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SPECIAL SERVICE (CFM&MSS)  
  
NATIONAL FOCAL POINT



**EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA  
FINANCIAL MECHANISM  
2004-2009**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2**  
  
**ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF**  
  
**THE EEA FINANCIAL MECHANISM**  
**2004-2009**  
  
**IN THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC**

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## **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS**

BS	Beneficiary State
CFM&MSS	Cohesion Fund Management & Monitoring Special Service
EEA	European Economic Area
FCC	Financial Control Committee
FM	Financial Mechanism
FMC	Financial Mechanism Committee
FMO	Financial Mechanism Office
GA	Grant Agreement
GOL	Grant Offer Letter
IP	Individual Project
MA	Monitoring Agent
MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance
MECS	Ministry of Economy, Competitiveness and Shipping
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MS	Member State
NFP	National Focal Point
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PEC	Proposal Evaluation Committee
PIP	Public Investment Programme (of the Hellenic Republic)
PIPs	Project Implementation Plans
PIRs	Project Implementation Reports
PCRs	Project Completion Reports
PARs	Project Annual Reports
SPA	Single Paying Authority
SC	Steering Committee
TS	Technical Secretary (of the Steering Committee)
TAF	Technical Assistance Fund

## ***PREFACE***

The purpose of the Annual Report on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism in the Hellenic Republic is to give comprehensive information on the implementation during the period under review. The annual report should provide an overview of the implementation of the mechanism and compile information the National Focal Point has received from all the involved bodies throughout the implementation period April 2008 - February 2010.

The present Annual Report is elaborated in fulfilment of the Beneficiary State's reporting obligation to the EEA Financial Mechanism Committee as stipulated in Article 5 of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Hellenic Republic and the donor States (Republic of Iceland, Principality of Liechtenstein and Kingdom of Norway) and in Article 3 of the "Reporting and Monitoring Guidelines" as adopted and amended by the EEA Financial Mechanism & the Norwegian Financial Mechanism.

The reported period covers the time from the previous report (April 2008) until February 2010.

During the aforementioned period, the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism in Greece has made great progress since the implementation phase started on January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008 with the announcement of the "Open call for submission of individual project proposals and for individual project proposals focused on academic research". The period for submission of proposals lasted four months with concluding date for submissions being May 12<sup>th</sup> 2008. The process for the evaluation and classification of submitted project proposals followed and concluded at national level before the Christmas vacation (November 2008) with the selection and submission of 50 short-listed proposals and 21 proposals form the reserve pool to the FMO for further appraisal and donors' selection.

The final decision by the EEA FMC has finished on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009 by forwarding to the Beneficiary State the Grant Offer Letters of the approved projects. By the end of February 2010, forty eight (48) Grant Agreements have been signed by the Chairman of the EEA FM Committee.

The National Focal Point confirms that the data included in the Annual Report on implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism is comprehensive, complete and correct.

## **1. IMPLEMENTATION STATUS**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Under the *Agreement, Protocol 38 – on the EEA Financial Mechanism*, the EFTA countries undertake to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the EEA through the establishment of a Financial Mechanism. The estimated amount allocated for the Hellenic Republic is 34.260.000 € for the period 2004 – 2009.

### **1.2 SETTING UP FOCUS AREAS**

The Greek Authorities, after extensive internal consultations during which the EEA FM priority sectors were carefully examined, focus areas were identified and explored based on the synergies between the activities and actions of the EU Structural Funds (i.e. CSF, CF, Interreg, etc). The finally defined focus areas are presented in the Annex B of the signed MoU.

### **1.3 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

#### **1.3.1 SIGNING OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

On 21-06-2005 within the framework of an official visit of the Deputy Minister of Economy and Finance in Oslo, Norway, the Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism was signed between the Kingdom of Norway and the Hellenic Republic. On 07-07-2005 the signing procedure was completed by the Republic of Iceland and the Principality of Liechtenstein.

#### **1.3.2 ADDENDUM TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

In view of the devastation caused by the forest fires in southern Greece, the Hellenic authorities on 05-09-2007 requested by the donor states (Republic of Iceland, Principality of Liechtenstein and Kingdom of Norway) an amendment to the Annex B of the MoU, so that to direct available financial support to the affected regions in order to address the damage to the environment.

In detail, the Hellenic authorities proposed 40% of the "Individual projects" funds to be distributed to the priority sector "Protection of the environment", and to channel 50% of the aforementioned funds to the afflicted regions with the addition of one focus area: "Restoration of the ecosystem ravaged by forest fires".

The EEA Financial Mechanism Committee has granted its approval and on 11-12-2007 the signing process for the "Addendum to the MoU" regarding the aforementioned amendment, between the donor states and the Hellenic Republic, was completed on ambassadors' level.

### **1.4 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK AND REGULATORY CONTEXT**

The legislative framework and the regulatory context of the EEA FM include, among others, the following:

- Protocol 38a to the EEA Agreement, incorporated into the EEA Agreement by the EEA Enlargement Agreement. Protocol 38a to the EEA Agreement determines the priority sectors eligible for co-financing.

- The Memorandum of Understanding (07-07-2005) on the implementation of the EEA FM 2004-2009, between the Republic of Iceland, the Principality of Liechtenstein, the Kingdom of Norway and the Hellenic Republic.
- The Addendum to the MoU (11-12-2007) on the implementation of the EEA FM 2004-2009, between the Republic of Iceland, the Principality of Liechtenstein, the Kingdom of Norway and the Hellenic Republic.
- The Rules and Procedures for the implementation of the EEA FM 2004-2009, adopted by the EEA Financial Mechanism Committee.
- A number of guidelines adopted and issued by the Financial Mechanism Committee

It should be noted that, during the implementation phase of the EEA FM, any procurement shall be carried out in accordance with the relevant EU and National Legislation.

## **1.5 TECHNICAL MEETINGS**

### **1.5.1 TECHNICAL MEETING ON 16<sup>TH</sup> OF OCTOBER 2008 IN BRUSSELS**

On October 16<sup>th</sup> 2008, a technical meeting was held in Brussels and was attended by the Secretary General of Investments and Development and FMO and FP representatives. During the meeting principal issues of the approved project selection list at national level were discussed. Specifically, the FP presented to the FMO the SC and PEC final list of the projects' evaluation at national level stating that this would be PEC's final recommendation to the Minister of Economy and Finance. Also, due to the fact of the increased number of submitted applications of individual projects and individual projects focused on academic research and their good quality, the Greek Authorities proposed to the FMO the possibility of reducing the EEA FM co-financing from 80% to 50% and simultaneously increasing the PIP co-financing from 20% to 50%. Finally, issues regarding which annexes of the English version of the short-listed application forms should be attached and forwarded to FMO for further evaluation as well as the relevant Ministerial Decision on the co-financing rates and on management and control systems of the EEA FM implementation in Greece were discussed.

### **1.5.2 TECHNICAL MEETING ON 19<sup>TH</sup> OF DECEMBER 2008 IN BRUSSELS**

On December 19<sup>th</sup> 2008, a technical meeting was held in Brussels between the Secretary General of Investments and Development, representatives of the Greek FP and FMO in which the Greek authorities presented the Ministerial Decision (prot. no. 51116/CFM&MSS 3537/10-11-2008 on the approved project selection list at national level and on co-financing rates. According to the aforementioned Ministerial Decision, 50 projects were approved and 21 were in a reserve pool. A total of 71 project proposals were going to be sent to the FMO for further evaluation. It must be noted that in the time interval between the previous (16-10-2008) and the present technical meeting, the donor states approved the Greek Authorities' request regarding the reduction of the EEA FM co-financing from 80% to 50% and simultaneously the increase of the PIP co-financing from 20% to 50%. Also, another major issue that was discussed was the estimated time schedule of the projects' appraisal at FMO level. FMO informed the FP that due to a vast number of projects' application forms from several BS that had to be appraised by that time, a rational schedule was that the Greek application forms would be appraised not before the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009, last date of the EEA FM 2004-2009 commitment period upon the pre-requisite that the FP would have sent the English version of the application forms to the FMO by the beginning of January 2009. Another issue on the agenda was the application form by the Intermediary Body of the "Scholarship and Mobility Fund". As the time was quite limited regarding the

implementation of the aforementioned specific form of grant assistance, the FP committed that the application form as well as the relevant Open Calls should be sent to the FMO by 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009 as a pre-requisite for the relevant GOL to be issued. Finally, as far as the Management and Control System of the EEA FM was concerned, the FP stated that it is of crucial importance for the implementation of the EEA FM in Greece and it is one of the main priorities of the Greek Authorities, however, as the FP has a limited number of staff, the most important issue at the present time was to speed up the process of submitting the English application forms to the FMO for further appraisal and evaluation.

### ***1.5.3 TECHNICAL MEETING ON 25<sup>TH</sup> OF MARCH 2009 IN BRUSSELS***

On the technical meeting held in Brussels on March 25<sup>th</sup> 2009 between the FMO and FP representatives, FMO informed FP on the appraisal process of the Greek project proposals and the formation of the estimated time schedule. In addition, FMO requested for further clarifications regarding the horizontal issues of "state aid" and "public procurement" which were raised after relevant correspondence exchange. Prior to the technical meeting, the FP, after request, sent to the FMO a horizontal letter (prot. no. 15859/CFM&MSS 1075/23-03-2009) regarding its positions on the aforementioned issues. In particular, as far as the issue of "state aid" was concerned, six cases (EL 0030, EL 0031, EL 0075, EL 0045, EL 0034, EL 0027) have been examined thoroughly in terms of the relative legislative framework. The Greek Authorities, on their behalf, believed that they had fully covered and clarified issues regarding the aforementioned subject. However, from the FMO's point of view the issue of state aid was not clarified at this meeting. Subsequent correspondence was required to clarify a couple of cases and a second technical meeting was held in September 2009. Regarding the "public procurement" issue, the FP pointed out that Greece is in fully compliance with all the EU regulations regarding the tendering procedure as it is a full MS for more than 25 years. Finally, the FMO raised the horizontal issue that in several Greek project applications involving Greek universities and research institutions the overhead costs appeared to have a fixed rate in project budgets more than 10% of total project costs-maximum fixed rate adopted by the EEA FM guidelines. The FP committed to comply with the aforementioned line after communication with the Project Promoters.

### ***1.5.4 TECHNICAL MEETING ON 11<sup>TH</sup> OF JUNE 2009 IN ATHENS***

On June 11<sup>th</sup> 2009, a technical meeting was held in Athens at the FMO's initiative between the FMO and FP representatives and the representatives of IKY - Intermediary Body of the specific form of grant assistance "Scholarship and Mobility Fund". The meeting was attended by representatives of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Athens. The meeting was held in two sessions. During the first session, a few technical points were discussed regarding the status of implementation of Greek approved projects such as the first date of expenses' eligibility, the time schedule regarding the signature of Grant Agreements and the issuing of the relevant implementation contracts, the progress of the draft Ministerial decision regarding the Management and Control System of the EEA FM implementation in Greece and finally the issue of appointing a Monitoring Agent and the time schedule of its tendering procedure. During the second session, an extensive discussion took place as the FMO was quite concerned about the occurred time delays in the Open Call announced by IKY, the low interest expressed by scholarships' potential candidates (only 8) and the impossibility mostly for master's students to enrol for postgraduate studies during the Fall Semester of 2009, due to the fact that examination results would be issued in July 2009 and it would be late for the donors' academic institutions to give admissions to potential post graduate students.

#### **1.5.5 TECHNICAL MEETING ON 23<sup>RD</sup> OF SEPTEMBER 2009 IN ATHENS**

On September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009, a technical meeting was held in Athens between the FMO and FP representatives. The meeting was also attended by representatives from the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Athens. The meeting was held in two sessions. During the first session, clarifications and technical points were discussed regarding the "state aid" issue for the following approved individual projects: EL 0019, EL 0026, EL 0027, EL 0029, EL 0030, EL 0031, EL 0036, EL 0043, EL 0051, EL 0053, EL 0075 and EL 0084. The Greek Authorities committed to send a relevant official letter to the FMO. During the second session, an extensive discussion took place as the FMO was quite concerned about the progress of the specific form of grant assistance "Mobility and Scholarship Fund". In particular, the NFP has investigated the possibility of changing the Intermediary Body in order to proceed more rapidly and efficiently with the specific form of grant assistance. After an extensive survey conducted by the NFP, the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA) has found to be more suitable and mature by the NFP to be the potential intermediary body as it has signed bilateral agreements (programming and learning) with a number of donor states' academic institutions and has the know – how to implement similar academic programs. NTUA representatives presented their profile, facts and sheets of their academic institution and their capability of taking the responsibility of being the Intermediary Body of the aforementioned program. The FMO listened to the NTUA's presentation and the FP's opinion on the choice of NTUA as a potential new intermediary body. The FMO informed the FP and the NTUA of the requirements of considering a new intermediary body and the steps that would have to be followed in order for the FMO to assess the new intermediary body and provide its recommendation to the donors. Also, technical issues were discussed on the funding of IKY and the issuing of a separate GA for the latter.

#### **1.6 SPECIFIC FORMS OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The Greek Authorities, taking into consideration the efficient and effective implementation of the EEA FM and based on the priority sectors and focus areas of the Annex B of the MoU, decided to submit proposals for individual projects and individual projects focused on academic research and to use specific forms of grant assistance. Therefore, according to Annex C of the MoU, the following types of assistance will also be activated within the context of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2004 - 2009:

- A "Scholarships and Mobility Programs Fund" will support cooperation and transfer of knowledge.
- A "Technical Assistance Fund" will support publicity and information activities, workshops, activities related to administrative issues, management costs, the appointment of a Support & Monitoring agent, e.t.c.

#### **1.7 ALLOCATION OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN FORMS OF ASSISTANCE**

According to Table 2, par. 1.9 of the "Rules and Procedures", the cumulative commitment ceilings for the Hellenic Republic, after the deduction of management costs (4%) is 32,889,600 €.

Furthermore, according to the same aforementioned paragraph, an additional amount of approximately 3% shall be deducted from the net amount in order to cover expenses relating to appraisal reports, monitoring, ex-post evaluations and technical assistance. Hence, the net amount is reduced to 32,067,360 €.

Following the results of the approved projects within the framework of the open call for Individual Projects and Individual Projects focused on academic research and the amendment of the "technical Assistance Fund", the final allocation of the Greek net total

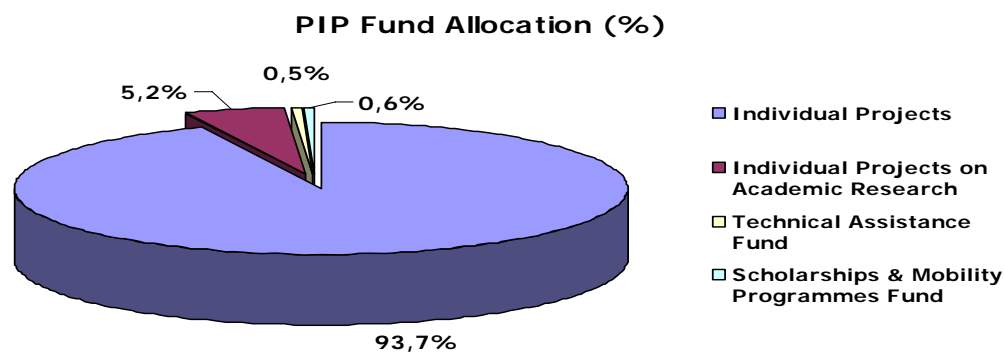
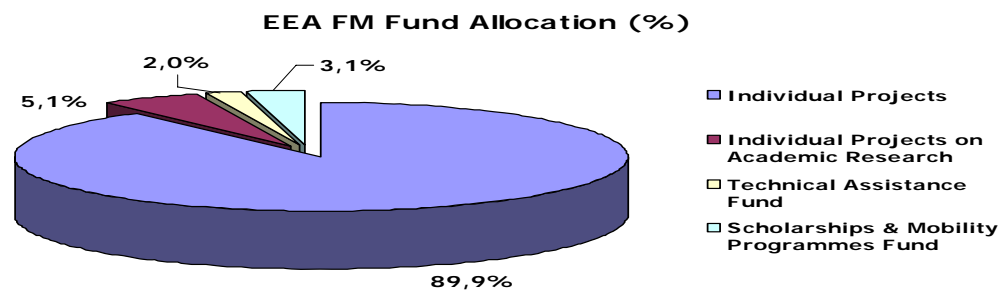
quota for the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism for period 2004 – 2009 as well as the corresponded national participation is presented as follows:

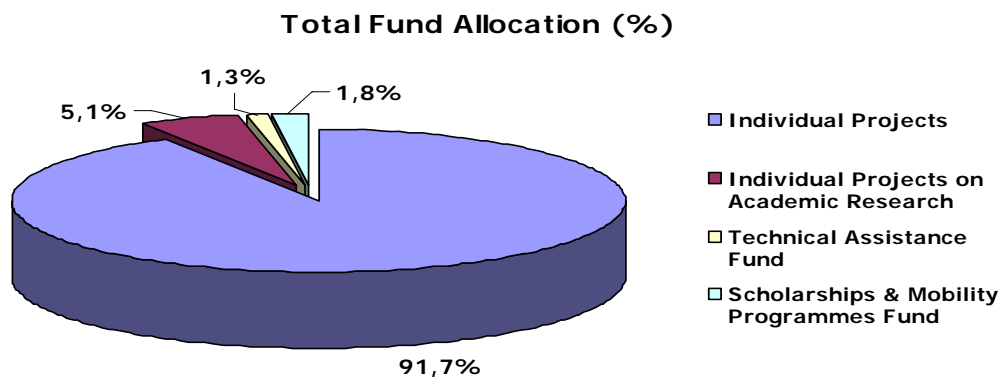
Forms of Assistance	EEA FM Contribution (in €)	PIP * Contribution (in €)	EEA FM (%)	PIP (%)	TOTAL (in €)
Individual Projects	28.814.119	29.132.344	49,7	50,3	57.946.463
Individual Projects on Academic Research	1.625.029	1.625.029	50	50	3.250.058
Technical Assistance Fund	636.685	159.171	80	20	795.856
Scholarships & Mobility Programmes Fund	991.527	174.975	85	15	1.166.502
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32.067.360</b>	<b>31.091.519</b>			<b>63.158.879</b>

\* PIP stands for the Public Investment Program of the Hellenic Republic

However, as far as the individual projects focused on academic research are concerned, for statistical purposes, and to ensure equal classification in all Beneficiary States, the FP was informed by the FMO that some projects were classified differently at appraisal stage compared to the national classification. Therefore, the FMO has registered academic research projects in the amount of 1.650.697 Euros.

The following pie charts give a graphical representation of the allocation of financial resources (in percentages) in several types of assistance, coming from the EEA Financial Mechanism, the Public Investment Programme of the Hellenic Republic, as well as in total.





## 2. OPEN CALL FOR SUBMISSION OF INDIVIDUAL PROJECT PROPOSALS AND FOR INDIVIDUAL PROJECT PROPOSALS FOCUSED ON ACADEMIC RESEARCH

### 2.1 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE "OPEN CALL"

Following a series of negotiations between the Hellenic Authorities and the Financial Mechanism Office that lasted for almost two years, the latter with its letter on December 4<sup>th</sup> 2007 granted its approval to the final version of the "Open Call" text that has been submitted to the FMO on November 29<sup>th</sup> 2007.

On January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, the "Open Call for submission of individual project proposals and for individual project proposals focused on Academic Research" was launched. Aiming to a wide communication to potential applicants and a transparent process, the "Open Call" was announced through three major financial and two political newspapers of nationwide circulation.

Furthermore, a press release was issued by the Office of the Deputy Minister of Economy & Finance, on January 15<sup>th</sup> 2008, in order to inform the public and potential applicants about the "Open Call" and to emphasize on the importance given to the implementation of the EEA FM in Greece.

The "Open Call" was analytical and described in detail the forms of financial assistance offered, the scope of eligible proposals, the eligibility criteria of potential applicants and of expenditures, the evaluation process and the evaluation criteria to be used.

### 2.2 EVALUATION PROCESS OF PROJECT PROPOSALS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

The CFM&MSS was responsible in co-operation with the Steering Committee to evaluate and classify the submitted 412 project proposals within the framework of the "Open Call". It should be mentioned that the number of the submitted project proposals, 412 in total of approximately 530 million Euros, denoted the wide interest of the potential project promoters within the Greek territory, which was the result of a broad promotion of the EEA FM in Greece. Therefore the Greek Authorities had a huge task regarding the short-listing of the appropriate schemes taking into consideration that the EEA FM contribution to Greece was 32.4 million Euros.

The SC, which is an advisory body to the NFP in respect of the identification, evaluation and classification of proposals, provided its opinion on the projects and submitted to the NFP a ranked list of project proposals that recommended for submission to the FMO. In order to come up to its conclusion on the proposals' ranking, the SC Chairman invited the

SC members to attend nine (9) meetings. The SC meetings were attended by a representative from the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Athens with an observer status. The evaluation process started in June 2008 and finished in October 2008. In addition, due to the vast number of the submitted proposals – 412 proposals -, the SC used the services of its Technical Secretariat which was a 21 - member secretariat constituted of MEF experts on focus areas of the Open Call. The SC operated in an open and transparent manner and created working groups.

The NFP, in co-operation with the SC, had defined the criteria and sub-criteria to be used in the evaluation by the MEF, as well as the corresponding weighting factors (WF). These criteria and sub-criteria which had been identified to the potential applicants in the Open Call, were as follows:

**i. Competence of body(ies) involved in the proposal (WF 20%)**

- Organisational structure, internal monitoring system(s) and material and technical infrastructure.
- Competency relevant to the procedures of co-financed programmes, ability to respond to the obligations of the management system of the EEA FM and ability to implement the proposed project
- Availability of resources to implement the proposed project.

**ii. Feasibility-importance, completeness and maturity of the proposal (WF 40%)**

- Overall objectives, aims and results to be generated through the implementation of the proposed project including its feasibility and importance.
- Time schedule detailed budget plan and cash-flow of the proposal, its added value and possible revenues to be generated during or after the project implementation.
- Long-term viability of the proposed project and the capacity for securing financing after its completion.
- Compatibility of the proposed project with national and EU legislation.
- Information and publicity plan.

**iii. Efficiency of methodology, technical approach and proposed solution (WF 30%)**

- Organisation and management of the proposed project, especially in respect of roles and responsibilities of the bodies involved.
- Clarity and feasibility of time schedule of the proposed project.
- Environmental impact of the implementation of the proposed project.
- Verification of the proposed indicators, as suggested by the FMC Guidelines (Examples of Indicators for Priority Sectors).

**iv. Risk management (WF 10%)**

- Risk assessment (managerial, technical, financial, legal, etc.).
- Competency of risk management and risk analysis.

The ranking of proposals conducted on the basis of the sets of criteria listed above and each proposal was awarded a score between 0-100, taking account the allocated weighting factors for each set of criteria. For this purpose, the SC approved homogeneous and standardized checklists which were used in order to carry out the projects' evaluation at national level.

The NFP verified that the applications were in accordance with the formal requirements, that the applicants were eligible and that the projects were in compliance with article 4

and 6 of the Open Call. In the event of the subject and/or budget of the proposed project were found to be incompatible with articles 4 and 6 of the aforementioned call, the proposal was rejected and the applicant was notified accordingly. If the application was found to be lacking documentation and/or that additional documents were required, the applicant was notified in writing or by fax. The applicant was then asked to present the requested documents to the CFM&MSS within fifteen (15) working days. If the deadline for providing the relevant documentation was not met, the proposal was rejected and the applicant informed accordingly.

A 5-member Project Evaluation Committee (PEC), which was established within the NFP, reviewed the recommendations by the SC in two meetings that took place in October 2008 and, based on these, provided its recommendations to the Deputy Minister of Economy and Finance as to which projects were to be short-listed and forwarded to the FMO for further appraisal and donors' decision.

The relevant Ministerial Decision was issued on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2008. It should be noted that due to the vast number of application forms, the Greek Authorities requested from the donor states during the technical meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2008 the reduction of the EEA FM co-financing from 80% to 50% and simultaneously the increase of the PIP co-financing from 20% to 50%. The aforementioned request was accepted from the donor states.

Following the aforementioned settlement, the NFP invited the fifty (50) short-listed applicants and the twenty one (21) applicants of the reserved pool proposals to submit their application forms and the required supporting documentation in English (in both hard copy and electronic format) in order for these to be forwarded to the FMO. The process of forwarding the relevant application forms to the FMO started by December 19<sup>th</sup> 2008 and lasted until January 30<sup>th</sup> 2009.

In parallel, the NFP provided the potential project promoters with its reasoned negative recommendation on their project proposals and with the final evaluation score that their proposals received during the evaluation stage.

### **2.3 APPRAISAL OF SHORT LISTED PROJECT PROPOSALS BY THE FMO**

The FMO appraised the project proposals forwarded by the FP. Out of the in total 71 project proposals forwarded, 50 approved ones and 16 out of the 21 project applications from the reserve pool were appraised, which included an assessment of whether the project proposal is in compliance with Protocol 38a, the Rules and Procedures and additional Guidelines adopted by the FMC.

The European Commission screened the proposals for their compatibility with Community objectives and provided comments to the FMO.

Based on this, the FMO submitted a reasoned recommendation for approval or rejection to the FMC, which made the final decision on each proposal by 30th April 2009.

Further to the FMO appraisal, the FMO gave its negative recommendation for six out of 50 suggested project proposals at national level and for one (1) from the reserve pool and therefore six proposals from the reserve pool were on the list approved by the FMC.

### **2.4. SIGNING OF GRANT AGREEMENTS**

Between 19<sup>th</sup> April 2009 and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009, GOLs have been sent to the approved project promoters through the NFP by the FMO. The successful project promoters and the NFP invited to accept the conditions for granting in the GOLs as well as the project promoters were asked to fill in the PIPs of their projects which are going to be used as an

Annex to the relevant GAs and as a basis to evaluate the implementation progress of the projects.

By 28<sup>th</sup> February 2010, forty-eight (48) GAs for individual projects signed by the FMC Chairman were forwarded to the Ministry of Economy, Competitiveness and Shipping in order to be signed by the Minister well. Until now, forty – six (46) GAs for individual projects have been signed by the BS and copies of them forwarded to the FMO, two (2) of them (EL 0029 and EL 0051) are at the Minister' s Office in order to be signed, one of them (EL 0015) was rejected after project promoter's refusal to proceed with the project implementation.

It should be noted that after national elections of the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2009, the Ministry of Economy and Finance has been split up into two Ministries. One of them, the Ministry of Economy, Competitiveness and Shipping is responsible for the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2004-2009 in Greece.

## **2.5. IMPLEMENTATION CONTRACTS**

The NFP is preparing continuously upon receiving the signed GAs the implementation contracts for the individual projects. Implementation contracts between the NFP and the Project Promoters will have the form of Ministerial Decisions in order to formally secure the national co-financing from the Greek Public Investment Programme for each project and to ensure that the obligations undertaken by the NFP in the GAs are properly delegated to the Project Promoter in a manner which ensures enforceability of these obligations.

In the Implementation Contracts, the first date of expenses' eligibility will be the first date of eligibility stated in the Grant Offers. However, the NFP requires the Implementation Contract to be in place before any tender procedures are launched and before any disbursements are made.

The NFP envisages the Implementation Contracts to be in place by the end of March 2010.

It should be noted that a pre-requisite prior to the issue of the Ministerial Decisions is the incorporation of the projects within the PIP. The aforementioned was satisfied by the Ministerial Decision dated 12-02-2010 and the new code for projects co-funded by the EEA FM and the PIP has the following code ΣΑΕ 4198 ΤΡΟΠ.0.

## **2.6. ASSESSMENT OF THE EEA FM DISTRIBUTION AMONG THE PRIORITY SECTORS**

According to the Open Call issued by the NFP on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2008, the Hellenic authorities indicatively allocated the total budget in the priority sectors as follows:

- Protection of the environment: 40% of the amount for individual projects
  - Also, 50% of the amount for individual projects in this sector should be allocated to the focus area "restoration of the ecosystem ravaged by forest fires".
- Protection of sustainable development: 25% of the amount for individual projects
- Conservation of the European Cultural heritage: 10% of the amount for individual projects
- Human Resources development: 10% of the amount for individual projects
- Health and Childcare: 15% of the amount for individual projects

- Academic Research: 100% of the amount for individual projects focused on academic research

Although the number of project proposals submitted was extremely high, 412, the Hellenic authorities tried to keep the aforementioned allocation with minor deviations. Therefore, according to the final approved projects, the total budget for individual projects and individual projects focused on academic research was 61.196.521 Euros, from which 30.439.148 Euros were covered by the EEA FM resources and 30.713.431 Euros by the PIP. Therefore, the budget allocation was shaped as follows:

- Protection of the environment: (11+5) 16 proposals (15.898.730 Euros +9.175.323 Euros =25.074.053) – 43,27 % of the amount for individual projects (deviation: +3,27%)
  - 5 proposals – 9.175.323 Euros – 36,6% of the amount for individual projects in this sector were allocated to the focus area “restoration of the ecosystem ravaged by forest fires” (deviation: - 13,4%)
- Protection of sustainable development: 7 proposals – 13.009.413 Euros – 22,4% of the amount for individual projects (deviation: -2,6%)
- Conservation of the European Cultural heritage: 6 proposals – 7.113.610 Euros - 12,276% of the amount for individual projects (deviation: +2,276%)
- Human Resources development: 5 proposals – 5.518.314 Euros – 9,5% of the amount for individual projects (deviation: -0,5%)
- Health and Childcare: 9 proposals – 7.231.073 Euros – 12,47% of the amount for individual projects (deviation: -2,53%)
- Academic Research: 7 proposals – 3.250.058 Euros – 100% of the total amount for individual projects and individual projects focused on academic research.

The Hellenic authorities were interested in all the priority sectors set by the donor states, which is shown by the initial indicative budget allocation. However, “protection of the environment” is the sector at the heart of the EEA FM implementation in Greece. Almost 43,27% of the total funding is spent on environmental projects due to the fact that the Hellenic authorities are in general extremely sensitive to environmental issues, which was especially increased after the massive forest fires ravaged mainly the Region of Peloponnesus. It is believed that the EEA FM implementation will greatly contribute to the goals of the donor states in terms of harmonizing environmental standards within the single market bearing in mind the economic and social aspects of the Beneficiary State. Environmental projects are focused on energy efficiency and renewable energy, on reducing water pollution, securing waste management, improving environmental monitoring and restoring forests damaged by fires. Also, as quite an important number of NGOs participates either as a project promoter or as a partner, approved projects focused on child and healthcare as well as on human resources development create important platforms for social change and reduction of economic and social disparities regarding minority groups such as children, abused women, etc. Finally, international cooperation within the field of academic research is particularly important for the Hellenic authorities as it invests in long – term social and economic progress through sharing resources, ideas, knowledge and experience.

## **2.7. PROJECTS' IMPACT ASSESSMENT ON CROSS – CUTTING ISSUES**

One of the aims of the National Focal Point in regard to the launching of the “Open Call” on January 2008 and the implementation of projects within the framework of the EEA Financial Mechanism for period 2004 – 2009, was to meet, among other issues, the objectives concerning the cross – cutting issues; “Sustainable Development (environmental – economic – social)”, “Gender Equality” and “Good Governance”.

**“Sustainable Development (environmental – economic – social)”**

Within the planning of the approved projects and of the actions that will be implemented or already are under implementation, it has been taken into account, whereas possible, the benefit of the broader public concerning the projects' results.

In particular, effort has been made in order to include all relevant aspects such as:

- Environmental sustainability with the implementation of projects involving renewable sources of energy and protection and / or rehabilitation of the environment,
- Easing of economic disparities between regions and between minorities and the general population,
- Finally, by taking under consideration the social aspect concerning the implementation of projects all possible effort has been put in directing, whereas possible, the projects' results to the benefit of the broader population.

### **"Gender Equality"**

The overall implementation of the EEA FM is in accordance to the objectives and principles set-out in the Guideline: "Gender Equality Policy and Guide" issued by the EEA Financial Mechanism Committee and in full compliance with the National and EU policy and legislation regarding Gender Equality.

Moreover, several approved projects lie within this field and implement actions of particular interest and to the benefit of women (such as shelters for abused women victims of domestic violence, trafficking, etc.).

Finally, all actions have been made in order to ensure and safeguard equal representation of women and equal opportunities in relation to the implementation of projects.

### **"Good Governance".**

The National Focal Point ensures and commits itself to uphold good governance practices regarding the overall implementation of the Financial Mechanism 2004-2009 in Greece. In particular, to include accountability, transparency, participation, equality, rule of law, capacity, competence and responsiveness to people's needs, as referred to the EEA Guideline: "Good Governance and Anti-corruption policy and Guide".

An independent audit program is being planned in order to be implemented in a considerable percentage of the projects being implemented within the EEA Financial Mechanism, in co-operation with the "Single Paining Authority" and the "Financial Control Committee".

The aim is to verify the effectiveness of the management systems and to ensure sound financial management of the Project Promoters and Partners involved in the implementation of projects.

Furthermore everyday monitoring of projects by the National Focal Point and communication with Project Promoters takes under consideration the aforementioned aspects.

## **2.8. PROJECTS' EFFECTS ON BILATERAL RELATIONS**

The participation of Partners from the Donor States and especially Norway, in a considerable number of projects (32 in total), contributes to the strengthening of bilateral relations between them and the Beneficiary State, which is one of the major objectives of the mechanism.

Also, the implementation of the "Scholarships and Mobility Programs Fund" is planned in such a manner in order to enhance considerably bilateral relations between the Donor States and the Beneficiary State in the academic field.

## **2.9. WORKSHOP**

On September 24<sup>th</sup> 2009, a workshop was held in Athens at the premises of the American School of Classical Studies on the implementation of the approved EEA Financial Mechanism 2004 – 2009 individual projects and individual projects focused on Academic Research". The premises of the American School of Classical Studies have been chosen to host the event as the American School is the Project Promoter of the individual project: "Reviving the ancient agora, the place where democracy was born".

The scope of the workshop was to inform the project promoters on the management and control system that is going to be followed regarding the implementation of the approved projects, issues relating to the procurement procedures and payment claims, issues relating to filling up the standardized documents such as PIRs, PCRs and PARs requirements of the EEA FM regarding information and publicity and the role of the MA who is going to be appointed after an international open procurement process.

The workshop marked the initialization of the approved projects actual implementation in Greece focusing on the targets that are going to be achieved by the EEA FM in Greece.

The workshop was attended by Ms Marie Osnes, Country Portfolio Officer, Mr Hjortur Sverrisson, FMO Head of Legal Affairs and Mr Kurt Haugen, FMO Head of Finance and Controlling whose presentations and interventions were very fruitful for the works of the event. His Excellency, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to Athens, Mr S. Stub made an opening remark.

Also, it should be noted that during the lunch break, representatives of the FMO and NFP have meetings with representatives of projects EL 0084, EL 0030 and EL 0031 in order to clarify some technical aspects regarding the "state aid" issue.

## **3. SPECIFIC FORMS OF GRANT ASSISTANCE (ANNEX C OF THE MoU)**

### **3.1 SCHOLARSHIPS AND MOBILITY PROGRAMMES FUND**

The Hellenic authorities appointed the State Scholarships Foundation of the Ministry of Education and Religion as the intermediary body for the "Scholarships and Mobility Fund".

The State Scholarships Foundation prepared in collaboration with the NFP and submitted to the FMO a complete application form regarding the implementation of the aforementioned fund in Greece for the period 2004-2009 which was submitted to the FMO for evaluation and approval by the EEA FMC. Indeed, the EEA FMC approved the application with a Grant Offer Letter dated 15-01-2009. The total amount of the Fund is € 1.166.502, 85% (i.e. €991.527) is being covered by the EEA FM resources and 15% (i.e. €174.975) is being covered by the PIP. The State Scholarships Foundation elaborated and published three open calls regarding university education and research scholarships aiming at promoting partnerships between Greece and the donor states. Specifically, through the open calls, scholarships for master's degrees, PhD degrees and post-doc degrees have been published. During the technical meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2009 an extensive discussion took place as the FMO was quite concerned about the occurred time delays in the Open Call announced by the State Scholarships Foundation, the low interest expressed by scholarships' potential candidates (only 8) which had as a consequence the impossibility mostly for master's students to enrol for postgraduate studies during the Fall Semester of 2009. On 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2009, within the framework of the Open Calls 1 PostDoc, 1 PhD and 4 MSc scholarships were approved. These results would imply that a

maximum of approximately € 140,000 of the total funds for regranting (€ 1,050,900) are allocated after the first call, i.e. approximately 13 % of the total funds for regranting.

The FMO's concern is that the scholarship fund is implemented as successfully as possible and that as much of the funds for regranting as possible is regranting to relevant activities. Based on the results of the 1st open call it would at present appear unlikely that the target figures for mobilities are met and that the funds for regranting are fully absorbed.

In May 2009, the NFP attended a meeting in Warsaw, Poland, on "Scholarship Funds", and exchanged experiences with the other BSs on the implementation of the Scholarship Fund. The particular meeting, which had the character of a seminar, was extremely fruitful for the participants as it gave to them the possibility to exchange know-how and experience on management and implementation issues of the particular fund.

Taking under account the aforementioned delays in the implementation of the "Scholarships and Mobility Programmes Fund" during the Technical Meeting held in Athens on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2009 between the National Focal Point and the representatives of the FMO, the NFP proposed to the FMO a possibility of appointing a new Intermediary Body which would be more mature and flexible in similar procedures applied by the EU Structural Funds. The NFP proposed the "National Technical University of Athens" (NTUA), after a relevant research that conducted between the major Universities in Greece. The NFP asked from NTUA representatives to give a brief presentation on the profile of the Institution and on the procedures followed in cases of Erasmus. The FMO representatives stated that the appointment of a new Intermediary Body is a decision that is going to be taken by the donors. However, in order the FMO to recommend the aforementioned to the EEA FM Committee, it requested from the Greek Authorities to follow certain steps described in the regulatory context of the EEA FM, such as to make an official amendment request for appointing a new Intermediary Body and to fill in a new application form and a new Annex III Fund Set-Up. On its behalf, the NFP, in order to make the request to the FMO, it would need an official statement by the Minister of Education regarding her approval of appointing NTUA as the new Intermediary Body and an official statement by the NTUA that the Rectorial Board should accept the aforementioned appointment. Also, NTUA should proceed in filling in the new application form and the Annex III Fund Set-Up. The aforementioned relevant documents should be sent to the NFP in order to fill in Part B of the application form and to forward the request to the FMO.

Also, the FMO informed the NFP that prior to the appointment of a new Intermediary Body, two pre-requisites should be fulfilled:

1. the Grant Offer letter for IKY should be signed and therefore its Grant Agreement and
2. granting for IKY scholars should be arranged.

As the time was running vice-versa for the whole "Scholarship and Mobility Fund", the following actions were taken by the Greek Authorities:

- On 14-12-2009, the "National Technical University of Athens" has been officially appointed by the Minister of Education as a new Intermediary Body.
- The NTUA Rectorial Board has officially accepted this appointment.
- The NTUA submitted a relevant application and the Annex III Fund Set-Up to the National Focal Point.
- Although the application form was not sent to the FMO as the NFP was waiting for additional documentation by NTUA, NTUA has launched an Open invitation for the submission of applications by candidates which was published in NTUA's official internet site. The review of the applications and the issuing of the results are expected to be completed within May.

- As soon as the NFP receives the requested additional documents from NTUA, it will officially apply to the FMO for the amendment request of the new Intermediary Body

### 3.2 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FUND

The Technical Assistance Fund is proposed by the Beneficiary State on the purpose of supporting activities of the NFP regarding the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism for the period 2004 – 2009. It is a specific form of Grant Assistance referred to in Article 8 of the MoU.

The total budget of the TAF, after allocating unabsorbed funding that became apparent after finalising the appraisal of the short-listed individual projects, has increased by € 120.877. Therefore, the TAF total budget is € 795.856. The EEA FM contribution will be € 636.685 (80%) and the contribution of the Hellenic Republic through the Public Investments Programme of the Ministry of Economy & Finance will be € 159.171 (20%). The NFP will act as the Project Promoter assuming full responsibility for the implementation of the Technical Assistance Fund.

The supported activities include: publicity and information activities, workshops, management costs, appointment of a Monitoring Agent for the implementation of the FM and expenses relating to the organization of Annual Meetings, Monitoring Committees, Steering Committee meetings and technical meetings on the implementation of the approved projects.

The revised activities under the Technical Assistance Fund are presented in the following table:

#	Activities	TOTAL	EEA Contribution (80%)	PIP Contribution (20%)
1	Workshop 2009 on the implementation of approved projects	25.000	20.000	5.000
2	Information & Publicity	4.035	3.228	807
3	Management Costs (translation, etc.)	10.400	8.320	2.080
4	Annual Meetings (2009 - 2011)	12.150	9.720	2.430
5	Monitoring Committees (2009 - 2011)	56.100	44.880	11.220
6	Monitoring Agent (revised amount)	551.096	440.877	110.219
7	Steering Committee	106.075	84.860	21.215
8	Technical Meetings (projects implem.)	6.000	4.800	1.200
9	Final Workshop 2011	25.000	20.000	5.000
<b>Total</b>		<b>795.856</b>	<b>636.685</b>	<b>159.171</b>

The NFP prepared a complete application form which was submitted to the FMO for assessment on 27 March 2006. The FMO with a letter dated April 28<sup>th</sup> 2006 requested additional information on several issues regarding this application.

The NFP decided to proceed further in relation to the TAF application after the publication of the "Open Call for Submission of Individual Project Proposals and for Individual Project Proposals focused on Academic Research".

On February 28<sup>th</sup> 2008, the NFP submitted a revised TAF Application Form which was approved and since then is operational. More specific, the GA was signed on 23<sup>rd</sup> October

2008, the implementation contract was signed on 18-03-2009 (Ministerial Decision with prot. no. 15102/EYΔ&ΠΤΣ 1006) and was revised on 21-09-2009 (Ministerial Decision with prot. no. 46484/EYΔ&ΠΤΣ 3374) as the total eligible cost has been increased from 644.760 Euros to 795.856 Euros. The NFP will send the aforementioned Implementation Contract and its amendment to the FMO according to article 3.7. of the Grant Agreement.

#### **4. INFORMATION - PUBLICITY**

The National Focal Point being responsible and accountable for the overall implementation of the EEA FM 2004 – 2009, ensures that all relevant information is going to be widely communicated, aiming to increase transparency and raise public awareness. The National Focal Point serves as the contact point for the implementation of the EEA FM. Therefore, it is available to the public for the provision of any inquiry regarding the EEA FM.

As far as the approved projects are concerned, the NFP shall ensure that the Project Promoters will implement the approved Publicity Plans according to the "Publicity Guidelines" adopted by the EEA FMC.

The NFP also ensures that all relevant information related to the overall implementation of the EEA FM is given adequate publicity. The NFP follows the Publicity Guidelines and the Communication Action Plan revised and sent regularly to the FMO.

##### **4.1 PUBLICITY ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE**

Indicative publicity & information activities are presented below according to a publicity schedule updated (Communication Plan) and forwarded to the FMO twice a year.

###### **4.1.1 WORKSHOPS**

###### **Workshop Meeting on the implementation of the approved projects**

In 24<sup>th</sup> September 2009, the NFP organized a Workshop on the implementation of the approved projects that resulted from the evaluation process of the "Open Call for submission of individual project proposals and for individual project proposals focused on Academic Research".

Representatives from the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Athens and the FMO, project promoters of the approved projects as well as all the involved bodies participated. The scope of the workshop was to inform all parties involved on the implementation of the approved projects regarding the legislative and regulatory framework in force.

###### **Closing Workshop**

A closing workshop regarding the EEA FM 2004 – 2009 implementation, is scheduled to be held in 2011. This workshop is aiming to ex-post evaluating and reviewing the 2004 - 2009 implementation period as well as to identifying the best practices and approaches followed.

###### **4.1.2 PUBLICITY AND INFORMATION ACTIVITIES**

According to the "Rules and Procedures" on the implementation of the EEA FM 2004 – 2009, the NFP has already proceeded to a number of activities such as: press releases, information meetings and workshops, printed material (such as brochures, etc.), updating of its web page ([www.eeagrants.gr](http://www.eeagrants.gr)). The NFP will proceed before the end of the year to the creation of the English version of the web site and of the link to the EEA web

site. Communication strategy plans are in force and revised per semester. The aim is to provide information to the public regarding: Information, in general, about the EEA FM, 2004 – 2009 and the already publicized “Open Call”. Also, publicity and information activities are focused on the projects’ implementation by organizing information workshops for the project proposals and by updating the site with guidelines regarding the management and monitoring system of the EEA FM implementation in Greece. Also, the NFP operates a help desk in collaboration with the other involved services, such as the Legal Support Unit and the Single Paying Authority in order to assist the Project Promoters with the implementation of their projects.

#### **4.1.3 ANNUAL MEETINGS & ANNUAL MONITORING COMMITTEES**

In addition to the aforementioned publicity measures, adequate publicity will be given to the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism for period 2004 – 2009 in regard to the Annual Meetings and the Monitoring Committees that are scheduled to be organized during the programming period, as follows:

##### **Annual Meetings**

According to the “Guide to Annual Meeting Preparation”, paragraph 1.1., four annual meetings are planned to be held during the years 2008 – 2011, between the Hellenic authorities and the FMO. In the Annual Meetings, among others, several issues are going to be discussed specifically on the progress made towards the achievement of the overall objective of the EEA, the progress of project identification in the beneficiary state, the ongoing implementation of the financed projects, the financial progress pertaining to commitments and disbursements.

The first Annual Meeting was held on May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2008 at the Financial Mechanism Office premises in Brussels and the second Annual Meeting was scheduled to be held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2010 at the Ministry of Economy and Finance premises, after the postpone of a scheduled one in September 2009.

##### **Annual Monitoring Committees**

The NFP will organize two annual Monitoring Committees (MC) for the years 2010 – 2011, with the participation of representatives of all parties involved. No Monitoring Committee meeting was held during 2009 as the approved projects had not been activated. Prior to the organization of the Monitoring Committee, the Minister of Economy, Competitiveness and Shipping should establish and appoint it. The MC will be broad – based as it will comprise of members from NFP, the Single Paying Authority, the Financial Control Committee, relevant ministries, social and economic partners, representatives from regional and local administrations, actors from civil society and NGOs. Also, the Norwegian Embassy in Athens shall be invited to attend the meetings with an observer status. The aim of these meetings is to follow up on the overall progress of the EEA FM 2004 – 2009 and the progress of different types of assistance. The NFP estimates that Fall 2010 is an optimum period to hold the 1<sup>st</sup> Monitoring Committee.

#### **4.2 WEB PAGE**

The National Focal Point – CFM&MSS in order to ensure that the existence of the Financial Mechanism and all relevant information regarding its implementation are communicated in the most efficient way to the public at large and that the Mechanism’s contributions are given adequate publicity, has created a distinct section at its own website ([www.eeagrants.gr](http://www.eeagrants.gr)).

The information provided on the web page regarding the EEA FM 2004 - 2009 is structured as follows:

- News
- Legislative Framework
- Regulatory Framework, including:
  - Guidelines
  - Application Form (along with the user guide and indicator guidelines)
- Other Documents (annual meeting reports and Minutes from Annual Meetings according to the EEA FM publicity guidelines)
- Adequate special section is given regarding the “Open Call for Submission of Individual Project Proposals and for Individual Project Proposals focused on Academic Research”, that was published on January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, as follows:
  - Announcement of the “Open Call”
  - Announcement of Workshops (such as the workshop held on March 13<sup>th</sup> 2008 at Iraklion Crete)
  - Frequently Asked Questions regarding the proposals’ preparation within the context of the “Open Call”
  - Table of approved projects by the EEA FMC – Final Stage

The aforementioned web page is updated regularly according to the progress made regarding the implementation of the EEA FM.

Furthermore, the NFP is in the process of upgrading its website aiming to a more user-friendly format and enriched content including the English version.

## **5. MANAGERIAL SET-UP**

### **5.1 NATIONAL FOCAL POINT**

The Hellenic National Focal Point for the implementation of the EEA FM is the Ministry of Economy and Finance, Cohesion Fund Management & Monitoring Special Service.

The NFP has the overall responsibility for the management and monitoring of the activities of the EEA FM in the Hellenic Republic, as described in Annex A of the MoU, and serves as a contact point in accordance with the Rules and Procedures adopted by the Financial Mechanism Committee, including the overall responsibility for the use of funds, financial control, and audit.

### **5.2 STEERING COMMITTEE**

The Steering Committee is an advisory body to the National Focal Point and to the PEC in respect of the identification, evaluation and classification of proposals. The Steering Committee’s task is to provide opinions and recommendations to the PEC on projects that are eligible for support within the EEA Financial Mechanism.

In order to appropriately evaluate projects, the Steering Committee could be assisted by working groups and use the services of individual experts or other institutions. The Steering Committee operates in an open and transparent manner.

The Steering Committee is independent from potential applicants. It is comprised of representatives of the Ministry of Economy and Finance/National Focal Point, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Development, Ministry of Employment and Social Protection, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Religion, Ministry of Internal Affairs and confederation of regional and local authorities.

### **5.3 PROPOSALS EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

Regarding the evaluation process of the application forms by the MEF, a five-member project Evaluation Committee (PEC) was established within the NFP and reviewed the recommendations by the SC and, based on these, provided its recommendations to the Deputy Minister of Economy & Finance as to which projects were to be short-listed and forwarded to the FMO for further appraisal and donor decision.

## **6. REFORMS AND RESTRUCTURING OF MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL SYSTEM**

### **6.1 PUBLIC WORKS PROCUREMENT SYSTEM**

The last five years an accelerating ongoing development regarding the public works production system is in a process. The Ministry of Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works in close cooperation with the European Commission has agreed on several modifications of the aforementioned system, as follows:

- The Greek legislation regarding the procurement of public works construction contracts has been revised with Law 3263/2004, having been fully adapted to the EU legislative framework and practices.
- In order to encounter the great and arbitrary deviations between the budgets described in the open calls and the construction costs of the projects and to ensure transparency and rendering of equal opportunities regarding the participants in public procurements, the following have been enforced:
  - New public works price lists reflecting the actual market prices and unifying the fragmented subtotals for each activity into coherent unities with clear specifications.
  - Standardized procurement and contract issues regarding the construction of public works.
- With the Law 3316/2005 regarding the “procurement of studies and relevant services” the legislation has been revised and adapted to the recent EU guidelines (17/04 and 18/04).

### **6.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EEA FM IN PERIOD 2007 - 2013**

With the Law 3614/2007 regarding the “management, audit and implementation of development interventions for the programming period 2007 – 2013” the legislative framework is set for the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism in Greece throughout the aforementioned period.

The issues regarding management, audit and implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism projects have been settled in detail upon the issue of a relevant Ministerial Decision which was issued in September 2009.

The Financial Control Committee which is responsible for auditing according to Annex A of the MoU, is going to set up an audit plan as soon projects’ expenses have occurred and these have been inserted into MIS. The audit plan is estimated to be executed after the end of July 2010.

All audit plans will be in full compliance with the audit and control system that is being implemented to the mainstream of programs co-financed by the EU.

## **7. CHALLENGES REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EEA FM**

The National Focal Point taking under consideration its experience from the implementation of the EEA Financial Instrument for period 1999 – 2003, regards the following key point as crucial for the successful implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism:

- Selection and approval of mature and viable proposals within the context of the “Open Call” in combination with credible and competent Project Promoters in charge.
- Sound application of the legislation in force by the Project Promoters during the implementation of projects.
- Sufficient knowledge by the Project Promoters and all involved parties in the implementation of projects, of the legislative and regulatory framework of the EEA Financial Mechanism in force and of the Management and Control System of the EEA FM implementation on Greece.

Furthermore, the National Focal Point schedules to organize a Workshop “The implementation of the approved projects” where the aforementioned legislative and regulatory framework will be presented to all involved bodies along with detailed instructions regarding the implementation process and the procedures that are to be followed.

- The National Focal Point, in order to closely monitor and secure the projects’ smooth implementation as well as the competency of the Project Promoters in charge, is planning to contact a number of visits and on-the-spot checks throughout the implementation period of the EEA Financial Mechanism.

In particular, a sufficient number of such visits is initially budgeted and incorporated in the “Management Costs” category of expenses as described in the Technical assistance Application Form of the National Focal Point.

- A fundamental issue for the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism is the appointment of a “Support and Monitoring Agent” who will offer an adequate follow up on the projects’ implementation and overall support to the National Focal Point.

## **8. ACTION PLAN FOR PERIOD MARCH 2010 – MARCH 2011**

The next 12 months will correspond to the most crucial phase regarding the implementation of the Financial Mechanism for period 2004 – 2009 in Greece: the actual implementation stage of the approved projects.

In detail, the planned activities for period August 2009 – August 2010 are:

### **1. Implementation of the approved projects**

- As previously described, Implementation Contracts are in process of being signed between Project Promoters and the NFP.
- The NFP must continuously ensure that projects’ implementation process takes place according to the EEA FM and national legislative and regulatory context as well as to the Management and Control System of the EEA FM. The NFP must comply with all the undertaking responsibilities which derive from the GAs.
- The NFP will immediately proceed to the selection and appointment of a Monitoring Agent.

### **2. Scholarships and Mobility Programme Fund**

Regarding the specific form of grant assistance "Mobility and Scholarship Fund" certain key aspects should be fulfilled. The first key aspect is that as far as IKY is concerned, a Grant Agreement should be signed between the EEA FM Committee and the Hellenic Republic. After the signing of the GA, the implementation contract should be signed in order the scholarship beneficiaries to receive the grant. Simultaneously, a GOL should be issued regarding NTUA as the new Intermediary Body and immediately after the relevant GA and the implementation contract should be signed.

### **3. Technical Assistance Fund**

The revised technical assistance fund is implemented accordingly to the relevant amended Ministerial Decision on the EEA FM technical assistance fund.

### **4. Signing of Grant Agreements and Implementation Contracts**

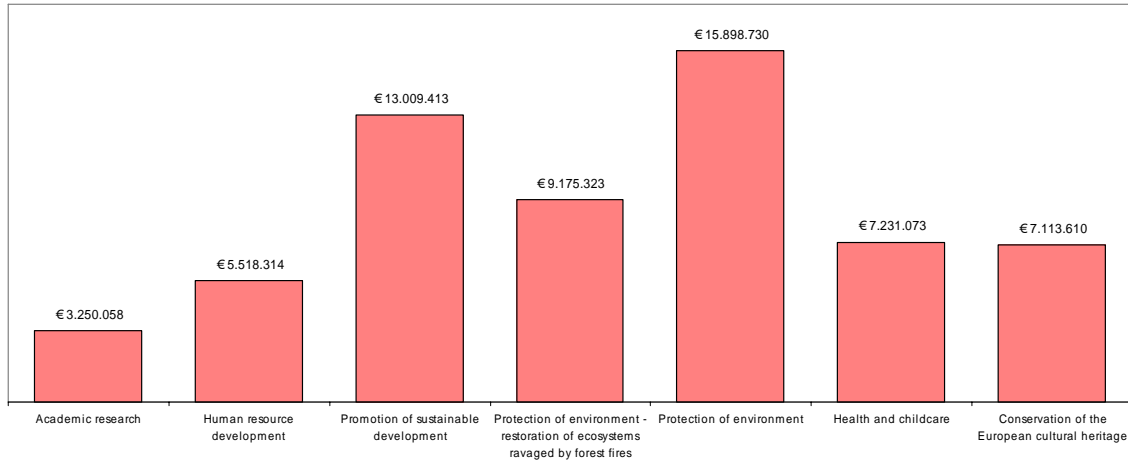
In the period June 2009 – March 2010, the FMO and the FMC, in co-operation with the Hellenic Republic proceeded to the signing of the Grant Agreements and during March 2010, the implementation contracts are going to be signed and the implementation of the projects is going to start immediately.

### **5. Other issues**

The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Athens will be informed on important activities/issues by either the FMO or the FP, such as the withdrawal of a project promoter, the issuing of the Ministerial Decisions, project amendment requests, activities etc.

## ANNEX

### Break-down of total funding made available by priority sector



### Break-down of total funding made available by region

