GRACE | Grants
Administration
and Collaboration
Environment

Submit Strategic Reports

GRACE user manual
for National Focal Points

Version 1.0, June 2020

Table of contents

1. Introduction

The below document is a user manual that describes how to navigate GrACE pages in order to submit the Strategic Reports.

The objective of the Annual Strategic Report is to provide key information on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 and Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, covering all programmes and bilateral activities implemented in the Beneficiary State, except for programmes operated by the FMO, inter-governmental organisations or Donor State entities (Reg. Art. 2.6[1])

A regular Strategic Report is submitted by all beneficiary countries, except Cyprus, Malta and Slovenia. For these three countries, a combined strategic and annual programme report is submitted.

For further technical support, please contact grace.support@efta.int

2. Annual Strategic Reports in GrACE

The sections in the Strategic Report in GrACE reflect the sections from the Strategic Report template previously shared with the National Focal Points[2].

The following represents the Annual Strategic Report workflow in GrACE. The workflow is started by the FMO Country Officer. S/he will start to start the workflow in GrACE as soon as the date for the Annual Meeting is known, preferably 4 months in advance. The National Focal Points will submit the Strategic Report in GrACE at least 2 months before the Annual Meeting.

The Donors will approve the Strategic Report during the Annual Meeting. Following their approval, the FMO Country Officer will approve the Strategic Report in GrACE.

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[1] https://eeagrants.org/resources/regulation-implementation-eea-grants-2014-2021; https://eeagrants.org/resources/regulation-implementation-norway-grants-2014-2021

[2] https://eeagrants.org/resources/eea-and-norway-grants-2014-2021-annotated-strategic-report-template

Note: after approval of the strategic report, the National Focal Point will publish the main text (without the annexes) on the grants dedicated website in the Beneficiary State.

3. Submit Strategic Report task

The FMO Country Officer will start the workflow in GrACE and register the year to which the strategic report refers to.

Important: The year contained in name of the document is the year of the starting date of the reporting period. Example: if the Strategic Report covers the period October 2019- September 2020 the document title will be SR [Beneficiary state name] 2019.

Once the FMO Country Officer starts the workflow, the task Submit Strategic Report will be available for the Primary contacts from the National Focal Points under Dashboard>My tasks. If necessary, the other contacts in the organization can acquire the task from Dashboard>My team(s) tasks.

To access the Strategic Report document, click on the task name.
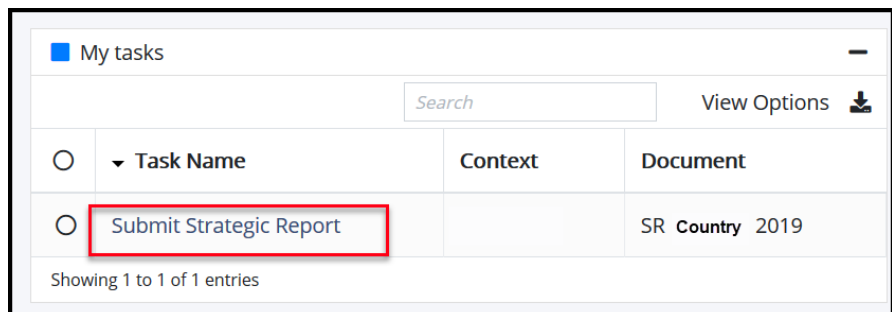
To navigate through the different sections, click on the different titles in the ribbon under "Structured Data tab" (1). As per similar structured documents in GrACE, you will register data and information in the "Structured Data" section.

As for any other tasks, you can reassign the submit Strategic Report task to another user with the same role in GrACE (2)
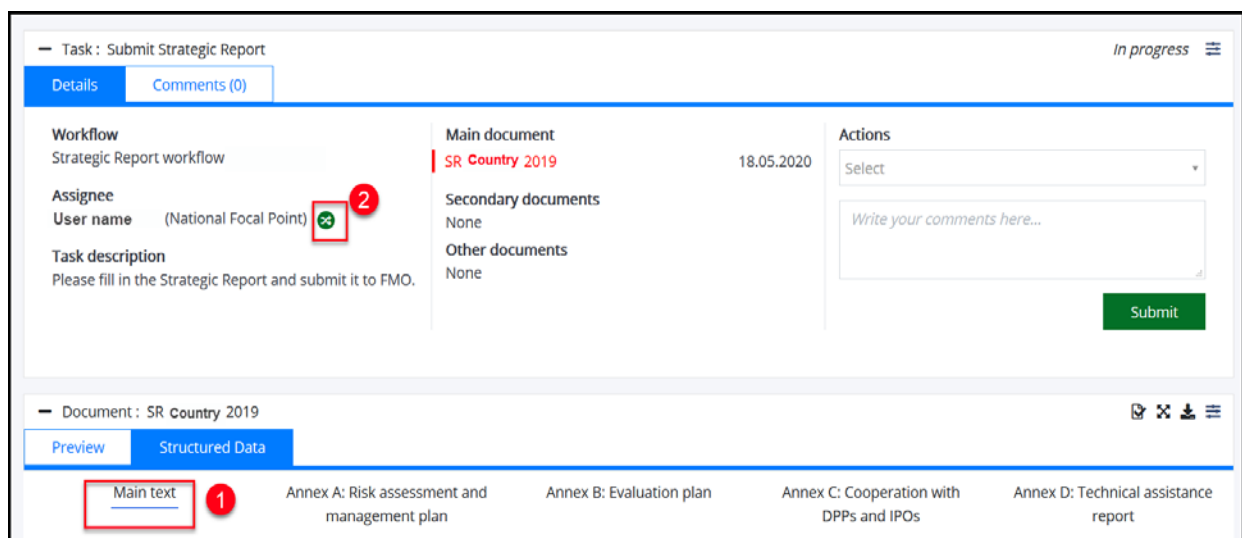
By clicking on the Preview tab, you will be able to see a printable version of the Strategic Report that GrACE created, based on what is currently registered under Structured Data tab.
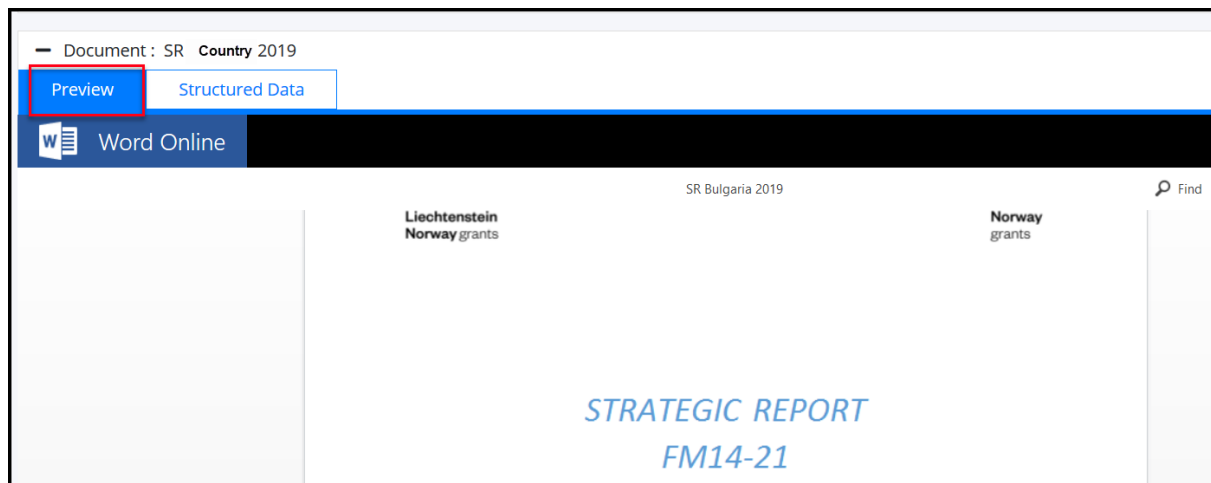
Until you press **Submit**, you have the possibility to **edit/update/save** the information registered as many times as necessary.
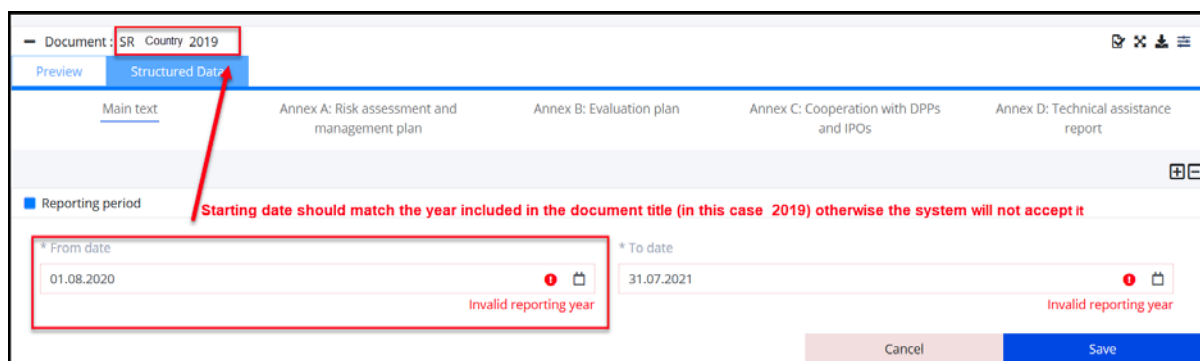
4. Fill-in the Strategic Report

The Structured data tab is composed by several tabs in which you will register the information, in line with the template previously shared:

- Main text of the Strategic Report

- Annex A: Risk assessment and management plan

- Annex B: Evaluation plan

- Annex C: Cooperation with DPPs and IPOs

- Annex D: Technical assistance report

At the beginning of the Main text section you will register the reporting period for the strategic Report.

Important: The starting date of the reporting period should be in the year the document title refers to. Example: if the Strategic Report covers the period October 2019- September 2020 the document title will be SR [Beneficiary state name] 2019. The system will not allow you to register a reporting period which doesn't start in the year included in the document title.

The Main text section contains a textbox for each heading from the Strategic Report. The instructions from the Annual Strategic Report template[3] are visible in *grey italic text* at the

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[3] https://eeagrants.org/resources/eea-and-norway-grants-2014-2021-annotated-strategic-report-template

beginning under each section (1). This text is replaced when you start to write, but it is still possible to read the instructions by hovering the mouse pointer over each section title (2).

In order to start filling-in, you will click Edit on the desired section (3).

After you click Edit, the text editor opens, and you can type in or paste the formatted text in the field. The textbox will resize automatically according to the amount of text. If you would like to see the instructional help text, click outside the textbox so that you can see the title of the section, then hover the mouse over the title.

Pressing **Save** will save the data and exit the edit mode.
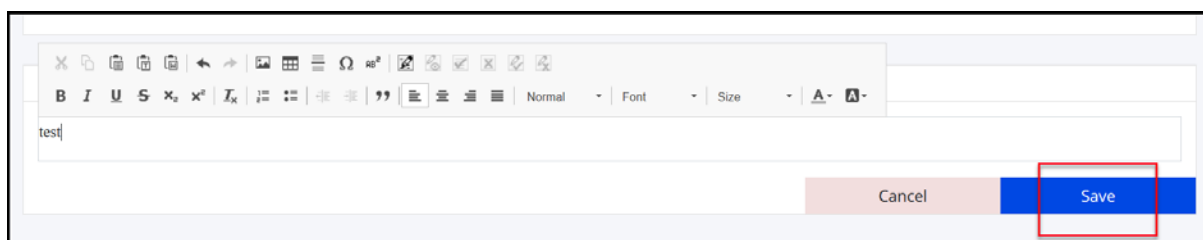
When fill-in the **Main text** sections:

- The main text section should not exceed 25 pages. You can check the number of pages in the Preview tab mentioned above.
- Make sure to follow the instructions from the Annual Strategic Report template displayed on the screen
- Section 1. Executive Summary: preferably write this last as a standalone summary, limit to 1-1 ½ page maximum
- Section 4. Status of programmes is registered per programme

When fill-in the **Annex A Risk assessment and management plan**, you will register the risks for each programme.

In the same manner as for the other tabs, you will click on **Edit** in order to register the information. In Edit Mode you will fill in the data for the risks according to your assessment then Save.

In the first Strategic Report submitted in GrACE, you will register the risks one by one with all the fields:

- the **Risk Description** initially identified
- the **Planned response** initially identified;
- the **Actual response** to the risk undertaken during the past year;

- the **Planned future response** to the risk for the upcoming period;

From the second APR submitted in GrACE, the risk assessment information reported in the previous Strategic Report is pre-filled based on the previous year. For the risks identified in the previous years, the Risk Description and Description of planned response will be greyed-out and read-only. The Description of planned response is pre-filled based on the Planned future response registered last year.

For the risks identified in the previous years, you will:

- select the N/A box (1) if the risk is not applicable. The risk will be greyed out from the current Strategic Report and will not be displayed anymore in the next Strategic Reports

- if the risk is still applicable, you will fill-in the description for actual response and planned future response (2)

You can add **new risk/s** that occurred during the last year. When ready – click **Save.**

Annex B: Evaluation plan requires uploading of a separate file, in case all programme agreements have been signed or if there were changes compared to the previously submitted evaluation plan.

Annex C: Cooperation with DPPs and IPOs and **Annex D: Technical assistance report** require registration of the information in the textboxes in the same manner as described above for the Main text section.

5. Submit the Strategic Report

After finalising the registration of the information in the Main text and each of the Annexes tabs, you will select Submit to FMO (1) then click Submit (2). The system will notify you in case there are empty textboxes and will not allow to proceed before they are filled in. Optionally you can leave a comment for FMO.

The FMO Country Officer will receive a task to Review the Strategic Report.

6. Update the Strategic Report

In case further changes are needed, the FMO Country Officer will return the Strategic Report task and you will receive an Update Strategic Report task in GrACE.

In the task details, you can access the document with comments from FMO (if any) in the section Secondary Documents:

Near the task details, you can see any comments left by FMO to the task itself:

The Strategic Report will become editable again by the NFP as shown in the section 4 Fill-in the Strategic Report.

7. Combined Annual Strategic Report + Annual Programme Report (Cyprus, Malta, Slovenia)

The Combined Strategic and Annual Programme Report follows the same workflow as for the regular Strategic Report previously described.

The template for Combined Strategic and Annual Programme Report combines information from Strategic Report template with elements from the Annual Programme Report template[4].

8. View Annual Strategic Reports in GrACE

You can visualise all the Strategic submitted in GrACE including their status in the Strategic Reports tab from the Beneficiary State page in GrACE.

You can click on View options (1) in order to add or remove fields in this list. By clicking on the download symbol (2) you can export this list to Excel. You can access the content of each Strategic Report by clicking on its name.

Note: The Strategic Reports received in 2019 and before were submitted before the functionality was ready. You can still find those in GRACE under the Documents tab from each Beneficiary State page.

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[4] https://eeagrants.org/resources/eea-and-norway-grants-2014-2021-annotated-annual-programme-report-template