concerns related to promoting tolerance, multicultural understanding and respect of the minorities as the central objective of the research is to develop understanding of the determinants of the inclusive integration context. No other projects have reported on dealing especially or directly with the horizontal concerns issues.

The main challenges of the programme continue to be related to certain results, which may fully appear only after the end of the projects and programme period (e.g. published articles, joint proposals for future cooperation).

No need for major adjustments within the programme has occurred.

3.2.2 Green Industry Innovation

The programme has one expected outcome and three outputs under it:

Expected outcome – “Realisation of the business opportunities of greening of the European economy” and its outputs:

- Improvement of processes and smart solutions with ICT
- Development of innovative services for citizens and businesses with ICT
- Green business ideas developed and assessed

For achieving the expected outcome, the programme setup of one small grant scheme and two calls for proposals was approved in the programme agreement. All the calls were closed in 2014 and no additional projects were granted in 2015.

The first results of the programme implementation can be considered good. 15 open call projects were granted in total. By the end of the third reporting period three projects were finished, five were in the final phase and seven are still in the implementing phase. During the third reporting period one project out of 3 finished projects has managed to commercialize their project.

The initial analyses after the first 3 finished projects show that the number of processes developed and improved by open call projects is 16 (the target value for the entire programme is 10). Therefore, the total number 16 exceeds the target (10) after 3 finished project. This shows that the granted projects have an ambition to solve different problems with their software. There are also five different innovative services developed (the target value for the programme is 10). The initial results are clearly showing that development processes have been successful and have already exceeded the set targets.

To summarize activities of 2015, the Green Industry Innovation Estonia programme has significantly contributed to encouraging cooperation between Estonia and Norway. The cooperation with donor programme partner was very intensive during the reporting period: Innovation Norway had a leading role in all the bilateral and complementary actions accomplished in 2015. They have been willingly sharing their experiences, giving suggestions and connecting people in Estonian and Norwegian ICT circles.

The best examples of the ongoing project were shared during the Norway – Estonia GreenIT cooperation seminar held in May 2015 in Tallinn under the umbrella of ICT Week. The seminar

was hosted by Innovation Norway with Norwegian Embassy and Enterprise Estonia. The objective of the seminar was to encourage further Norwegian – Estonian cooperation, to present best cases, share experiences and to inspire new partnerships and projects. In April 2015 a study tour to Norway was organized for 10 participants. The goal of the study tour was a competence building and learning from Innovation Norway's experiences. In September 2015 a Green Industry Innovation experience sharing and communication workshop was organized by FMO and Innovation Norway.

There have also been bilateral achievements beyond the programme during the reporting period as an Estonian project partner signed a contract for a long-term cooperation with a Norwegian company. The first contact between the partners was created during a matchmaking event of the GII programme in 2013.

The programme does not particularly address the horizontal concerns.

During the reporting period three SGS projects were checked by the implementing agency and due to financial correction there were additionally released funds available in SGS. Three open call projects were finished during the reporting period and there were additionally released funds. The programme agreement was changed to make the wording more flexible and to reallocate funds to the fund of bilateral relations. Additional bilateral events will be organized within the programme, to enhance and further develop the bilateral relations.

No need for major adjustments within the programme has occurred.

3.2.3 Public Health Initiatives

The programme has four expected outcomes and up to three outputs under each:

1st expected outcome – “Improved mental health services” and its outputs:

- The infrastructure for Tallinn Children's Mental Health Centre is built and taken into use
- The rehabilitation services for children with severe mental health problems are developed and provided in community residential setting
- The plan for integrated services to improve children's mental health

2nd expected outcome – “Improved access to and quality of health services, including reproductive and preventive child healthcare” and its outputs:

- Service network for provision of integrated social, education and health services for children with mental health problems created
- Web-based information sources and counselling services are provided on mental and reproductive health

3rd expected outcome – “Life-style related diseases prevented or reduced” and its outputs:

- Social marketing campaigns on healthy lifestyles (especially regarding alcohol and tobacco)
- Substance-abuse guidelines for local governments developed and disseminated
- Training on health in all policies in non-health sectors

4th expected outcome – “Improved prevention and treatment of communicable diseases (including HIV/AIDS and TB)” and its outputs:

- Communicable disease surveillance in detention institutions increased
- Training materials and training on infectious disease prevention in detention institutions is developed and provided to contact persons of inmates
- Increased coverage with Hepatitis C treatment in detention facilities

Implementation of all three predefined projects started in 2013, also three open calls were launched in 2013. All project promoters have been selected and contracted.

All projects have shown a major contribution and progress towards the programme's expected outcomes and output indicators. Based on objectives of the projects, it can be said that the outlook for achieving the programme's outcome indicators' targets in general is positive.

During the period, PO has been mostly concentrating on promoting implementation on project level for guaranteeing sustainability of the activities after the end of the programme. As activities under the mental health centres projects, especially established local mental health outpatient counselling teams have been very successful, Ministry of Social Affairs wants to expand the model to the other counties as well. Therefore project extension was requested in order to make relevant adjustments in the current health care legislation.

For the next reporting period, the PO will focus more on presenting programme results and also will continue strengthening bilateral relations with Norway. For example measuring quality of child psychiatry services and developing Estonian version of quality standards based on the model of UK which has already adapted in Norway. Moreover study tour to Norway will be organized for getting better understanding how integrated mental health services are provided and how cooperation between different sectors is functioning in Norway. All these activities will help to strengthen the impact of the programme objectives and increase long term effects. In 2016 PO is planning to announce a tender for programme impact assessment for getting feedback about the current programme activities and results and also getting an input when writing a new programme for the next Norway Grants period.

PO has continued taking an initiative using bilateral relations fund. During the period seminars and study trips took place where many good contacts were established. First review of child psychiatry services was beneficial and piloting quality network for inpatient and community children and adolescents mental health services (QNIC and QNCC) will continue in 2016 as well. In April PO organized a seminar which focused on new health challenges and ideas to meet them, economically wise social investment and early intervention, research on alcohol abuse reduction measures, alcohol policy developments. In May PO organized seminar about how to talk about mental health without the stigma.

As to horizontal concerns, the programme addresses problematic groups like children, youth and inmates. Children and youth with mental health problems have been one of the most disadvantaged groups due to decreasing investments in the area of mental health. Children with mental health problems suffer from other related problems like school violence, child abuse and domestic violence. There is also a big Russian population in Estonia and the programme aims to develop services available for the Russian population in Russian. All these concerns are taken into consideration when developing new services and improving access to the mental health services and improving treatment and prevention of communicable diseases in prisons.

No need for major adjustments within the programme has occurred.

3.2.4 Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance

The programme has three expected outcomes and up to three outputs under each:

1st expected outcome – “Awareness raised and research on gender issues promoted” and its outputs:

- High-quality, comprehensive and sustainable systems for promoting gender equality developed and implemented
- New concept for gender pay gap statistics in place
- Enhanced capacity of Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner to protect against discrimination and help obliged actors to mainstream gender in their core work

2nd expected outcome – “Balance between work, private and family life improved” and its outputs:

- Research- based concepts for promoting balance between work, private and family life developed
- Employee and family friendly social and working environment promoted

3rd expected outcome – “Capacity of gender equality organisations and networks strengthened” and its outputs:

- Gender equality organisations and networks have improved awareness and better cooperation on gender equality and gender mainstreaming measures
- Work-life balance measures supported

The implementation of two pre-defined projects began in early 2013, two calls for proposals were launched in mid-2013 and 2 open calls under the SGS were announced (one in 2014 and second in 2015). The second open call was launched in March 2015. Overall, 13 applications were submitted, 5 projects were selected for financing. By the end of the reporting period, contracts had been signed with all of the 5 project promoters. With the addition of the 6 projects from previous SGS, 2 pre-defined projects and 4 projects from open calls altogether 17 projects were in implementation by the end of 2015.

With three full years of implementation behind and less than a half year still ahead, the risk that the programme will not meet all its expected outcomes is relatively high. The risks vary across various outcomes and should be assessed on the basis of each individual indicator rather than their compound. All of the projects contribute to the achievement of the programme’s outcomes and can be categorized under the outputs in one way or another. Nonetheless, since most of the projects were chosen via open calls, the PO did not have control over the exact contents.

It is important to keep in mind that the actual impact of the programme will likely lag behind the period of active implementation and justifications for any shifts in the outcome indicators will have to be examined by taking other actions (i.e. efforts external to the programme) into consideration as well.

In order to foster bilateral relations a joint study visit with programme of “Domestic and Gender based violence” took place in fall 2015. It is important to note that the projects that have been selected for financing in the programme are also themselves contributing to the facilitation of

bilateral relations (independently from the programme's fund for bilateral relations). For example, in fall 2015 the Responsible Business Forum took 20 of its development programme members on a study visit to Norway.

A new call from SGS in 2015 did not result in any project partnerships. Since there will be no more call for proposals the target for the bilateral indicator will not be completely met. So far only three project partnership agreements have been signed and only one of them is in the public sector. To support bilateral cooperation between Estonia and Norway programme operator opened in February 2015 the call for the project promoters who have received a grant from the SGS. Altogether 3 applications were submitted. 2 contracts are signed, one application is in the evaluation process.

To a certain extent, the programme addresses the majority of horizontal concerns related to fundamental values such as promoting tolerance, multicultural understanding, and respect for the rights of minorities. As was reported in 2013, the programme complements the implementation of two of the fundamental tools for eliminating intolerance and discrimination and creating a basis for equality in the Estonian society as a whole: the Gender Equality Act and the Equal Treatment Act. Close to a third of the programme's budget is directed towards enhancing the capacity of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner. The Commissioner is the main body in Estonia responsible for investigating discrimination cases on the grounds of gender, nationality, race, religious beliefs, disability, age, and sexual orientation. It is the Commissioner who is supposed to make proposals to – as well as advise and inform the central and local governments on issues relating to – the implementation of the Gender Equality Act as well as the Equal Treatment Act.

While pre-defined projects and some open call projects started behind the intended schedule, in 2015 adjustments have been made in projects timetable where needed, resulting in extension of the project deadline for both pre-defined projects and all 4 projects financed from open calls (from 1 month up to 4 months depending a project).

No need for major adjustments within the programme has occurred.

3.2.4 EEA and Norwegian-Estonian Scholarship Programme

The programme has two expected outcomes and up to three outputs under these:

1st expected outcome – “Increased and strengthened institutional cooperation at all levels of the education sector (school education, higher education, vocational training/education, and adult education) between Estonia and EEA EFTA States” and its outputs:

- Inter-institutional cooperation projects in the upper secondary education sector between Estonia and EEA EFTA States
- Increased mobility for staff related to the inter-institutional cooperation projects at the upper secondary education level
- Preparing and working on innovative measures in the teaching process (as a result of the cooperation projects)

2nd expected outcome – “Increased higher education student and staff mobility between Estonia and Norway” and its outputs:

- Increased HE student mobility between Estonia and Norway through different types of mobility
- Increasing staff mobility between Estonia and Norway through different types of mobility

By the end of the year 2015 3 projects submitted their final reports and 7 projects are still ongoing.

In 2015, the programme saw a considerable rise in the interest towards the programme among the higher education institutions – 11 received applications in 2015 for mobility in higher education level, compared to 5 applications in 2014. For the first time in mobility in higher education, there was a competition for the available funds. All of the applications fulfilled the eligibility criteria and passed the evaluation process; 2 applications were fully approved and 9 applications partially approved. The number of people planned to be involved in the mobility is 190 in total: 87 students and 103 staff members.

Target levels of all output indicators, except for the number of mobile students as part of new or existing mobility agreements and number of HE students involved in work placements, have already been achieved and exceeded. It can be seen that the ratio of student and staff mobility is continuously leaning towards staff mobility, although there has been a very positive rise in the planned student mobility numbers (26 planned student mobilities in 2014 compared to 87 planned student mobilities in 2015). There is a very clear risk that the set aim for student mobility cannot be achieved.

In 2015 the funds for bilateral relations have been used entirely for measure Preparatory Visits. In 2015, no new applications were accepted for preparatory visits. 8 preparatory visits took place in the beginning of 2015 for which the applications were received at the end of 2014. All visits were intended for preparing for a mobility project under measure 2. It was positive that smaller Estonian higher education institutions who applied for a preparatory visit in 2014 (e. g. Estonian Academy of Security Sciences, Tallinn Health Care College) also submitted successful applications for Measure 2 – mobility in higher education in the call of 2015.

In the reporting period, 3 donor partnership projects (2013-2015) were finalised and their final reports were received. One of the ongoing projects (selected for funding in 2014) had to break the cooperation with a Norwegian partner due to unexpected problems in the partner school and decided to look for a new project partner. The project promoter managed to find a new and reliable partner from Norway. According to the interim report the project is progressing according to the plan.

One of the major risks concerning the strengthening of bilateral relations is related to the low level of interest among the Norwegian HEIs and other institutions to exchange students and staff with Estonian HEIs. The above-mentioned risk has led to some Estonian HEIs who received funding with the call of 2015 to report that they will not be able to implement their project as the project partner(s) are no longer able to or interested in accepting their students and/or staff. It is regrettable that although there was a remarkable increase in the number of applications in the call of 2015, some of the applicants have to decline the support allocated for their project. As the aims and outcomes of the programme will only be achieved in cooperation with the partner institutions in the donor states, this continues to directly influence the progress and implementation of the programme.

None of the topics of the financed projects deals especially or directly to the horizontal concerns but may have broader connections to these issues. For instance, one cooperation project developed sustainable school policy which focuses among other issues on pupils' and teachers' understanding in democracy and human rights, welfare, health and cultural diversity.

In 2015 a request for amendments to the programme agreement related to reallocation of funds was presented to the FMO. The request was approved and the amendments issued in September 2015. The amendment will help to ensure the use of the remaining funds of the programme. There will be another proposal for amendment submitted in 2016 in relation to amend the agreement with the provision allowing allocating the remaining funds.

3.2.5 Domestic and Gender-based Violence

The programme has two expected outcomes and up to five outputs under each:

1st expected outcome – “Gender-based violence reduced” and its outputs:

- Estonian Women's Shelters Union is creating more effective services for victims of gender-based and domestic violence and raising the skills and knowledge of specialists working with victims of violence
- Awareness-raising activities for general public implemented
- Improved knowledge and data on sexual and gender based violence, including trafficking
- Strengthened capacities of NGOs to tackle GBV

2nd expected outcome – “Victims of trafficking supported” and its outputs:

- Anti-trafficking hotline operated by the NGO Living for Tomorrow supported to provide better services
- New services for victims of sexual exploitation, provided by NGO Eluliin
- Awareness-raising activities for general public implemented
- Strengthened capacities of NGOs to tackle human trafficking
- Research in place on trafficking in human beings.

All the projects that are being implemented under the programme were selected in 2013 and 2014. The only call that was open in 2015 was from the bilateral relations fund.

2015 faced active and visible implementation of all activities – a final spurt to reach the objectives and meet the expected outcomes of the programme started. Domestic and gender-based violence has been openly discussed in public throughout the year 2015. Triggers for the public discussion and media coverage were the revelation of the surveys, studies, conferences, campaigns, press releases that were done under the programme. Remarkable progress has been made over the last years thanks to Norway Grants that has enabled to put more focus on public awareness raising activities, improve the quality and availability of services and carry out studies and surveys for future decisions and activities.

The main advancements during the reporting period have been:

- Improved knowledge and data on sexual and gender based violence, including trafficking
- Raise in the availability and quality of training professionals
- Services for victims of sexual violence have been piloted
- Diverse cooperation especially promoting bi-lateral relations

The programme is well on track of meeting the expected outcomes. However, reducing GBV in long run we first witness the numbers and statistics increasing simultaneously with the public awareness raising. Risks not reaching the target indicators vary across the various outcomes and should be assessed on the basis of each individual outcome rather than their composite.

2015 witnessed active promotion of bilateral activities on the programme and also on the projects level. A call from bilateral relations fund was open from February to September 2015 to give all the project promoters and their partners an additional possibility for advancing bilateral relations and giving extra value to the projects. Total 4 applications were submitted. One project promoter withdrew application in the process. Other 3 applications are in the evaluation process, contracts have not signed yet. Bilateral activities are eligible until March 2016.

In May 2015 a bilateral conference “What makes a man?” was held in Tallinn. The aim of the conference was to raise awareness about modern manhood (changes in roles, expectations and attitudes) and to share good practices from Norway and Estonia dealing with perpetrators and providing support to male victims of intimate partnership violence. In September 2015 a PO study visit jointly with the gender equality programme was organised by DPP. The objective of the trip was to learn more about the achievements and trends in mainstreaming gender equality and tackling gender-based violence in Norway.

The programme as a whole is addressed to combating the horizontal concerns of violence against women, sexual harassment and trafficking in human beings. To get better progress on horizontal concerns many project promoters set a more specific focus on reaching minorities and people with cumulative disadvantages promoting tolerance, multicultural understanding and respect for the rights of minorities.

No need for major adjustments within programme has occurred.

4 MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Management and control systems

The management and control systems of the National Focal Point, the Certifying Authority, the Audit Authority and the entity responsible for the preparation and submission of irregularities reports remained in place in 2015.

At the programme level, setup of management and control systems started for all programmes in 2013 and were finalised in 2014. In 2015 the management and control systems at programme level remained the same.

4.2 Compliance with EU legislation, national legislation, and the MoU

Legal basis

The Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009–2014 between Estonia and Norway entered into force on 9 June 2011, and the legal framework of the financial mechanism based on the memorandum serves as the main legal basis for implementing the Norway Grants and is followed by the Estonian state.

Annexes A and B to the Memorandum of Understanding were updated in August 2015 due to increasing the allocation for the fund for bilateral relations at national level and decreasing the allocation for technical assistance. The changes are related to the funding Estonian-Norwegian e-Governance Initiative.

The Government of the Republic of Estonia Decree No. 78 “The rules and procedures for application for and implementation of the grants from the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2009–2014” for establishment of the rules and procedures for application for and implementation of the grant from the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2009–2014 replacing the implementation agreements between the National Focal Point and the Programme Operators remained unchanged in 2014.

The Government of the Republic of Estonia Decree No. 278 “Reclamation and repayment of grants, and rules and procedures for reporting on irregularities in awarding and using the grants” of 22 December 2006, which stipulates the requirements for informing about irregularities or fraud and conditions for repayment of the financial support, was updated according to the needs for implementing the Grants. The updated Decree entered into force on 29 August 2014.

When reviewing the programme documents (open call criteria, draft agreements, etc.), special attention has been paid by the National Focal Point in assuring compliance with the legislative framework inter alia the compliance with Community Policy (state aid, public procurement, programme area specific directives).

State aid

In order to make full use of available expertise, the National Focal Point and the Programme Operators have had several consultations on state aid with the Public Procurement and State Aid Department of the Ministry of Finance. In some calls the possibility of granting either state aid or de minimis aid was identified.

In all actual cases, relevant measures were taken, i.e. the project budgets were reviewed and related conditions were included in the project contracts.

Regarding all possible and actual cases of either de minimis aid or state aid, the Public Procurement and State Aid Department of the Ministry of Finance has been and will be consulted. Information on de minimis aid previously granted to Estonian applicants has been and will be checked from the relevant register under the Ministry of Finance and will be taken into account when awarding the grant.

Public Procurement

In order to improve the competence of public procurement procedures of the project promoters and avoid subsequent problems, Programme Operators or Implementing Agencies have advised or organised area-specific trainings on public procurement for the project promoters during 2015.

In addition to this, the expertise of the Managing Authority of the Structural Funds for ex-ante check and advice from the Public Procurement and State Aid Department of the Ministry of Finance are available.

Irregularities

PO's send the information about the irregularities to the NFP via Estonia's internal information system SFOS. All cases of the irregularities are then checked by the NFP. After that the NFP composes reports about the irregularities and sends them to the FMO via DoRIS.

There were 18 cases of new and ongoing irregularities in Estonia in the EEA and/or Norwegian Financial Mechanisms in 2015:

- 6 cases at programme level.
- 12 cases at project level.
- No irregularities at beneficiary state level were detected.

Detailed financial information about the irregularities is shown in the annexes 4 and 5. FMO has closed 15 cases of the reported irregularities. Most of the cases were discovered by the Programme Operators, except one case was discovered by NFP.

In 2016 the NFP will continue with the same approach in internal and external reporting of the irregularities.

4.3 Audit, monitoring, review, and evaluation

National Focal Point

In the IV quarter of 2014 the NFP initiated control procedures to review management costs in the programme "EE04 "Children and Youth at Risk". The main emphasis was put on the use of flat rate in the overheads at programme level. The control procedures were finalised in the II quarter of 2015. NFP discovered that some of the grant had not been used in accordance with the rules and as a result 2,447.84 € grant was reimbursed.

Estonian Youth Work Centre aka POIA signed various contracts with one employee for the same time period, financed the contracts from EEA Mechanism and from ESIF (European Structural and Investment Funds). But some of the necessary requirements were not fulfilled; detailed description is available in the irregularity report IR-0210.

In 2015 the NFP carried out a risks assessment based on fraud indicators (red-flags) in the projects data and payments details that Programme Operators had inserted into Estonia's internal information system SFOS. Programme Operators were informed of all of the risks identified. After analysis by the PO's and NFP some of the risks emerged into irregularities, but major fraud cases were not discovered. The NFP assisted the Programme Operators to ensure that reviews based on the risks discovered were effective and that the risks were mitigated with monitoring activities. The NFP will conduct additional risk assessment in the III quarter of 2016 if additional risk indicators emerge. If any additional risks emerge from the assessments, NFP will carry out necessary actions and reviews.

In the beginning of 2016 NFP conducted fraud risk assessments with all of the Programme Operators. Detailed summary of the highest possible fraud risks identified is included in annex 7. When analyzing the results of the fraud risk assessments it is important to remember that not all the risks pointed out are applicable to all the programmes. Fraud risks are largely related to beneficiaries and costs, but various programmes have different beneficiaries and project costs may vary largely between programmes.

The one recurring problem that emerged during the fraud risk assessments was whether or not working time-tables reflect the real situation. For the POs it is almost impossible to evaluate the content of them. During the risk assessments POs suggested that the emphasis of control should be put more on the results and less on technical aspects. One way to do that would be to describe in detail all the duties of employees and the results of these duties in the projects proposals and evaluate the results of the workers during/after implementation of the project.

An isolated incident took place in the programme EE10 concerning one of the projects. During the evaluation processes the project did not get good scores and was assessed with rather low quality, but was still accepted on the request of programme partner. This resulted in Archimedes Foundation (PO) having the most problems in the programme with the implementation of that concrete project.

One interesting proposal came from the PO who has many Estonian Universities as beneficiaries (programme EE06). Their costs are reviewed as same as other beneficiaries in the programme, but they are public bodies and have inner control systems already in place. It might be reasonable to monitor or audit their inner bodies and not single costs of the projects as it has been on the current period.

Overall the fraud risks in Norway and EEA grant projects were assessed rather low. Main explanation was that many of the fraud risks were mitigated in the project selection processes that involved many experts and evaluators from specific areas. Therefore inflated prices and unreasonable costs were excluded from the project budgets already in the project selection stage. Nevertheless there were situations where it was complicated for the POs to find suitable and neutral experts for the evaluations due to the fact that Estonia is rather small and in some cases the potential evaluators were involved in the projects that they would have been evaluating. Fortunately POs were able to detect these conflicts of interests before they occurred.

Audit Authority

Audit Authority (AA) has presented to the NMFA audit strategies for each programme operator. According to these strategies a management and control systems audit of each programme will be conducted, which is complemented with audits on projects. To be more specific, AA has to carry out the following management and control system audits and audits of projects of the programmes:

Table 1

	Management and control system audits	Audits on projects
EE04 - Children and youth at risk	1	3
EE05 - Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage	1	3
EE06 - Research cooperation	1	2
EE07 - Green Industry Innovation	1	4
EE08 - Public Health Initiatives	1	2
EE09 - Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance	1	3
EE11 - Domestic and Gender-based Violence	1	3

EE02 - Integrated marine and inland water management	1	2
EE10 - Scholarship	1	2

So far (as of 10.02.2016) AA has covered five programmes with **management and control systems audits**. It has also conducted 13 audits on projects. In 2015 the AA has carried out the following audits²⁸:

Table 2

	Management and control system audits	Audits on projects
EE05 - Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage	1	3
EE08 - Public Health Initiatives	1	2
EE09 - Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance	1	3
EE11 - Domestic and Gender-based Violence	1	3
EE02 - Integrated marine and inland water management	1	2

The results of audits have been the following:

I Management and control system audits:

- EE05 – Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage. Audit report No II-167/2015 (18.06.2015). Audit opinion: the management and control systems of the Estonian Ministry of Culture as the Programme Operator works well, but some improvements are needed (Category II²⁹);
- EE02 – Integrated marine and inland water management. Audit report No II-171/2015 (16.10.2015). Audit opinion: the management and control systems of the Estonian Ministry of Culture as the Programme Operator works well, but some improvements are needed (Category II);
- EE08 – Public Health Initiatives, EE09 - Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance and EE11 - Domestic and Gender-based Violence. Joint audit report No II-175/2015³⁰. Audit opinion: the management and control systems of the Estonian Ministry of Culture as the Programme Operator works well, but some improvements are needed (Category II).

II Audits on projects:

- EE05 - Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage.
 - Audit report No II-168/2015 (14.07.2015). No major findings;
 - Audit report No II-169/2015 (19.06.2015). No findings;
 - Audit report No II-170/2015 (21.05.2015). No findings.
- EE02 - Integrated marine and inland water management.
 - Audit report No II-173/2015 (09.10.2015). No findings;

²⁸ 1 management and control systems audit and 5 audits of projects are being finalized at the moment.

²⁹ Category I – Works well; only minor improvements needed.

Category II – Works, but some improvements are needed.

Category III – Works partially; substantial improvements are needed.

Category IV – Essentially does not work.

³⁰ Audit report is being finalized.

- Audit report No II-174/2015 (18.09.2015). No findings.
- EE08 - Public Health Initiatives.
 - Audit report No II-176/2015 (05.01.2016). No findings;
 - Audit report No II-177/2015 (10.12.2015). 1 finding (1611,37), error rate 0,05%.
- EE09 - Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance³¹.
 - Audit report No II-181/2015;
 - Audit report No II-178/2015;
 - Audit report No II-179/2015 (05.01.2016). No findings.
- EE11 - Domestic and Gender-based Violence³².
 - Audit report No II-182/2015;
 - Audit report No II-180/2015;
 - Audit report No II-183/2016.

Audit plan for the 2016 is shown in the annex 6.

4.4 Information and publicity

In general, the communication strategy for the EEA and Norway Grants 2009–2015 in Estonia has been in implementation as planned and does not need revision.

During 2014 most of the publicity was done by the programme operators in connection with launching the calls, organising seminars and conferences, etc. The general Grants website has been updated continuously by the NFP and news on opening calls or invitations to different seminars under the programmes have been distributed via the Facebook page for the Grants as well. Information which has distributed via social media (Facebook) and home page has been written in language which is understandable wide number of people.

With regard to communication of the programmes performed by the programme operators, it can be said that the information and publicity measures that have been taken are effective. The interest in events organised under the programmes as well as active participation in the calls are the best proof of that. As of a year ago special commendation can be given to the programmes of the social field (the Children and Youth at Risk programme, the Public Health Initiatives programme, and the gender programmes) for co-operating in organising events. Special commendation deserves also manor schools program, who has spread information about their programme via different media channels very actively.

Many events and projects have been organized which are funded by EEA and Norway grants, but following projects examples highlights some of them. Firstly, end of august 2015 opened children's mental health centre in Tallinn. This project was funded by public health programme. The aim was ensure tender of high quality services of psychiatric treatment and trainings for specialists to improve their competence. For Estonian health care sector, this project was very important and has given very positive impact.

Secondly, many useful seminars have been organized in water management program. For example seminar about future of climate which gives influence for Estonia ("Estonia in 2100 – is it tropic or cold Nordic country?") There were many other special seminars in this field about ecological system of sea and lakes. In addition, these kind of seminars gave its participants a

³¹ 2 audit reports are being finalized.

³² Audit reports are being finalized.

bigger and clearer picture about general processes happening in the field in which they all are active.

The communication work of the programme operators and the National Focal Point can be assessed through the results of the public opinion survey ordered by the Ministry of Finance that for the first time included the EEA and Norway Grants, in addition to the EU Structural Funds in 2013. It then appeared that 27% of the Estonian population aged 18 to 74 knew that Estonia was receiving support from the EEA and Norway Grants. As a result of the survey carried out by Faktum & Ariko in August 2014, it appeared that the awareness of EEA and Norway Grants within the same age group had risen to 35%, which makes the annual growth eight percentage points. As a result of the survey carried out by Saar Poll OÜ in August-September 2015, it appeared that 16% of the Estonian population aged 18 to 74 knew that Estonia was receiving support from the EEA and Norway Grants. It shows big difference in awareness of EEA and Norway Grants in Estonia which can be based in two different social poll firms methodology and also in 2015 many PO's has finished with their projects. Within those aware of the EEA and Norway Grants the level of education showed the biggest difference: the higher the education of respondents, the higher the awareness of the Grants. Also the visibility of the Grants' logos fell during the year between the two surveys from 21% to 16%.

The results of the survey were shared on the Grants website as well as on the Facebook page of the Grants in Estonia. The trends for visibility of the Grants is planned to be monitored annually throughout the entire implementation period.

4.5 Work plan

All the planned open calls under the Norway Grants' programmes were launched by the end of 2014 and most of the actions for disseminating the results of the programmes are planned for 2016.

The table showing the main relevant dates for partner events and information events of the programmes is as follows:

	Programme	Partner / information event
EE06	Norwegian-Estonian Research Cooperation	17-18 February – Bergen and Tartu University research co-operation closing seminar; 13-15 April – programme committee meeting in Oslo and site visits to project partners
EE07	Green Industry Innovation	5-8 April – study tour to Norway (Oslo-Gjøvik-Raufoss) for entrepreneurs to encourage bilateral relationships between Estonia and Norway; 1 June – cooperation committee meeting in Tallinn; 3 June – Green IT: closing seminar of Green Industry Innovation programme in Estonia; 17-21 October – cooperation committee meeting in Oslo, in connection to Oslo Innovation Week
EE08	Public Health Initiatives	9-10 May – cooperation committee meeting and site visits; October/November – programme closing event

EE09	Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance	April – cooperation committee meeting (together with EE11); May/June – programme closing seminar / conference (could be on consecutive days with EE11)
EE10	Norwegian-Estonian Scholarship Programme	May – cooperation committee meeting
EE11	Domestic and Gender-based Violence	April – cooperation committee meeting (together with EE09); May – programme closing seminar / conference (could be on consecutive days with EE09)

The Monitoring Committee convenes before the annual meeting in order to review the progress of implementation, to give an opinion on the strategic report.

The Cooperation Committees of the programmes are planned to be convened throughout the year in order to discuss work plans of the bilateral funds at the programme level, etc. The dates of the meetings are agreed on a rolling basis.

5 SUMMARY LIST OF ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no outstanding issues to be added to those that have already been mentioned under the previous chapters.

As the eligibility period will be closing, the main effort will be put on ensuring timely and efficient implementation of programmes and projects and if necessary making the relevant adjustments.

6 ATTACHMENTS TO THE STRATEGIC REPORT

1. For each Programme, a table showing the breakdown in respect of applications received and projects selected / contracted, as well as the types of intervention supported.
2. For each Programme, a table providing information in respect of donor partnership projects (names of Donor State entities, number and proportion of partnership projects).
3. A summary table on Donor partnership projects on the Beneficiary State level.
4. A list of irregularities detected at the Beneficiary State level and at Programme level during the reporting period and financial corrections made.
5. For each Programme, a list of irregularities detected at project level during the reporting period and financial corrections made.
6. A plan setting out the monitoring and audit activities in the Beneficiary State for the coming reporting period.
7. A risk assessment at the national and programme levels.