

1st EEA Financial Mechanism Committee 2014-21 meeting

7 – 8 September 2016

Conclusions

27.10.2016

1 Meeting agenda

The agenda was adopted with the following item added under 12 Other issues: "Entrusting programmes to the FMO, inter-governmental organisations or Donor State entities under Article 6.13 of the draft Regulations on the implementation of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021".

2 Minutes from the previous meeting

The minutes from the 6th Financial Mechanism Interim Committee meeting 29 – 30 June 2016 were adopted.

3 Regulation and Annexes

Regulation

The FMO informed the Committee about the results of the consultation with the National Focal Points and outlined the main comments received. By the deadline 8 July 2016 all 15 Beneficiary States had submitted comments. All comments were assessed by the FMO and changes had been made to the draft Regulations as deemed necessary. The Committee decided on the final amendments to the draft Regulation.

Annexes

The Committee adopted the nine annexes to the Regulation:

- Annex 1 – Eligible Priority Sectors and Programme Areas
- Annex 2 – Template for MoU
- Annex 3 – Information and Communication Requirements
- Annex 4 – Bilateral Fund Agreement template
- Annex 5 – Concept note template;
- Annex 6 – Programme Agreement template
- Annex 7 – Technical Assistance Agreement template, including budget
- Annex 8 – Forecast of likely payment applications template
- Annex 9 – Irregularities report template.

The Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2014 – 2021 and the Annexes will be sent to the Standing Committee of the EFTA States for a confirmation by the Standing Committee at its meeting on 22 September 2016.

4 Blue Book

The Committee took note of the results of the consultation with the Beneficiary States and the public consultation and adopted the Blue Book. The "Summary of results – consultation on the draft 'Blue Book' for the EEA and Norway Grants" and the Blue Book will be published on the eeagrants website simultaneously with the Regulation when the Regulation has entered into force.

5 Research Guideline

The FMO outlined the comments received from the Beneficiary States. The Committee adopted the Guideline for Research Programmes. The Guideline will enter into force on the same date as the entry into force of the Regulation.

6 (i) EEA and Norway Grants: Fund for Youth Employment (ii) EEA and Norway Grants: Fund for Regional Co-operation.

The Committee decided to establish a working group consisting of Donor representatives and the FMO to continue the work on the two Funds.

7 Civil Society

The Committee will revert to the updated documents at its next meeting.

8 MoU process

The Committee took note of the status of the MoU negotiations and discussed the plan for the autumn.

9 Administrative budget 2016 Financial Mechanisms 2014 - 2021

The Committee approved the administrative budget for Financial Mechanism 2014 – 2021 for 2016.

10 Draft Standing Committee Decision regarding the audit of programmes and projects under the Financial Mechanism (2014 – 2021)

The Committee took note of the draft "Decision of the Standing Committee of the EFTA States No 5/2016/SC regarding the audit of programmes and projects under the Financial Mechanism (2014 – 2021)". This decision will be on the agenda of the Standing Committee meeting of 22 September 2016.

11 Meeting schedule for the second half of 2016

See agenda item 8.

12 Other issues

The Committee decided that the operation of programmes under Article 6.13 would be considered to be entrusted to the FMO.

13 Next meeting

27 – 28 October 2016 were set aside for the next meeting.

ANNEX I

List of participants

Iceland

Ms Thóra Magnúsdóttir, Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mr Andri Júlíusson, First Secretary, Embassy of Iceland

Liechtenstein

Mr Dominik Marxer, Counsellor, Liechtenstein Mission to the EU

Norway

Mr Anders Erdal, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Chairman)
Mr Sjur Larsen, Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ms Torill Johansen, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mr Tønnes Svanes, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mr Tom Tjomsland, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

FMO - Secretary

ANNEX 1

Eligible Priority Sectors and Programme Areas

EEA Financial Mechanism

The overall objectives of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 are to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area and to strengthen bilateral relations between the Donor States and the Beneficiary States through financial contributions in the priority sectors and programme areas listed below.

Each of the five priority sectors includes a number of programme areas. Each of the 22 programme areas includes an objective, areas of support and programme area specifics.

Each programme and any project funded through it shall contribute to the objective of the programme area.

The areas of support define what is eligible under the programme area.

The programme area specifics are conditions which shall be adhered to within the programmes.

Programmes can focus on a single programme area or alternatively they can combine a number of areas of support from various programme areas in an individual programme, as long as all measures under the programme contribute to the same objective.

The below priority sectors and programme areas are eligible for the EEA Grants 2014-2021.

Priority Sectors and Programme Areas

Priority Sector a) Innovation, Research, Education and Competitiveness		
<p>Programme area: Business Development, Innovation and SMEs</p> <p><u>Objective</u> Increased value creation and sustainable growth</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Innovative technologies, processes and services > Sustainable business development > Greening of existing businesses and processes > Development and implementation of innovative products and services 	<p><u>Programme area specifics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The programme area is targeted at private businesses. The aim is that 75% of the funding shall be allocated to SMEs > Priority shall be given to bilateral partnership offering added value > Programmes can consist of a maximum of three focus areas chosen among the following: green industry innovation, blue growth, energy, welfare technology, ambient assisted living (health), and ICT > All programmes shall allocate at least 50% of funding to green industry innovation, unless otherwise specified in the memorandum of understanding or exceptionally in the programme's concept note > Programmes can be operated by a relevant donor country entity

		in close cooperation with a beneficiary country entity or by a qualified beneficiary country entity together with a donor programme partner
<p>Programme area: Research</p> <p><u>Objective</u> Enhanced research-based knowledge development</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Research cooperation between donor and beneficiary countries > Research within the priority sectors and/or programme areas of the EEA and Norway Grants or in other agreed areas > Application of research results > Capacity building in research, including supporting the careers of female researchers and early stage researchers > Participation and cooperation of beneficiary countries in the European Research Area (ERA) 	<p><u>Programme area specifics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > All research projects shall include cooperation between donor and beneficiary countries > Priority shall be given to bilateral partnerships offering added value > Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) shall be eligible participants in all programmes > Dissemination of research results shall be included in all programmes
<p>Programme area: Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeships and Youth Entrepreneurship</p> <p><u>Objective</u> Enhanced human capital and knowledge base</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Institutional cooperation at all levels of education between donor and beneficiary countries > Enhancing the quality and relevance of education and training in the beneficiary countries at all levels of education > Cooperation and partnerships between education, research and the world of work > Traineeships, apprenticeships and work placements > Youth entrepreneurship > Improving adult participation in lifelong learning > Professional development of teachers > Higher education student learning mobility and staff mobility between donor and beneficiary countries 	<p><u>Programme area specifics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > All programmes shall address gender disparities in education and training > Priority shall be given to bilateral partnerships offering added value > All programmes shall address inclusive education
<p>Programme area: Work-life Balance</p> <p><u>Objective</u> Work-life balance improved</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > National strategies, systems and policies to promote work-life balance and gender equality > Gender equality in the labour market > Women’s economic empowerment > Gender equality institutions and organisations > Child-care policy, aiming at affordable, good quality and accessible child-care 	<p><u>Programme area specifics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > A maximum level of funding available for infrastructure (hard measures) shall be identified in the memorandum of understanding or exceptionally in the programme’s concept note

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Policy/systems for family leave entitlements > Social dialogue 	
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Priority Sector b) Social Inclusion, Youth Employment and Poverty Reduction		
<p>Programme area: European Public Health Challenges</p> <p><u>Objective</u> Improved prevention and reduced inequalities in health</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Prevention of non-communicable diseases > Prevention and control of communicable diseases in accordance with the international health regulations, including Tuberculosis (TB) and HIV/AIDS > Health systems development, including information and surveillance systems > Universal access to health care > Reduction of social inequalities in health and the burden of diseases > Mental health, including mental disorders associated with alcohol and drug abuse > Strengthening systems for primary health care services > Healthy and active ageing 	<p><u>Programme area specifics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > A maximum level of funding available for infrastructure (hard measures) shall be identified in the memorandum of understanding or exceptionally in the programme’s concept note > At least 10% of the total programme allocation shall address child health > At least 10% of the total programme allocation shall address improved access to health for vulnerable groups/people and deprived areas
<p>Programme area: Roma Inclusion and Empowerment</p> <p><u>Objective</u> Enhanced inclusion and empowerment of Roma</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Implementation of European national, regional and local strategies relevant for Roma inclusion, and investments for systemic changes > Integrated measures at local level in the areas of education, employment, health and housing > Innovative approaches to enhancing the inclusiveness of public institutions and policies > Empowerment of Roma > Combating all forms of discrimination, including stereotyping of Roma > Systems for data collection and analysis, monitoring and evaluation > Collecting knowledge, and synthesising expertise on different Roma groups, languages, cultures, histories and identities in Europe 	<p><u>Programme area specifics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > All programmes shall address the three aspects of Roma participation: empowerment of Roma; rendering institutions and policies more inclusive; and targeting the majority, unless otherwise specified in the memorandum of understanding > A maximum level of funding available for infrastructure (hard measures) shall be identified in the memorandum of understanding or exceptionally in the programme’s concept note

<p>Programme area: Children and Youth at Risk</p> <p><u>Objective</u> Promote the rights and well-being of children and young people</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Child welfare and child protection systems > Child-friendly justice > Protection of child victims of trafficking, sexual abuse and domestic violence > Early childhood education and care systems > Prevention of early school-leaving > Empowerment of children and young people, including participation in decision-making processes > De-institutionalisation/ alternatives to institutional care 	<p><u>Programme area specifics</u></p> <p>> A maximum level of funding available for infrastructure (hard measures) shall be identified in the memorandum of understanding or exceptionally in the programme's concept note</p>
<p>Programme area: Youth Participation in the Labour Market</p> <p><u>Objective</u> Increased number of young people aged 15-30 in employment</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Vocational education and training systems and work-based learning > Assisting the transition from education and unemployment to the world of work > Reshaping labour market policy and institutions to facilitate access to employment and tackle social exclusion > Social protection mechanisms providing adequate income support 	<p><u>Programme area specifics</u></p> <p>> The programme area is particularly suitable for partnerships with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)</p>
<p>Programme area: Local Development and Poverty Reduction</p> <p><u>Objective</u> Strengthened social and economic cohesion</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Social and economic development in specific geographic areas > Anti-discriminatory activities focusing on groups vulnerable to social and economic exclusion > Interventions to increase job prospects > Interventions to increase job capacity, especially among the most vulnerable > Quality of and access to social/welfare services > Networking and policy exchanges between municipalities 	

Priority Sector c) Environment, Energy, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy

<p>Programme area: Environment and Ecosystems</p> <p><u>Objective</u> Improved environmental status in ecosystems and reduced adverse effects of pollution and other human activities</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Environmental strategies, management plans, action plans and/or protection plans > Environmental monitoring and modelling > Systems for the sharing and the dissemination of environmental information > Management and control of hazardous substances > Compliance with environmental legislation 	<p><u>Programme area specifics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The programmes shall contain small grant scheme(s) targeting, among others, civil society including non-governmental organisations (NGOs) > Priority shall be given to bilateral partnerships offering added value
<p>Programme area: Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Energy Security</p> <p><u>Objective</u> Less carbon intensive energy and increased security of supply</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Energy efficiency in production, distribution and/or end use > Renewable energy production and/or distribution > Recovery of energy from waste or hazardous waste > Energy security > Renewable energy policies in all relevant sectors > Energy markets 	<p><u>Programme area specifics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Programmes targeting greenhouse gas reductions and/or avoidance through energy efficiency measures shall deliver considerable reductions at a reasonable cost; a maximum of 150 EUR grant per tonne CO₂ equivalent per year reduced/avoided should be aimed for > Priority shall be given to bilateral partnerships offering added value
<p>Programme area: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation</p> <p><u>Objective</u> Climate change mitigated and vulnerability to climate change reduced</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Strategies, action plans and/or contingency plans > Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions > Climate change adaptation measures > Climate change-related extreme weather preparedness and risk management > Carbon capture and storage 	

Priority Sector: d) Culture, Civil Society, Good Governance, and Fundamental Rights and Freedoms		
<p>Programme area: Cultural Entrepreneurship, Cultural Heritage and Cultural Cooperation</p> <p><u>Objective</u> Social and economic development strengthened through cultural cooperation, cultural</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Cultural heritage management, preservation and conservation related to national, regional and local development > Documentation and accessibility of culture and cultural heritage 	<p><u>Programme area specifics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Cultural heritage management and conservation shall take account of impact on regional and local development > All programmes shall include cultural cooperation between donor and beneficiary countries

<p>entrepreneurship and cultural heritage management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Capacity development of cultural players > Cultural entrepreneurship > Cultural, creative and artistic activities contributing to sustainable development and social cohesion > Audience development, including people in the diversity of culture, outreach and educational activities > Networking and international cultural cooperation/exchange 	<p>> A maximum level of funding available for infrastructure (hard measures) shall be identified in the memorandum of understanding or exceptionally in the programme's concept note</p>
<p>Programme area: Civil Society</p> <p><u>Objective</u> Civil society and active citizenship strengthened and vulnerable groups empowered</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Democracy, active citizenship, good governance and transparency > Human rights and equal treatment through combating any discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity > Social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups > Gender equality and gender-based violence > Environment and climate change 	<p><u>Programme area specifics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > At least a third of the re-granting amount shall be allocated to democracy and human rights relevant projects > All programmes shall include youth inclusion > Protection of the environment and climate change shall only be supported as part of measures to promote civic participation, advocacy and active citizenship > Provision of welfare and basic services shall only be supported as part of wider actions addressing awareness-raising, advocacy, empowerment and reform initiatives > At least 15% of the re-granting amount shall contribute to capacity development and sustainability of civil society, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
<p>Programme area: Good Governance, Accountable Institutions, Transparency</p> <p><u>Objective</u> Integrity and accountability of public administration improved</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Institutional capacity-building > Public administration reform > Delivery, accessibility and quality of public services > Accountable, inclusive and transparent government > Economic and financial governance > Cooperation between government and civil society 	<p><u>Programme area specifics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The programme area is mandatory in each beneficiary country. It shall be implemented either as an individual programme or within other programmes > The programme area is particularly suitable for cooperation with international organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
<p>Programme area: Human Rights – National Implementation</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p>	<p><u>Programme area specifics</u></p>

<p><u>Objective</u> Human rights situation improved and discrimination and extremism combatted at national level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union > Developing and empowering ombudsperson institutions, national human rights platforms and equality bodies > Peaceful conflict resolution and reconciliation > Combating all forms of discrimination, including hate crime and hate speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Priority shall be given to empowering minorities and vulnerable groups to uphold their rights > Priority shall be given to initiatives targeting young people
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Priority Sector e) Justice and Home Affairs		
<p>Programme area: Asylum and Migration</p> <p><u>Objective</u> Functioning national asylum and migration management systems ensured and the right to seek asylum safeguarded</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > National systems for asylum and migration management, including voluntary return > Services to help asylum seekers to exercise basic rights 	<p><u>Programme area specifics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Priority shall be given to the needs of unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable groups
<p>Programme area: Correctional Services and Pre-trial Detention</p> <p><u>Objective</u> Improved correctional system</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Correctional service systems and mechanisms > Support to prisoners, including their rehabilitation and preparation for release > Measures stimulating the beneficiary countries to meet international standards on correctional services and detention, including the Council of Europe's European Prison Rules, recommendations of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) and case law of the European Court of Human Rights > Alternative sanctions to alleviate overcrowded prisons > Education and training for prison and probation staff > Support to vulnerable groups (in pre-trial detention, prison and probation) 	<p><u>Programme area specifics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Improvement of material conditions in prison shall only be supported alongside rehabilitation and reintegration measures > A maximum level of funding available for infrastructure (hard measures) shall be identified in the memorandum of understanding or exceptionally in the programme's concept note > Priority shall be given to juveniles in prison

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Strengthening the implementation of agreements on the transfer of sentenced persons and EU framework decisions > Justice chain cooperation and networking between justice institutions (courts, prosecution services, police and correctional services) 	
<p>Programme area: International Police Cooperation and Combating Crime</p> <p><u>Objective</u> Improved crime prevention and investigation</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Cooperation between national and international law enforcement authorities, such as Europol, Interpol, and Frontex > Efficiency of cooperation between law enforcement authorities in fighting organised crime > Cooperation between authorities, including national law enforcement authorities, and relevant stakeholders, such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the general public, especially vulnerable groups > The justice chain – cooperation and networking between justice institutions, including courts, prosecution services, police, and correctional services > Combating transnational crime, including cyber-crime, trafficking in and smuggling of human beings and itinerant criminal groups > Combating hate crime and violent extremism > Combating gender-based violence > Combating crimes against employees, work-related crime, money laundering and corruption > Effectiveness of the police system and its performance > Systems to protect and support victims of crime > Child-friendly justice 	<p><u>Programme area specifics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > A maximum level of funding available for infrastructure (hard measures) shall be identified in the memorandum of understanding or exceptionally in the programme’s concept note
<p>Programme area: Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Judicial System, Strengthening Rule of Law</p> <p><u>Objective</u></p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Efficiency of the judiciary and quality of judicial decision making > Stimulating integrity and addressing corruption in the judiciary 	<p><u>Programme area specifics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > A maximum level of funding available for infrastructure (hard measures) shall be identified in the memorandum of understanding or

<p>Strengthened rule of law</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Access to justice, including for vulnerable groups > International cooperation between actors within the judicial system, including Eurojust > Efficient justice chain: cooperation and networking between justice institutions, including courts, prosecution, police and correctional services > Promoting openness and cooperation between the judiciary and civil society as well as relevant public authorities > Justice capable of addressing hate crime and extremism > Child-friendly justice > Restorative justice 	<p>exceptionally in the programme's concept note</p>
<p>Programme area: Domestic and Gender-based Violence</p> <p><u>Objective</u> Domestic and gender-based violence prevented and victims protected and assisted</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Prevention of domestic and gender-based violence > Protection and support for victims of domestic and gender-based violence > Effective and integrated response systems including police, justice, health and service agencies 	<p><u>Programme area specifics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Priority shall be given to vulnerable groups including child witnesses of violence, migrant women and Roma women > Priority shall be given to comprehensive and coordinated measures, involving public entities as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) > A maximum of 50% of funding shall be made available for infrastructure (hard measures)
<p>Programme area: Disaster Prevention and Preparedness</p> <p><u>Objective</u> Improved disaster resilience</p>	<p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Risk and vulnerability competence and capacity > Prevention and reduction of existing and new risks and vulnerability > Disaster and crisis risk resilience at all levels and in all sectors of society 	